

Forgotten Darfur: Old Tactics and New Players

By Claudio Gramizzi and Jérôme Tubiana



Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken



 HM Government



NORWEGIAN MINISTRY
OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

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List of abbreviations

CAR	Central African Republic
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
CRP	Central Reserve Police
DDPD	Doha Document for Peace in Darfur
DPA	Darfur Peace Agreement
EU	European Union
GoS	Government of Sudan
GoSS	Government of South Sudan
IDP	Internally displaced person
JEM	Justice and Equality Movement
LJM	Liberation and Justice Movement
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
NCP	National Congress Party
NISS	National Intelligence and Security Service
PDF	Popular Defence Forces
RPG	Rocket-propelled grenade (launcher)
SAF	Sudan Armed Forces
SPLA	Sudan People's Liberation Army
SPLM/A	Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army
SPLM-N	Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North
SLA	Sudan Liberation Army
SLA-AW	Sudan Liberation Army-Abdul Wahid Mohamed al Nur
SLA-MM	Sudan Liberation Army-Minni Minawi
SRF	Sudan Revolutionary Front
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UNAMID	African Union/United Nations Hybrid operation in Darfur
UNMISS	United Nations Mission in South Sudan

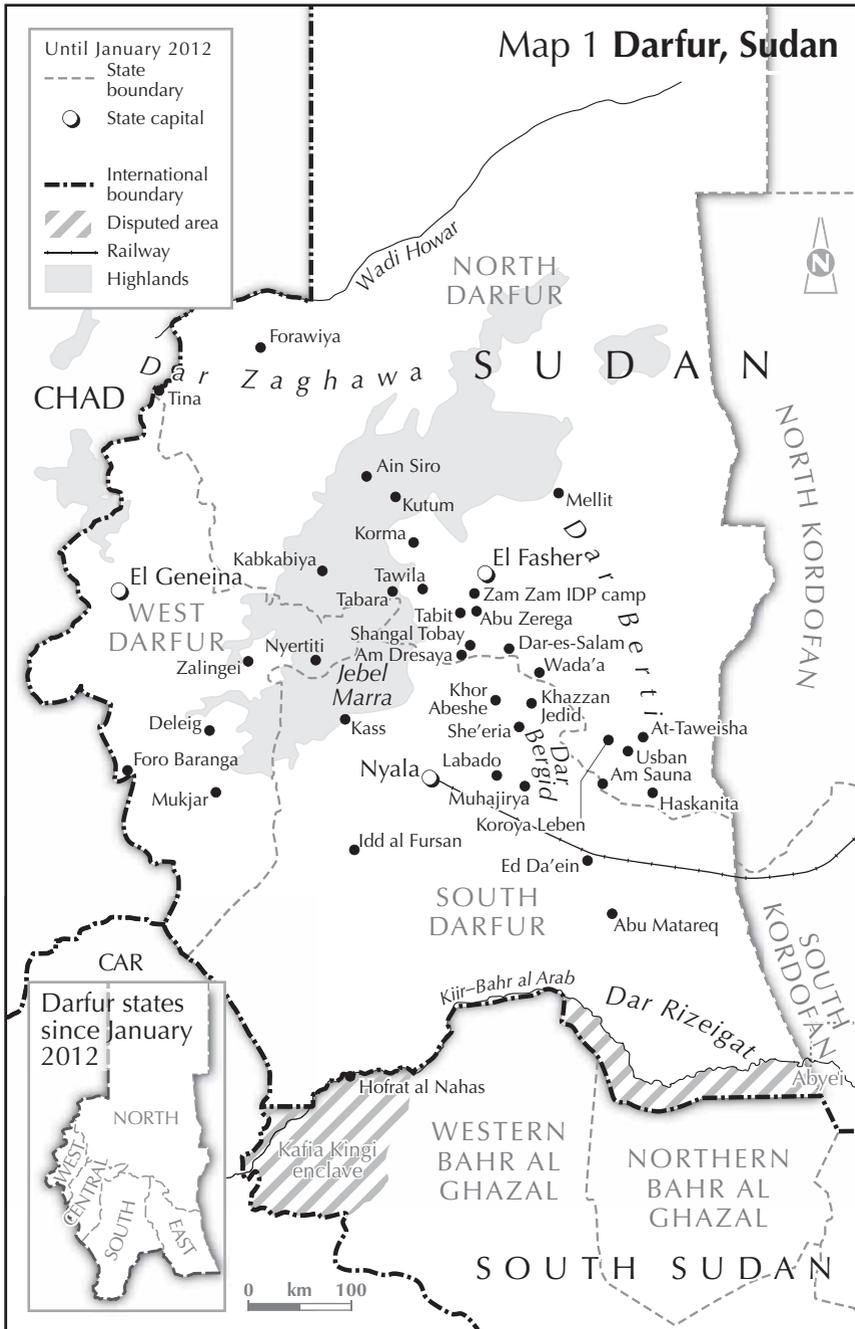
Executive summary

Since 2010 Darfur has all but vanished from the international agenda. The Sudanese government has claimed that major armed conflict is essentially over, that armed violence of all kinds has declined significantly, and that such violence is now dominated by criminality rather than by military confrontation (AP, 2009; VOA, 2010). This view has been bolstered by statements from the leadership of the joint United Nations–African Union peacekeeping force in Darfur and by those invested in the under-subscribed 2011 Doha Document for Peace in Darfur, who have hailed declining violence and wider regional transformations as conducive to a final resolution of the conflict (UNAMID, 2011b; Gambari, 2011; VOA, 2010).

Notwithstanding such celebratory assertions Darfur’s conflict has moved largely unnoticed into a new phase.¹ While several parts of Darfur have become demonstrably more peaceful since 2009—particularly as the geography of conflict has shifted eastwards away from West Darfur and the Sudan–Chad border—late 2010 and the first half of 2011 saw a significant offensive by the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and militias, backed by airstrikes and aerial bombardments, targeting both rebel groups and the Zaghawa civilian population across a broad swathe of eastern Darfur (AI, 2012; see Map 1).

Significantly, the Government of Sudan has partly shifted away from using Arab proxy militias only to rely on newly formed (and newly armed) non-Arab proxies. This development has fundamentally changed the ethnic map of eastern Darfur, drawing on previously latent tensions between non-Arab groups over land, ethnicity, and local political dominance—and generating some of the most significant ethnically directed violence since the start of the conflict in 2003.

This new pattern, explored in Section I of this report, marks a substantial shift in Darfur’s conflict dynamics, as distinct from the two previous phases of the conflict. The first wave of major fighting, from 2003 to 2005, was dominated by attacks against non-Arab groups accused of supporting the rebellion. The violence was perpetrated principally by government-sponsored, Arab-dominated



abbala (camel-herding) militias, leading to thousands of civilian deaths and the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people.² After the signing of the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) in 2006, Arab groups increasingly turned against both the government and each other. Between 2008 and 2010, violent deaths in Darfur were thus dominated by intra-Arab fighting, notably between *abbala* and *baggara* (cattle-herding) groups in South Darfur (AU, 2009, p. 112; Flint, 2010b; USAID, 2010).³

In contrast, the ‘new’ war in eastern Darfur, which erupted in late 2010 and early 2011, has pitted non-Arab groups against other non-Arabs; specifically, government-backed militias drawn from small, previously marginalized non-Arab groups—including the Bergid, Berti, and Tunjur—deployed against Zaghawa rebel groups and communities.

Although the political and ethnic basis of the Darfur conflict has thus evolved, its ground-level dynamics, tactics, and technologies—explored in Section II of this paper—are similar to those encountered in earlier phases. In particular, arms supplies to Sudanese government forces and proxy militias in Darfur—which remain both the major perpetrators of armed violence and the ‘junction box’ for material supplies to armed groups on all sides through supply and seizure—have been almost entirely unimpeded by the actions and policies of the international community, including the ineffectual UN arms embargo on Darfur. In the same vein, the Sudan Air Force has continued to move weapons into Darfur with complete impunity; it supported ground attacks with aerial bombardment in all of Darfur’s states during 2011 and in West and North Darfur during 2012, despite the UN Security Council’s prohibition on such offensive aerial operations since 2005.

Darfur’s rebels, meanwhile, have either lost or abandoned many of the ‘liberated areas’ formerly under their control. At the same time, the regional powers that have historically constituted their major external sources of material support—Chad, Libya, and South Sudan⁴—have each experienced political transformation, regime change, or a reconfiguration in their posture towards Sudan and Darfur that may have diminished their capacity or willingness to provide such support.

Yet these regional transformations have not fully removed either the mechanisms or the motives for cross-border flows of arms, personnel, or political support to Darfur’s armed actors. Regime change in Libya, accompanied by

the rapid establishment of political and military cooperation between Khartoum and the new Libyan National Transitional Council (*Sudan Tribune*, 2011e), has ended government-sponsored transfers of arms and other material support from Libya to the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) and other Darfur rebel groups. But poorly secured military stockpiles and the inability of the new regime to extend full political control over southern Libya may have facilitated unofficial weapons flows instead.⁵

Similarly, the rapprochement between Chad and Sudan has certainly diminished previous movements of weapons and rebel personnel across the Chad–Darfur border (Tubiana, 2011a). But, despite the deployment since early 2010 of a joint Sudan–Chad Border Force, large-scale rebel movements between the desert areas of north-eastern Chad and northern Darfur continue to be possible. One example is JEM’s successful operation to extract its leader Khalil Ibrahim from Libya around 28 August 2011 via the Libya–Chad–Niger and Libya–Chad–Sudan tri-borders. Small-scale exchanges of military equipment between Chadian and Sudanese armed groups likewise illustrate the limits of rapprochement and disarmament with respect to denying material support to rebel forces. These exchanges are also detailed in Section II.

Finally, South Sudan’s independence since July 2011 does not appear to have led to a decisive change in the ambiguous relationship between Darfur’s rebel groups and the Government of South Sudan (GoSS). While the growing political presence of Darfur’s rebel groups in South Sudan is indisputable, the unrealized promise of more substantive material assistance from the GoSS to Darfur rebel groups remains bound up with prospects for consolidation of Darfur’s fragmented rebel groups; their involvement in the South Kordofan conflict, which remains South Sudan’s major extra-territorial priority; and the triangular relationship between Darfur rebels, the Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA), and the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement–North (SPLM-N).⁶

Section III of this report explores the ambiguous relations between rebels and communities in western South Sudan and South Kordofan, and their potential to draw the Darfur conflict into much larger North–South confrontations. In particular, this section describes not only increased linkages between Darfur’s rebel groups and the SPLM-N in South Kordofan, but also the overlooked potential for conflict on the Darfur–Bahr al Ghazal border.

Although the international community generally holds that the Darfur conflict has experienced profound and propitious improvement, this report thus argues that, as the conflict enters its ninth year, there is no clear-cut prospect of a decisive end to violent confrontation. Its key findings include the following:

- Since late 2010, new non-Arab ‘Popular Defence Forces’ have been recruited, trained, and armed by the Sudanese government to push Zaghawa rebel groups and civilian communities out of a wide swathe of eastern Darfur. About 70,000, mostly Zaghawa, individuals had been displaced by mid-2011, leading to a sequence of retaliatory attacks from both sides during mid-2011 and early 2012.
- Weapons and, in particular, newly manufactured ammunition continue to flow to these proxy forces and to the government forces in Darfur that back them, unimpeded by the wholly ineffective UN embargo on Darfur. While the UN Security Council is yet to authorize the publication of the latest findings of the Panel of Experts established to monitor the embargo, new evidence from South Kordofan indicates that the trend of ‘just-in-time’ international ammunition supplies to SAF identified by the Panel in 2010 appears to be continuing.
- The Darfur conflict continues to be characterized by aerial bombardment in all states of the region, in support of ground operations against rebel forces themselves and, in some cases, deliberately targeting civilian settlements believed to be supportive or identified with rebel forces. This aerial capacity, deployed in violation of Security Council resolutions, is maintained through ongoing international support via Sudanese, Middle Eastern, and Eastern European corporate actors that sustain the military–logistical assets used both to bomb Darfur and to deliver arms.
- Ironically, SAF in Darfur is the primary source of supply—mainly through battlefield capture—to Darfur rebel groups.
- While the removal of the Muammar Qaddafi regime has ended officially sponsored material support from Libya to JEM and the Sudan Liberation Army-Minni Minawi, rebel groups claim that they moved significant materiel from Libya’s poorly secured southern stockpiles after the fall of the regime.

- Darfur rebels' involvement in the South Kordofan conflict increased during late 2011 and 2012, with JEM forces in particular ending combat operations in Darfur between mid-2011 until early 2012. This fragile alliance with the SPLM-N is rooted in tribal connections, particularly among the marginalized Masalit groups of Darfur, Western Bahr al Ghazal, and the Nuba Mountains.
- With both the SPLA and the GoSS leadership split over assistance to Darfur rebel groups, the SPLA until late 2011 retained division-level links with the small encampments of Darfur rebels present in Western and Northern Bahr al Ghazal. The presence of Darfuris in Bahr al Ghazal, while not as extensive as has been claimed by the Government of Sudan, has coincided with the largely unreported escalation of military incidents between SAF and the SPLA along the South Darfur–South Sudan border, raising the possibility of significant future conflict in this critically contested area.

New internal ethnic dynamics in Darfur; ongoing supplies of weapons and other support to all sides; and growing connections to latent and actual conflict in contested parts of South Sudan and South Kordofan—all these factors raise the prospect of a continued, slow-burning war of attrition with armed actors and against civilian communities within Darfur and along new fronts on the region's southern and eastern boundaries. 🗨️

I. Political and tribal shifts within Darfur: the rise of non-Arab inter-tribal conflict

As the conflict in Darfur has evolved since 2003, so have conflicts between ethnic groups and communities that pre-date the 2003 rebellion (Tubiana, 2011b). These factors have contributed to the ensuing political violence and have, in return, been fuelled by it.

Darfur's inter-ethnic conflicts can be broken down into three phases:

- First, between 2003 and 2005, most of the violence in Darfur involved attacks by largely Arab, government-sponsored militias against non-Arab groups that were systematically regarded as supporters of the rebellion. The militias were largely recruited from the *abbala* (camel-herding) groups of North Darfur and were pejoratively nicknamed 'janjaweed'.⁷
- Second, after the signing of the DPA in 2006, Arab groups turned increasingly against the government, and even more so against each other. Between 2008 and 2010, most of Darfur's violence appears to have been generated by fighting between Arab tribes, notably between *abbala* and *baggara* (cattle herders) of South Darfur, but also between large tribes sometimes straddling those livelihood categories (such as the Rizeigat and the Missiriya) (AU, 2009, p. 112; Flint, 2010b; USAID, 2010).
- A third phase has emerged as Arab groups have become more reluctant to fight on behalf of the government, notably due to the violence they themselves suffered in 2008–10. As a result, the government has shifted to forming and backing *non*-Arab militias for its counter-insurgency strategy. This approach, which exploits the existing grievances of eastern Darfur's non-Arab tribes (such as the Bergid, Berti, Mima, and Tunjur) against the Zaghawa—who are systematically labelled 'rebels' by local and national authorities—created unsustainable tensions and finally ignited an extended cycle of violence that began in late 2010.

Prior to this new wave of recruitment, non-Arab proxy militias had been active to some degree as early as 2003. In particular, they had been recruited among the South Darfur Fellata (a Pula community generally considered Arab), South Darfur Bergid (a tribe also involved in the current violence), and West Darfur Gimir and Tama (two communities that have older and deeper grievances against their Zaghawa neighbours to the north than do the non-Arab tribes in eastern Darfur). These early non-Arab militias, however, were not at the forefront of the conflict; they were complementary to the Arab militias and were less extensively deployed, in much smaller areas than the wide stretch of eastern Darfur where such militias have been active in 2010–12.

A divided rebellion

This evolution of Darfur's ethnic tensions has run parallel to the constant reconfigurations of Darfuri armed opposition. The armed opposition began in 2003 as a relatively unified rebellion involving just two movements with different ideological postures. Since 2006 the rebel groups have spectacularly fragmented, particularly along ethnic lines (Tanner and Tubiana, 2007). By 2011, in order to survive, the weakened and fractured rebellion had no choice but to restart coordination among the different movements and factions, albeit against a background of ongoing political fragmentation.

A major change came at the end of 2010 with the return to the rebellion of the Sudan Liberation Army-Minni Minawi (SLA-MM). While it is the only movement to have signed the DPA with the government in 2006 in Abuja, Nigeria, SLA-MM has received few benefits since then, instead suffering a constant loss of its political influence, troops, and territory.⁸

SLA-MM's return to rebellion has allowed the movement to gain and regain troops and leaders from various other splinter factions originating from the SLA and even JEM, including some who had previously joined the Liberation and Justice Movement (LJM)—the umbrella created by the international community to negotiate with the government in the framework of the peace talks in Doha, Qatar (Flint, 2010a). Although the African Union–United Nations Joint Chief Mediator Djibril Ypèné Bassolé sought not to repeat the mistakes of Abuja, notably the signing of an agreement with only one movement, the

Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD) was nonetheless signed on 14 July 2011 only with the LJM.⁹

Even before signing the DDPD, the LJM had itself begun to fragment, notably by losing its strongest (ex-SLA) military factions, recruited among the Zaghawa of the Wogi sub-group and led by Ali Mokhtar (sometimes called SLA-Field Leadership) and Ali Abdallah 'Kerubino'.¹⁰ Before their defection, both were part of the LJM's High Council of the Presidency as well as its Military Council. On 18 April 2011 they withdrew their support to chairman Tijani Sese along with six other members of the High Council, six of the Military Council, and 120 other leaders of the movement, and left the Doha talks.¹¹ Ali Mokhtar joined SLA-MM while 'Kerubino' formed his own faction under the name SLA-Justice, giving himself the position of chief of staff, with his kinsman Musa Tajeddin as political leader. After the signing of the DDPD, the LJM also suffered the defection of Ahmad Abdeshafi 'Toba', the most prominent of the LJM's few Fur leaders beyond its chairman.

JEM, the other negotiating movement, also suffered splits, notably in September 2011, when Mohamed Bahar Ali Hamadein left the movement with a small group of leaders from both Darfur and Kordofan. Mohamed Bahar is a Missiriya from Kordofan who was the chief of JEM's delegation in Doha and the movement's vice president in charge of Kordofan. The AU-UN mediation—now led by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the African Union/United Nations Hybrid operation in Darfur (UNAMID), Ibrahim Gambari—appears to have hoped that Mohamed Bahar would be followed by a significant number of other JEM members. More seriously, the departure of JEM leaders from Kordofan could have endangered JEM's long-term strategy to move the war beyond Darfur, in particular to Kordofan.

Yet JEM retained cohesion. First, the killing of JEM chairman Khalil Ibrahim in Kordofan in December 2011 appears to have appeased other internal frictions; second, JEM's recent alliance with the SPLM-N—involving military coordination in South Kordofan in particular—is a major attempt to end the fragmentation of Sudan's various rebellions. However, Darfur's rebels retain significant internal rivalries, and it is unclear whether the alliance has actually increased rebel cooperation within Darfur. The return of Khalil Ibrahim from Tripoli with Libyan weapons shortly before his death may also have main-

tained JEM as the most well-resourced Darfur rebel group, making cooperation with them more attractive for the SPLM-N in spite of historical grievances and ideological differences.¹²

A short history of a new war

The third phase of Darfur's conflict pits the Zaghawa against most of the other small, non-Arab ethnic groups of eastern Darfur. The latter have feared that the Zaghawa would use their predominance in the main rebel movements to occupy land in other tribes' areas. Much like the former waves of violence between *abbala* Arabs and non-Arabs, as well as between *abbala* and *baggara*, this conflict revolves around land ownership between newcomers (initially *abbala*, now Zaghawa) who fled the droughts of the 1970s and 1980s in northern Darfur, and more ancient settlers (non-Arabs or Arabs) from southern, wetter areas. In contrast to inter-Arab conflicts, but much like clashes between Arabs and non-Arabs in 2003–05, the tensions among non-Arab groups today are directly connected to the government practice of forming proxy militias.

To understand the dynamics of Darfur's recent violence, it is important to be familiar with the particular political and ethnic make-up of eastern Darfur. The area referred to in this report as eastern Darfur is distinct from the new state of 'East Darfur', which was created in January 2012 and covers only the south-eastern corner of greater Darfur, mostly the traditional *dar* (territory) of the Rizeigat Arabs. In this report 'eastern Darfur' refers instead to the highly strategic area situated north of Dar Rizeigat and the railway between Nyala and El Obeid, and south of El Fasher, straddling the boundary between the former state of South Darfur and the state of North Darfur (which remained unchanged in the recent administrative reorganization). It is an area of sandy plains (*goz*), situated between the Jebel Marra massif (with some water streams running into it during the rainy season) and the similar plains of Kordofan. The area is dryer than the southern and western flanks of Jebel Marra, but it is good for both farming and herding during the rainy season and is thus crossed by important migratory routes. Irrigated dry-season farming (tobacco, ground nuts) has also developed in the *wadis* (seasonal watercourses), and trade has flourished thanks to the proximity of Kordofan and also because the area is

intersected by the main road between Darfur's two most important urban centres, Nyala and El Fasher.

These dynamics explain why this area is among the most ethnically diverse of the whole of Darfur. The area of Shangal Tobay in North Darfur (at the border with South Darfur) alone is home to more than 30 different ethnic groups—mostly small non-Arab groups (Mima and Tunjur) as well as some small Arab groups (USIP, forthcoming). While the rest of Darfur was historically oriented westwards towards what is now Chad, the eastern part of Darfur was open to influences from Kordofan and the Nile Valley (O'Fahey, 2008). From the east came offshoots of Kordofan tribes (such as the Missiriya) as well as 'Jellaba' traders from the Nile Valley. These influences also explain why the main non-Arab tribes of the area (the Bergid, Berti, Mima, and Tunjur), even if often linked with tribes based farther west, differ from their counterparts elsewhere in Darfur by being more 'arabized', with some having lost their original language and adopted Arabic.

Like most of Darfur, eastern Darfur is divided into *dar* administered by a 'traditional leader' or 'native administrator' (the colonial terminology that continues to be commonly used for Darfur's traditional leadership). Given the region's ethnic diversity, this leader administers people from various ethnic groups beyond his own, and in some cases he even comes from a minority group himself. Thus, in Shangal Tobay all tribes are administered by a *shartay* (commonly the highest level of the native administration hierarchy), Adam Abbakar Rashid, who belongs to the Tunjur (a non-Arab tribe); he recently replaced his elderly father after having been one of his *omdas* (mid-ranking traditional leader) (USIP, forthcoming).

In the 1940s, Zaghawa migrants from northern Darfur began to settle in eastern Darfur. More joined them during the major droughts of the 1970s and 1980s, and the Zaghawa became one of the most important tribes of the area, with sufficient numbers to challenge prior settlers' dominance during elections.¹³ Upon its formation in 2003, the SLA recruited among the Zaghawa in particular, notably among those who had settled in eastern Darfur. The Zaghawa component of the SLA had started to fight in their homeland of Dar Zaghawa, which straddles the border with Chad. But confronted with a massive government-backed counterinsurgency campaign, including aerial bombings that even reached

remote areas that were inaccessible to SAF's ground forces and proxy militias, the SLA sought to survive by relocating southwards to eastern Darfur, where it could rely on the support of significant Zaghawa communities. This move allowed the rebels to take control of most of eastern Darfur's rural areas in 2004, including important towns such as Muhajirya, Shangal Tobay, and Tabit (Tanner and Tubiana, 2007, p. 23).

In this area the mainly non-Arab population, much of which had already been displaced by Arab 'janjaweed' attacks, initially welcomed the rebels' presence. But they were soon victims of violence committed by the rebels of the Zaghawa-dominated SLA-MM, including murders, arrests, and forcible taxation (Tanner and Tubiana, 2007, pp. 41–45). Shangal Tobay leaders claim that between April 2004 and December 2010, 22 individuals from their area were arrested by the rebels and disappeared.¹⁴ This has fuelled inter-tribal tension. 'None of the victims was Zaghawa,' a politician from Shangal Tobay asserted. 'All were members of other tribes: Tunjur, Berti, Mima, Fur, Arabs.'¹⁵ These abuses also seem to have triggered renewed displacements—notably of non-Zaghawa elites, including traditional leaders, whom the rebels often considered (rightly or not) pro-government and who sought refuge in El Fasher. In She'eria in South Darfur, several thousand Bergid, the main ethnic group of this area, left after the SLA-MM took control of the town. In 2011, following calls by a local government official, many of these joined anti-Zaghawa militias.¹⁶

The Zaghawa population was clearly given preferential treatment by the SLA-MM. Some Zaghawa native administrators, as well as other civilians, were given particular powers in exchange for their support to the rebellion (USIP, forthcoming). Such unequal treatment continued after Minni Arku Minawi joined the government in May 2006, and SLA-MM troops were left in charge of the areas they held in eastern Darfur, although some (in particular Muhajirya and Gereida in 2009) were gradually lost to rebels who remained outside the DPA.

This discriminatory treatment created dormant resentment against the Zaghawa by non-Zaghawa communities across much of eastern Darfur. Non-Zaghawa traditional, political, and military leaders from eastern Darfur have repeatedly stated, particularly since the end of 2010, that there is no distinction between Zaghawa civilians and rebels (AI, 2012, p. 11; *Africa Confidential*, 2012, p. 10). In

the words of one traditional leader from Shangal Tobay: 'There is no civilian from the Zaghawa tribe, they're all rebels.'¹⁷ In describing a violent incident in which he accused the Zaghawa of responsibility, another leader claimed: 'You cannot ask if they were civilians or rebels. They are Zaghawa, and they are all of the same category.'¹⁸ Even leaders from outside the area embrace this view. One Arab traditional leader from North Darfur (whose tribe is also present in eastern Darfur) stated: 'We consider any Zaghawa a rebel.'¹⁹

Since late 2010 this rhetoric has served as the primary political justification for the expulsion of the Zaghawa from the area. Explains one military leader based in Shangal Tobay:

*Zaghawa are all criminals. They killed, they robbed. When they were here in Shangal Tobay with us, they did the only thing they are good at: killing, looting, raping. That's why we took up arms against them [. . .]. The reason why they ran away is clear: they are criminals.*²⁰

Shangal Tobay's traditional leaders agree: 'The best solution is for Zaghawa to stay outside our land. Now people have only one idea toward them: they don't want to live together with them.'²¹

The sequence of violence among non-Arab tribes, 2010–12

The trigger

In October 2010, Minni Minawi, senior assistant of President Omar al Bashir since the 2006 DPA, left the government after four years of unsuccessful collaboration and decided to return to rebellion (Tubiana, 2011a, p. 57). Although his decision may already have been made by the aftermath of the April 2010 presidential and general elections,²² a major reason was the intensification of pressure from Khartoum to finally integrate his troops into SAF, and thus to fulfil a key part of the DPA security arrangements.²³

Minni Minawi travelled directly from Khartoum to Juba.²⁴ Most of his Darfur-based forces (then numbering around 200–250 vehicles) crossed the border into South Sudan, while others remained in their areas of control in Darfur, although in an increasingly ambiguous position in relation to the government.

Gradually, most of his remaining Darfur-based forces withdrew from the towns and villages they had controlled in eastern Darfur, including Dar-es-Salam and Shangal Tobay, and took refuge in mountainous areas to the west. From there, they coordinated with other rebel factions, some of which joined the SLA-MM while others, such as the SLA-Justice, remained autonomous; they subsequently began to harass government forces and to attack military and civilian convoys, especially on the roads between El Fasher and Nyala. Meanwhile, this withdrawal triggered not only new fighting between the government and rebels, but also a resumption of violence against Zaghawa civilians, who could no longer benefit from the relative protection of the SLA-MM (ACJPS, 2011a, p. 3; *Africa Confidential*, 2012, p. 9).

The new non-Zaghawa militias in the Shangal Tobay area have justified their armed activities since late 2010 with reference to abuses committed by the SLA-MM between the rebels' return to rebellion and their departure from town, although these seem consistent with abuses also committed while the SLA-MM was still part of the government.²⁵

Both sides agree, however, that the starting point of major violence was an official visit on 14 December 2010 by the governor of North Darfur, Osman Mohamed Yusif Kibir, to Dar-es-Salam and Shangal Tobay.²⁶ The visit's aim was to tackle the issue of the status of SLA-MM troops and their integration. The governor was thus accompanied by SLA-MM leaders who had remained with the government, as well as members of the army and the Central Reserve Police (CRP or *Ittihad-al-Merkazi*). In Dar-es-Salam, according to a member of the delegation:

*the governor made a speech announcing that some SLA-MM elements could integrate into SAF, CRP, or police, while the remainder would have to be demobilized. He also stated that those who were educated might also be given government jobs.*²⁷

Those who would not agree were told they would have to leave town within a week or face imprisonment. One eyewitness recalled hearing words of warning: 'He who is with us can stay with us, he who is against us should leave.'²⁸

The government convoy then proceeded to Shangal Tobay for a similar public speech. Yet, while approaching the town, the governor's convoy came under

fire from SLA-MM troops²⁹ posted at the checkpoint outside town; they reportedly used 'Dushka' (DShK-type) heavy machine guns, B-10 recoilless rifles, rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs), hand grenades, and AK-47 assault rifles (ACJPS, 2011a, pp. 3–4). The escort apparently refrained from returning fire, and the governor took refuge in the nearby SAF camp and then returned to El Fasher without entering Shangal Tobay town. No one was killed in the incident, although local government sources report that at least one member of the convoy's escort was wounded.³⁰ Some civilians were also injured and four houses burnt as a result of the shooting.³¹

That night Minni Minawi's forces attacked the market area, looting shops, stealing livestock, and beating civilians.³² They also abducted Adam Mohamed Khalil, a prominent Tunjur who was a clerk at the traditional justice 'popular court' and an *ajwad* (an elder acting as mediator in local conflicts). Accused of collaboration with the government, he has not been seen since his abduction. Violent incidents lasted one week, until 20 December, extending to neighbouring villages, where livestock was looted and some non-Zaghawa civilians were reportedly killed (HRW, 2011a). Although a SAF camp is located only a few kilometres from Shangal Tobay town, it took until 20 December for SAF to deploy in the area, pushing the rebels out of populated areas to the mountains.

Meanwhile, significant political decisions were taken in El Fasher. According to an El Fasher politician from the ruling National Congress Party (NCP):

*after the incidents during his visit to Shangal Tobay, the governor decided a new strategy: there should be no more so-called 'liberated areas' controlled by rebels in eastern Darfur. All should be clearly under government control.*³³

From fighting the rebels to targeting Zaghawa civilians

From 20 December 2010 onwards, SAF units deployed from El Fasher began an offensive against rebel movements (principally the SLA-MM and SLA-Justice) in Dar-es-Salam locality and neighbouring South Darfur localities (ACJPS, 2011a, p. 4). According to sources from both sides, SAF deployed more than 100 vehicles, and the SLA-MM some 30. A Zaghawa witness who was in the Shangal Tobay area on 21 December reported seeing around 130 vehicles and four armed personnel carriers, supported by six aircraft (two Sukhoi jets, two

Antonovs, and two helicopter gunships).³⁴ After fighting in Khor Issa, south-east of Shangal Tobay, the rebels were forced to take refuge in the mountainous areas between Shangal Tobay and eastern Jebel Marra.³⁵

The rebels had not given up fighting, however. On 23 December SLA-MM elements attacked Dar-es-Salam and remained within the town for several hours. According to a government official, they targeted the CRP's position with 'heavy weapons' but spared civilians, although they reportedly shot in the air to frighten the population, causing most of Dar-es-Salam's residents to flee the town.³⁶ Only non-Zaghawa returned after a few days; fearing reprisals, the Zaghawa community was almost entirely displaced northwards towards Abu Zerega, Zam Zam camp for internally displaced persons (IDPs), and El Fasher (*Africa Confidential*, 2012, p. 9).

SAF also targeted Zaghawa civilians during its counterinsurgency operations. In the morning of 21 December, SAF took positions around Shangal Tobay Jedid ('new Shangal Tobay', a town founded by Zaghawa migrants close to Shangal Tobay) and the nearby IDP camp of Shangal Tobay (better known by its nickname, 'Naivasha').³⁷ They reportedly shot mainly in the air, provoking the flight of civilians. As one witness recalls:

*Some of them were saying: 'You Zaghawa, get out of the area, leave the country!' There were no rebels in our village, only civilians. For three days, they looted everything: beds, blankets, TVs, radios.*³⁸

According to another witness: '[T]he soldiers were breaking the doors and taking everything inside the houses. If they found you inside, they would beat you.'³⁹ Witnesses alleged that three military helicopters loaded some 1,000 sacks of sugar, and that SAF also attacked Zaghawa civilians who had fled into the bush, and took their belongings.

Some days later, Zaghawa civilians began to take refuge around the UNAMID camp in Shangal Tobay. After several weeks, new forces appeared in the area: newly formed militias recruited among non-Zaghawa men from the area and integrated into the Popular Defence Forces (PDF). The PDF are paramilitary forces that were officially established as early as 1989, following the coup that brought the National Islamic Front to power. Recruited notably among Darfuris

(Arabs and non-Arabs alike), the PDF were used extensively in *jihad* in South Sudan and the Nuba Mountains. In reaction to the Darfur rebellion, many tribal (mostly *abbala*) militias were integrated into the PDF as well as the Border Guard Units.⁴⁰

According to an El Fasher NCP politician, 'After the incidents of 14th December, the governor called on community leaders from Shangal Tobay to send people to El Fasher for training.'⁴¹ Once deployed in Shangal Tobay, these militias systematically harassed and intimidated Zaghawa civilians, preventing them from moving within the area (notably to return to their houses and to access the market), looting their property, burning houses, and arresting—and reportedly torturing, raping, and killing—some individuals.⁴² Both UNAMID (after having received a threatening letter from a prominent local leader) and non-governmental organizations decided to redeploy their Zaghawa staff elsewhere. Between February and early April, this harassment led almost all the Zaghawa who had remained in the Shangal Tobay area, including those who had gathered around the UNAMID camp, to leave the area for safer places farther north.

Similar ethnic targeting against the Zaghawa, including harassment, violence, and consequent displacement (forced and preventive), occurred throughout Dar-es-Salam locality, as well as in neighbouring She'eria, Khor Abeshe, and Khazzan Jedid areas in South Darfur (ACJPS, 2011a, pp. 3–4; HRW, 2011a; *Africa Confidential*, 2012, p. 9). In the latter areas, Bergid government-aligned militias had already been recruited since 2006, when the SLA-Free Will—a rebel faction recruiting among Bergid and Tunjur—signed the DPA and joined the Government of Sudan (GoS). Although politically aligned with the SLA-MM, these Bergid combatants were primarily opposed to the Zaghawa presence on their territory. Under the leadership of Ibrahim Suleiman 'Abu Dur', Bergid militias fought alongside SAF in December 2010 to expel both the SLA-MM and the Zaghawa population from Khor Abeshe. There was also fighting the same month against Bergid and Zaghawa militias in neighbouring She'eria (UNAMID, 2011c).

The targeting of Zaghawa has led to their displacement from villages in eastern Darfur, which were home to a large part of the Zaghawa communities that had migrated there during the 1970s and 1980s. Most have taken refuge in Zam Zam IDP camp, south of El Fasher—now the biggest IDP camp in Darfur,

with more than 120,000 individuals; others fled to the town of Abu Zerega, now the only major Zaghawa settlement south of El Fasher. With some 70,000 new IDPs (some of whom had already been displaced at the beginning of the conflict in 2003–05), this is one of the most significant displacements that Darfur has experienced since the most intense wave of violence of 2003–05 (AI, 2012, p. 7; *Africa Confidential*, 2012, p. 9; UNSC, 2012b, p. 22). Zaghawa communities that had settled south of Nyala and as far south as the border with South Sudan had already been displaced in 2006—to Nyala town and surrounding IDP camps, mainly by Arab proxy militias (Tubiana, 2008). While the government’s strategy may simply be to deprive Zaghawa rebels of the ability to operate outside of Dar Zaghawa, its effect is primarily, and perhaps irreversibly, to purify the ethnic map of Darfur.

In response, armed Zaghawa groups—including rebel movements and, in particular, the SLA-MM and SLA-Justice—have engaged in retaliatory acts against both armed forces (especially the newly constituted PDF militias) and civilians from non-Zaghawa tribes. These have included targeted murders and indiscriminate killings, the burning of houses, stealing of livestock, and other looting. In particular, members of local non-Zaghawa elites who were known to be supporters of anti-Zaghawa militias have been assassinated. In April 2011, Abderahman Ahmad ‘Baldo’, a wealthy *sheikh* from the Darok (Arabized) tribe, accused by the Zaghawa of recruiting militias in his village of Tom ad-Duesh, north of Shangal Tobay, was killed in his house at night, together with one of his relatives. The fact that this murder was reportedly committed with a ‘Dushka’ heavy machine gun mounted on one of two vehicles that were attacking the area indicates that it may have been committed by rebel fighters.

On 22 May, another wealthy notable known to be a supporter of the new PDF and to have relatives in the militia, Abdelmajid Ismaïl Adam Tibin ‘Kubrus’, a Tunjur trader from Shangal Tobay, was murdered while he was driving his commercial lorry on the road between Abu Zerega and Shangal Tobay. Around 20 attackers on three cars took some of the vehicle’s sugar cargo and its fuel. The PDF from Shangal Tobay arrived on the spot soon after the ambush, alerted by the only passenger of the lorry, who was injured during the attack. In retaliation, they burnt the village of Nyortik farther north on the road; the village had already been abandoned earlier in the year by its (Zaghawa) population.⁴³

The mass killing of May 2011

The murder of Abdelmajid Ismail triggered a major act of retaliation from the PDF. The event constituted the most violent act against the Zaghawa population, and arguably Darfur's most violent episode since the notorious attack on the Fur market of Tabara in Jebel Marra by Abbala militias in September 2010 (ACJPS, 2011b; AI, 2012, pp. 13–14; *Africa Confidential*, 2012, p. 10).

Nine days after the murder, PDF composed of Tunjur from Shangal Tobay—reportedly reinforced by Bergid militias from She'eria in South Darfur—launched raids to loot Zaghawa livestock in the Abu Zerega area. The Zaghawa community of Abu Zerega responded in the traditional way, mobilizing several hundred civilians (including some women and children) into a *faza'* (a posse to recover stolen livestock) (*Africa Confidential*, 2012, p. 10; USIP, forthcoming).

Armed with some guns but mostly with spears and sticks, the *faza'* reached the PDF looters and fired on them to recuperate some of the livestock (ACJPS, 2011b). The *faza'* was, however, forced to retreat as the PDF received reinforcements: one of their own vehicles based in Shangal Tobay, as well as at least seven cars mounted with heavy machine guns (reportedly 'Dushkas') from the army camp in Shangal Tobay, and aerial support sent from El Fasher, whose intervention was reportedly limited to firing a small number of air-to-ground rockets to open a passage for PDF encircled by the *faza'* (AI, 2012, p. 13; *Africa Confidential*, 2012, p. 10). Four members of the *faza'* were killed in fighting with the PDF, and 20 others were subsequently arrested by SAF and PDF forces while retreating to Abu Zerega (AI, 2012, p. 13; *Africa Confidential*, 2012, p. 10; USIP, forthcoming). Seventeen of these were executed shortly afterwards, reportedly by the PDF alone, while the three others appear to have been saved thanks to their arrest by SAF, which transported them immediately to the army base at Shangal Tobay, where they were jailed (AI, 2012, p. 13; *Africa Confidential*, 2012, p. 10).

The North Darfur governorate subsequently formed an investigative committee, which travelled to the sites of the executions just days later, on 5 June. The committee found that the 17 victims had been executed with AK-type assault rifles as well as heavier weapons—Goryunov and 'Dushka' heavy machine guns mounted on vehicles (GoS, 2011). At the site of the executions, the committee found ammunition from these weapons, as well as unexploded

RPG shells, and concluded that the ‘unarmed’ victims had been tied and ‘killed without a fight by vehicles carrying RPGs, “Dushkas”, and Goronovs [*sic*], which means that a powerful force took part in the operation’ (GoS, 2011).⁴⁴

It appears that shortly before the arrival of the investigation committee, most of the bodies had been removed from the execution sites, but the committee reported that signs of 14 bodies were still visible on the ground. The PDF had apparently had no time to remove three further bodies, which were identified and buried by the committee (*Africa Confidential*, 2012, p. 10; USIP, forthcoming).⁴⁵ The committee also found the body of an 18th Zaghawa civilian, who had been killed on the road while driving a donkey cart and whose body had been burnt along with neighbouring houses (GoS, 2011).⁴⁶ The three remaining civilians in SAF custody were released by the committee (*Africa Confidential*, 2012, p. 10; USIP, forthcoming; GoS, 2011).

The Tunjur leadership and the local PDF viewed the government committee with hostility. Two major Tunjur figures, a traditional leader and a politician, declined to participate in the investigation (USIP, forthcoming). Although the committee was escorted by SAF, police, and National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) personnel, the PDF itself fired on the committee’s convoy on its way to the Shangal Tobay army camp. The committee as a whole decided not to travel into Shangal Tobay town itself, and the commissioner of Dar-es-Salam locality, who had joined the committee on its way, proceeded on his own with a security escort.

During this visit, the commissioner and the accompanying security forces witnessed, and were unable to prevent, the execution of a 19th Zaghawa civilian. Mohamed Saleh Haroun, who had witnessed the killings of 31 May and was acting as a guide for the committee, was taken out of the commissioner’s car by PDF members in the PDF headquarters in Shangal Tobay town and executed at point-blank range with three bullets, according to the commissioner’s own account to the committee (ACJPS, 2011b; GoS, 2011; *Africa Confidential*, 2012, p. 11).⁴⁷

As a consequence, several leaders of the Shangal Tobay PDF were arrested at the committee’s behest (*Africa Confidential*, 2012, p. 11; USIP, forthcoming). Among those arrested were Abubakar Saleh Yahya (of the Berti tribe), the local coordinator of the PDF, and Al-Fadel Ibrahim Abdelaziz (a Tunjur), a local PDF leader in charge of administration and the police, and a relative of the late

Abdelmajid Ismail, who was killed on 22 May. Tunjur authorities criticized both the committee's work and these arrests, labelling the victim of the murder a 'rebel' and a 'livestock rustler'. However, Shangal Tobay *shartay* Adam Abbakar Rashid, an open supporter of the local PDF, stated that:

*even if Mohamed Saleh Haroun was a criminal, they committed a very big mistake killing him in front of the commissioner, and it is normal that they are held accountable for what they did.*⁴⁸

The Zaghawa retaliation

The government committee's efforts to secure a judicial settlement of the conflict did not prevent yet another iteration of the cycle of violence. According to local leaders and witnesses, during the evening and night of 17 June, Shangal Tobay town was attacked by a force of at least eight vehicles mounted with machine guns and equipped with RPGs and B-10 recoilless rifles, together with around 100 men on camels. Some 150 houses were burnt, shops and livestock looted, and 19 people killed (including 13 civilians, 3 army soldiers, and 3 PDF) and some 35 injured (AI, 2012, p. 15; USIP, forthcoming).

The presence of vehicles armed with heavy weapons is a clear indication that rebel forces were involved. Zaghawa intellectuals close to the SLA-MM agreed with Tunjur leaders that SLA-MM elements, and perhaps also rebels from other movements, probably participated in the attack.⁴⁹ The attackers on camels seem to have included civilians and rebels. Witnesses said they identified both the leader of the vehicle convoy and the leader of the camel-mounted force as SLA-MM members from Shangal Tobay; they also quoted the latter as stating publicly that the attack had been an act of retaliation.⁵⁰ Similarly, a rebel commander defined this attack as an act of *sad at-tar*, or violent revenge.⁵¹ After the attack, a Tunjur traditional leader implicitly recognized that the Zaghawa had been engaged in retaliatory actions for acts committed by the Tunjur militias when he declared:

*We are also able to revenge. With one phone call you can get a vehicle. We can also make our own gangs and loot. We will start to have our own vehicles, the PDF will get more cars from the government. We already started calling each other, mobilizing the tribe. We have the right to defend ourselves!*⁵²

After this attack the area appears to have been relatively peaceful during the second half of 2011. Yet both sides remain oriented towards retaliation rather than reconciliation, and efforts to resolve the situation, notably by the Zaghawa and Tunjur communities in Khartoum, seem to have borne little fruit so far. Both the attack on Shangal Tobay and the arrests of the PDF leaders have made the Tunjur feel that they were not fully supported by the government. However, these developments did not put an end to the Tunjur leadership's strategy of mobilizing militias and seeking government support. The Tunjur have also continued to express vocal opposition to the return of the Zaghawa IDPs. 'It is impossible for the Zaghawa to return to Shangal Tobay,' argues one Tunjur traditional leader. 'I don't think they will come back because they committed many crimes and we're very angry.'⁵³

Yet more violence took place in February and March 2012. In a statement issued on 23 February, the SLA-MM claims to have killed 12 SAF soldiers and captured equipment in an attack on Alaona area in Dar-es-Salam locality. SAF confirmed the violence but accused SLA-MM forces of killing six civilians and injuring another four, burning three houses, and destroying water pumps (Radio Dabanga, 2012b). On the night of 7 March Bergid militias from She'eria in South Darfur, led by Ibrahim Suleiman 'Abu Dur', attacked the area of Shangal Tobay in North Darfur as well as the neighbouring areas of Abu Hamra and Um Nigayla in South Darfur. Two Zaghawa men were reportedly killed and livestock looted (*Hurriyat*, 2012).

The conflict in At-Taweisha area

In September 2011, attacks by newly formed non-Arab militias extended to the area around At-Taweisha, in the south-eastern corner of North Darfur state. This area constitutes the southern part of Dar Berti, the homeland of the Berti (non-Arab) ethnic group—that of Governor Kibir, who hails from At-Taweisha himself. Like other areas of eastern Darfur, the territory around At-Taweisha was settled by many Zaghawa from northern Darfur during waves of drought-driven migration; part of the area was previously controlled by the SLA-MM (particularly the area of Haskanita, south of At-Taweisha), while JEM was increasingly active there in 2010–11. Thus it was of primary importance for Governor Kibir to reassert his authority in this part of North Darfur.

On 2 September 2011, Kibir visited Am Sauna, an important mixed Berti-Zaghawa community south of At-Taweisha at the border with South Darfur. According to a witness, he was escorted by 20 vehicles of the PDF based in At-Taweisha and accompanied by the Berti *nazer* (paramount traditional leader) of At-Taweisha, Saddiq Abbas Daw-al-Beit, as well as the Berti *shartay* of Al Lait Jar-en-Nebi, south-east of At-Taweisha. At a public meeting, Kibir reportedly said: 'Zaghawa are with the rebels. I don't need any Zaghawa in this area. They have 72 hours to leave.' After his speech, the governor oversaw the recruitment of 47 PDF from the Berti of Am Sauna, giving each an AK-type rifle and SDG 1,150 (USD 430). In the words of one witness: 'I saw Kibir standing, the *nazer* on his side. He gave a gun to each PDF, he gave money to each, and they said "Allah akbar!" We Zaghawa were very angry.'⁵⁴

On 3 September, the governor's convoy proceeded to Usban and Koroya Leben, two villages with important Zaghawa communities north of Am Sauna, where he held similar meetings, again demanding that the Zaghawa leave within 72 hours.

On 6–7 September, most Zaghawa left the area between Koroya Leben and Am Sauna, some on the back of pick-up trucks, others on donkeys and camels, for Ghibeish in Kordofan. Those displaced were estimated at more than 600 families, the majority of whom came from Am Sauna.⁵⁵ They were only able to stay a few days in Ghibeish, where local government and traditional authorities of the Hamar Arab tribe declined them hospitality and gave them five days to leave the area.

A delegation of traditional leaders and *aayan* (elders) from Ed Da'ain in South Darfur⁵⁶ then travelled to Ghibeish; the group comprised both Rizeigat Arabs (for whom Ed Da'ain is the main centre) and members of Zaghawa communities who had migrated there in the 1970s and 1980s. With the support of the respected Rizeigat *nazer* Saïd Mahmoud Musa Madibbo, who has consistently acted independently from the government, they proposed to Ghibeish local authorities that the Zaghawa IDPs should be welcomed in Dar Rizeigat, in the name of the good Rizeigat-Zaghawa relations in the area. Despite Ghibeish authorities' reported reluctance, the Zaghawa IDPs moved to Ed Da'ain, where the Rizeigat *nazer* gave them an area in the existing IDP camp of Al Nim. Others went to Nyala and to Zam Zam camp south of El Fasher.⁵⁷

Yet some Zaghawa herders had stayed with livestock in the Koroya Leben area. On 8 September the PDF attempted to disarm those herders and looted livestock. On 11 September, the PDF burnt the houses of Koroya Leben, Usban, and Am Sauna as well as smaller Zaghawa settlements in the area.⁵⁸

The role of armed actors

The establishment of new PDF units in eastern Darfur

In contrast to the militias that were created at the beginning of the conflict in 2003, the various PDF units established in eastern Darfur—mainly at the end of 2010—were generally recruited among small, non-Arab groups; these units became the chief perpetrators of recent anti-Zaghawa attacks. More specifically, these groups are considered the ‘indigenous’ and ‘landowning’ tribes or first settlers of this part of Darfur, to which the paramount traditional leaders (and generally landowners) of this area belong. They include the Berti (mostly in At-Taweisha area), the Bergid (in She’eria, Khor Abeshe, and Khazzan Jedid as well as Shangal Tobay, Dar-es-Salam, and At-Taweisha), the Tunjur (in Shangal Tobay), the Mima (in Wada’a, Am Dresaya, and Dar-es-Salam), and some others—but not the Zaghawa. As a traditional leader said when justifying the formation of the PDF:

Those are the citizens who, after SLA-MM left, asked the government to train their sons to keep the security. Now you hear ‘militias, militias’, but they’re awlad al bilad (sons of the country), and owners of the land.⁵⁹

In Korma and Tawila areas west of El Fasher, Tunjur and Fur traditional leaders are said to have refused calls from the North Darfur governorate to mobilize militias. Similarly, Fur IDPs of Shangal Tobay area declined to take part in the conflict with the Zaghawa. *Abbala* leaders—who had already mobilized in 2003–04 and had often been disappointed by the government’s failure to fulfil its promises (to the point that some had joined rebel groups)—also refused to mobilize against the Zaghawa, with the exception of the Ereigat community of Ab Dileig, between El Fasher and Dar-es-Salam.

Unlike the former Arab proxy forces, the new non-Arab militias are not referred to as ‘janjaweed’ but simply as *milishiyat*⁶⁰ or *milishiyat Kibir*—after the governor of North Darfur, himself a Berti and one of the main supporters of the non-Arab PDF active in North Darfur, particularly in his area of At-Taweisha.

Governor Kibir and other officials in the North Darfur government and the NCP, as well as major traditional leaders from non-Arab non-Zaghawa tribes, started to mobilize kinsmen shortly after the departure of the SLA-MM in late 2010. In Dar-es-Salam the recruitment of 100 men started in mid-January 2011, at the initiative of local traditional leaders who met Governor Kibir in El Fasher several times during this period. Recruitment began in Shangal Tobay area at the same time, after an initial demand in December 2010 from members of the local non-Zaghawa traditional authorities and elites, who went as a delegation to Governor Kibir in El Fasher and obtained his backing to form a 300-strong PDF unit stationed in Shangal Tobay and neighbouring Am Dresaya. The Tunjur *shartay* of Shangal Tobay, Adam Abbakar Rashid, and some of the non-Zaghawa *omdas* under his authority also began to mobilize their communities, both directly through public calls and through their traditional war leaders (*agid*). In mid-January 2011, ‘recruitment’ ceremonies took place on the same day in both Shangal Tobay and Am Dresaya and were attended by Governor Kibir (*Africa Confidential*, 2012, p. 11; USIP, forthcoming). The Shangal Tobay PDF exist alongside an additional ‘reserve’ force of several hundred men (possibly more than 500), who are largely autonomous from the PDF, although at least some of them appear to coordinate with the PDF. The traditional authorities, including both the official native administration and the *agid*, are largely responsible for directing the reserves. Unlike the formal PDF, these forces do not receive arms, ammunition, salaries, or training from the government; only some (reportedly one-quarter) have firearms, purchased on the informal market, notably from rebel areas in eastern Jebel Marra.⁶¹ After the events of December 2010, however, through the mediation of the native administration, they received licences from government authorities to possess their guns. A small number have been integrated into the PDF, and more would probably like to join (USIP, forthcoming).

In She’eria, Khor Abeshe, and Khazzan Jedid areas, Bergid militias had already been constituted prior to 2011 under the leadership of Ibrahim ‘Abu Dur’.

Some of these have joined or supported the newly formed PDF in Shangal Tobay, Dar-es-Salam, and At-Taweisha areas.

In At-Taweisha area at least 200 people, mostly from the Berti tribe but also some Bergid originally from She'eria, were recruited in April 2011, with some new recruits following in September. Among those instrumental in this recruitment was Adam Ahmad Abdelqader 'Nyor', the PDF coordinator in North Darfur, who comes from a Jawama Arab family of Dar Berti (mixed with the Berti tribe).⁶² In May 2011, a Zaghawa politician witnessed a phone conversation between 'Nyor' and a North Darfur government official, during which 'Nyor' stated that he was recruiting PDF in At-Taweisha area, particularly among the Berti tribe, and from all tribes in the area except the Zaghawa.⁶³ The Berti *nazer* of At-Taweisha, Saddiq Abbas Daw-al-Beit, also seems to have played an important role in the mobilization, together with traditional leaders under him and some of his relatives.⁶⁴

New PDF recruits have been mainly trained by SAF instructors in Dar al Arkam camp in El Fasher. The militias from Dar-es-Salam and At-Taweisha received 15 days of training in January as well as in May 2011.⁶⁵ In January–February 2011, Shangal Tobay PDF had a more extensive training of between 30 and 45 days. After the training, every recruit was provided with an AK-type assault rifle, 60 rounds of ammunition, a SAF uniform, and a PDF ID card issued in Khartoum. More than 100 PDF were also trained to use heavier weapons in the Shangal Tobay army camp in early 2011. In August 2011—after the mass executions of May and the subsequent raid on Shangal Tobay—Shangal Tobay PDF members were reportedly given an additional three weeks of training at the same SAF base, including in legal issues and the use of some heavy weapons.⁶⁶ While the legal training may indicate that the government disapproves of the abuses committed by the PDF, the training in heavy weapons may be a reaction to the fact that the PDF were unable to protect Shangal Tobay on 17 June.

Even before this training, although armed mostly with AK-type assault rifles, the new PDF were also given some heavier weapons and vehicles. In At-Taweisha, the PDF were equipped in August 2011—just prior to the expulsion of the Zaghawa population—with 20 Land Cruisers mounted with 'Dushka' heavy machine guns and B-10 recoilless rifles.⁶⁷ The Shangal Tobay and neigh-

bouring Am Dresaya PDF each received one vehicle, with most of their members moving on foot. They were also given some RPGs, 'Dushkas', and Goryunovs (AI, 2012).

After the 17 June attack the Shangal Tobay security committee, which includes major non-Zaghawa traditional and political leaders, renewed its demand to the government for the PDF to receive more vehicles and heavier weapons, and for additional PDF to be recruited. They also drew lessons from the 31 May execution, as evidenced by their call for more training as well as the deployment of official state forces, which they considered more disciplined, better trained, better equipped, and more efficient, such as the army, police, and CRP.⁶⁸

The government had already agreed in January 2011 to recruit 100 more local men to be integrated into the CRP, alongside the 300 PDF members. The traditional and local authorities selected these CRP recruits in the presence of the locality commissioner, after a public call by the local *agid*. In May the recruits left for three months' training in Khartoum; since then, their number has reportedly increased to 250 men.⁶⁹

Although some Shangal Tobay leaders recognize that forces from outside the area might be less inclined to become involved in local tribal conflicts, most still seem to advocate an increased militarization of local communities, as in many other parts of Darfur. As one traditional leader maintained: 'It's better to train our people and give them strong weapons, because other people won't protect the land and the population well. Troops from outside don't care.'⁷⁰

The ambiguous role of the government

The government played an ambiguous role in the 2010–12 violence in eastern Darfur. Its attempts to expel rebels from the area, backed by the army and air force, led to attacks and abuses against Zaghawa civilians (AI, 2012, p. 9; *Africa Confidential*, 2012, p. 11). Government officials and members of the native administration⁷¹ were instrumental in the formation of the PDF, which also committed abuses against the Zaghawa population. Yet other government officials and native administrators clearly opposed this policy and attempted to contain the violence, albeit with limited success. Like the *abbala* 'janjaweed' militias since the beginning of the war, some of which even took to attacking army convoys, the new PDF appear at times to be out of the control of their government mentors and to pursue their own local agenda.

The link between SAF and the newly formed PDF is nonetheless clear. While local traditional leaders play an important role, the PDF are officially under the formal and official command of SAF officers. In Shangal Tobay the force is under the responsibility of a SAF first lieutenant and his deputy, a lieutenant, both of whom are from outside Darfur and under the authority of Maj. Mohamed Bashar, SAF commander in Shangal Tobay; the major is a member of the Bergid, a tribe involved in the conflict (*Africa Confidential*, 2012, p. 11). PDF coordinators and commanders below those SAF officers are local and have been deeply involved in the tribal conflicts, in some cases long before their integration into the PDF. In the words of one SAF officer: 'PDF are regular forces. Everything is the responsibility of the state.'⁷² This view is echoed by an *agid*, who explained the reluctance of his men to join the PDF as follows: 'When you're in the PDF, 24 hours a day, you belong to the government, you have to get permission from the government to do anything.'⁷³

PDF members receive arms, uniforms, ID cards, and salaries from SAF. In theory, the Shangal Tobay PDF receive a monthly salary of approximately SDG 400 (USD 150) for a non-officer, close to that paid in the army or the police, although local leaders cited salaries of less than half this sum.⁷⁴ In Dar-es-Salam, the PDF reportedly do not receive a government salary, but only financial support (less than SDG 50, or USD 20, per month per soldier) and food from the traditional authorities, which have gathered contributions from the civilian population, with each family asked to pay SDG 2 (USD 0.75) per month. In various places, it appears that the PDF are only paid occasionally, as when they are asked to take part in military operations, such as in the case of Am Sauna.⁷⁵

The May 2011 executions, and the subsequent murder of a Zaghawa civilian in front of the locality commissioner and other authorities, raise serious questions about the effectiveness of government and SAF control over the PDF. The government's investigation committee report concludes that 'the Popular Defence Forces in the area do not subordinate to any authority from the army, the Locality and even [North Darfur] State' and thus recommends 'to control the Popular Defence Forces in the area and put them under the control of the armed forces' (GoS, 2011).⁷⁶

These strong recommendations from a government committee, as well as the subsequent arrest of several PDF leaders, are unusual in the context of the

war in Darfur. While this may not necessarily indicate a genuine commitment to end impunity for government-backed forces in Darfur,⁷⁷ it suggests growing disagreement among government officials and supporters over the issue. The position of the commissioner of Dar-es-Salam locality, Abdulillah Banaga, is a case in point. Even before the murder of Mohamed Saleh Haroun, which seriously challenged his authority, the commissioner was described by both sides as opposed to the formation of the new PDF. A local government official said that in early 2011:

*the commissioner clearly indicated that the PDF should not be a long-term solution and should be dissolved as soon as the situation improves. In the long run, he prefers the regular police. This approach is badly perceived in Shangal Tobay, where people dislike him and accuse him of being a Zaghawa agent. Because of this Abdulillah can't visit Shangal Tobay.*⁷⁸

In early 2011 the commissioner ordered the arrests of Dar-es-Salam PDF members for alleged livestock rustling. During the same period, SAF officers arrested Shangal Tobay PDF members accused of murder. In both cases, other authorities ordered the release of some of the suspects citing armed forces' immunity. It has been said that Governor Kibir himself disagreed with the commissioner over this issue. Non-Zaghawa local authorities also displeased Abdulillah by advocating against the return of the Zaghawa IDPs.⁷⁹

At the time of writing, however, neither the disapproval of the commissioner and other officials, nor the arrests of some PDF leaders and the government committee's recommendations seem to have resulted in stronger control over the PDF or in legal action against those suspected of criminal acts. The raids around At-Taweisha in late 2011 show that recruitment and abuses have continued.

The failure of UNAMID

In March 2012, a UN official observed:

*The most disturbing question is where UNAMID is in this. Like the army garrison, UNAMID has a strong military presence in Shangal Tobay and there is no way that they could not have heard the shooting [of 31 May].*⁸⁰

Indeed, UNAMID's Shangal Tobay camp is no more than 2 km from one of the 31 May execution sites (GoS, 2011). Eastern Darfur has the highest concentration of UNAMID camps in the mission's whole area of operation. In several cases—including the Shangal Tobay and Khor Abeshe attacks—abuses against civilians, looting, and burning of property occurred in the immediate vicinity of UNAMID positions. UNAMID has been largely unable to protect the victims of such abuses, or to ensure the safety of approximately 5,000 and 15,000 civilians who sought its protection by gathering around UNAMID camps in Shangal Tobay and Khor Abeshe, respectively (UNSC, 2012b, p. 21). These civilians were eventually forced to flee these sites (close to their villages and farms) for more remote locations. Those who stayed in the 'security perimeter' of the UNAMID camp at Shangal Tobay between December 2010 and April 2011 were victims of repeated harassment by the PDF in front of UNAMID troops. One IDP reported: 'Every morning, some PDF in uniforms, including Al-Fadel [Ibrahim Abdelaziz] came with guns on a Tico [car] shouting at us: "This is our area and you should leave!"'⁸¹

During this period, joint PDF and SAF troops twice tried to enter the UNAMID security perimeter with the aim of arresting some of the IDPs and possibly to disperse the rest, accusing UNAMID of hosting their enemies and threatening to attack the camp. UNAMID succeeded in preventing the violent dispersal of the IDP settlement, but was unable to keep them from arresting, beating, raping, and reportedly killing some IDPs in front of the camp (AI, 2012, p. 12).

UNAMID responded slowly to the chain of retaliatory killings that followed, in particular the May 2011 executions. The first visit of UNAMID's Human Rights Section to the area took place on 12 and 13 June, almost two weeks after the executions and a full week after the government committee's investigation, by which time much evidence, including the bodies of the victims found by the committee, was no longer present. A UNAMID code-cable released on 24 June concludes that people had been 'allegedly killed/disappeared' (*Africa Confidential*, 2012, p. 12). As a result, contrary to the government's own investigation, the July report of the UN Secretary-General to the Security Council on UNAMID did not describe the events as executions, but rather as deaths in the course of fighting. The report states: 'A UNAMID verification team established that an unarmed sheikh was killed in the fighting and that there is a strong

possibility at least four other civilians were killed' (UNSC, 2011). Yet a UN official describes this assessment as 'a completely distorted account of facts. I am afraid of an attempt to cover up. The killing happened in front of their soldiers' noses!'⁸²

Citing UNAMID sources, the January 2012 report of the UN Panel of Experts on the Sudan simply states that 'more than 10 civilians were killed in Shangil Tobaya in June 2011' (UNSC, 2012b, p. 22). This account does not seem to distinguish between the execution of Zaghawa civilians and the retaliatory armed group attack, nor does it mention that one of those incidents was an execution of Zaghawa civilians.⁸³

UNAMID's public literature also downplays the intensity of the violence in eastern Darfur and does not reflect the specific targeting of the Zaghawa population. For example, UNAMID's magazine published an interview with the *shartay* of Shangal Tobaya (a key and open supporter of the PDF, as described above) under the title 'Shangil Tobaya: A Town of Social Harmony' in February 2011, at a time when some of the most intense displacements of the Zaghawa population by the PDF were taking place. In response to the question, 'There has been some fighting lately in Shangil Tobaya that has been of concern. What exactly happened there?', *shartay* Adam Abbakar Rashid is quoted as simply replying: 'I cannot say whether or not the attack was organized against certain groups as I wasn't in the place when the attack happened, but during armed conflict anything can be expected' (UNAMID, 2011a).⁸⁴

Such reporting only serves to fuel widely held suspicions by Darfuris within and outside Darfur that UNAMID is biased towards the government. These suspicions have been fuelled further by the fact that the 17 June attack on Shangal Tobaya by armed Zaghawa was described more accurately in the Secretary-General's report and in other UN documents (UNSC, 2011; Lynch, 2012). UNAMID thus faces criticism and suspicion from both sides; Shangal Tobaya leaders also criticized UNAMID for failing to react to the 17 June attack. Indeed, prominent PDF supporters have justified the formation of the PDF by invoking UNAMID's failures to protect non-Zaghawa civilians from the SLA-MM and other rebel groups' attacks and abuses, both during the SLA-MM's time with the government and afterwards. In the words of one PDF leader, 'the PDF could be seen as a result of the inefficiency of UNAMID'.⁸⁵ 🗨️

II. Tactics and technologies in the Darfur conflict

The military operations described in the previous section indicate that, while the ethnic and political dynamics of the Darfur conflict may have changed, its tactics and technologies have remained essentially the same. Whereas the Sudan Armed Forces appear to have moved heavier military assets into Darfur, including newly acquired attack aircraft and armoured vehicles, the fighting continues to be characterized by an asymmetry between highly mobile rebel ground forces on the one hand and, on the other, Sudanese government forces. Since the start of the conflict, government forces have been heavily reliant on air power, which they use to attack both rebel forces and civilian settlements perceived as pro-rebel (see Box 1).⁸⁶ Although rebel forces lost control in 2010 of

Box 1 **Airstrikes and aerial bombardment in Darfur since mid-2010**

Reports and verified instances of aerial bombing⁸⁷ in Darfur indicate that military activity has not disappeared from any of Darfur's (formerly three, now five) states. The UN Security Council's absolute prohibition on offensive military flights in Darfur⁸⁸ continues to be openly violated without any serious repercussion, in full view of international observers, including the UN–AU peacekeeping forces that share the airport facilities in Darfur's state capitals, from which most SAF military sorties fly.⁸⁹

Nonetheless, despite the geographical dispersal of aerial operations and relatively inaccurate bombing techniques, the GoS does not use aerial bombing entirely indiscriminately, or simply to terrorize or intimidate populations across Darfur as a whole. Rather, these operations appear to follow a range of tactical approaches, albeit with little regard for standards of international humanitarian law:

- In some cases, SAF bombing appears to have been based on fairly accurate information regarding the presence and movement of rebel forces; others have targeted SPLA military positions that technically constituted territorial incursions into Darfur. There were also a series of airstrikes in 2010–12 within the undisputed territory of South Sudan, as discussed in Section III.⁹⁰ For example, JEM members have admitted that they were present in the Kiir Adem area—site of a strategically important bridge over the Kiir–Bahr al Arab river and the major road between South Darfur and South Sudan—during the well-publicized SAF bombing between 11 and 24 November 2010 (AP, 2010; Enough, 2010).⁹¹ The Kiir Adem airstrikes clearly lacked discrimination, using ▶

- ▶ unguided explosive weapons to strike an area in which both civilians and soldiers were present. They also injured three children, one of whom was subsequently found dead; these children had been living in the encampment of soldiers' families, near the SPLA position at the bridge.⁹² The target was nonetheless evidently an SPLA base rather than a civilian settlement; the base was located on the southern bank of the river but 14 miles north of the South Sudan–South Darfur border, following the Munro–Wheatley line drawn in 1924.⁹³
- In other cases, SAF bombings appear to be aimed at the alleged positions of rebel forces following specific attacks, but these also encompass associated civilian settlements that are suspected of providing support for the insurgency and therefore of playing an active role in the conflict. In this context, the line between non-discrimination and collective punishment may be blurred. One such example was the 'Antonov'⁹⁴ bombardment of the predominantly Zaghawa village of Khair Wajid near Labado in South Darfur on 26 March 2011, which injured 16 civilians (AI, 2012). Following the attack, a GoS military intelligence officer explicitly stated that the bombardment had been in retaliation for an attack the previous day on a bus carrying military and civilian personnel in a neighbouring village. The GoS alleged that the bus incident, which had left one soldier dead and two others abducted, had been carried out by SLA-MM personnel, believed by SAF to have been harboured by Khair Wajid's civilian inhabitants.
 - Finally, some SAF bombing *does* appear to target purely civilian settlements deliberately, with the aim of intimidating or displacing populations believed to be supportive of or identified with rebel forces. These include numerous airstrikes and bombardments backing PDF ground attacks on predominately Zaghawa villages in eastern Darfur. The prevalence of direct-fire rocket attacks on civilian villages by helicopters and ground-attack aircraft, rather than simply 'dumb' Antonov bombardment, suggests that SAF's strategy entails the targeting of civilians rather than indiscriminate bombardment (*Africa Confidential*, 2012).

In all these cases, the bombing technology itself contributes to the inherent lack of discrimination in an environment in which mobile rebel forces, conventional military positions, and civilian villages—and the people in all three groups—are intermingled. SAF airstrikes have often combined the use of direct-fire S5- and S8-type rockets (typically delivered by SAF Mi-24 attack helicopters and Sukhoi-25 ground attack aircraft) with 'dumb' aircraft bombs. The latter are sometimes commercially fabricated, but with lugs removed to allow them to be rolled from an aircraft's cargo door;⁹⁵ others are even cruder, 'craft-made' shrapnel-filled barrel bombs,⁹⁶ dropped at high altitudes from Antonov 24/26 aircraft (UNSC, 2012b; *Africa Confidential*, 2012).⁹⁷

In short, SAF's acquisition of comparatively sophisticated ground attack aircraft in 2008–10, and the easy availability of ordnance for them,⁹⁸ have in no way constrained its use of crude and inherently indiscriminate 'Second World War' bombing tactics or reliance on an antiquated fleet of originally civilian Antonov aircraft. This appears to be a tactical choice rather than an exigency of supply or technology constraints.

significant areas of Darfur—particularly those previously held by JEM around Jebel Mun and elsewhere in West Darfur—and despite some progress at the Doha peace negotiations, these familiar conflict tactics have continued relatively unmodified, even in areas that are now under GoS control.

In addition to the wave of violence across eastern Darfur described above, ground-based fighting and aerial bombardment have continued into 2012 in the remaining Sudan Liberation Army-Abdul Wahid (SLA-AW) stronghold of Jebel Marra (UNAMID, 2012), which has become largely inaccessible to international actors, including UNAMID.⁹⁹ New fighting also reportedly broke out against JEM forces around Ba'ashim, north of El Fasher, in early March 2012 (Reuters, 2012).¹⁰⁰ In addition, the Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF) claimed clashes took place in Gereida (South Darfur) in early May 2012—when the SLA-AW and SLA-MM took control of the town for 48 hours (*Sudan Tribune*, 2012e; Radio Dabanga, 2012c).¹⁰¹

This section shows how these tactics have continued to rely upon weapons and weapons systems sustained by a now-familiar constellation of international suppliers. In particular, Belarus, China, and the Russian Federation have continued to supply arms to Khartoum, even though the UN Panel of Experts and non-governmental organizations have presented robust evidence that arms supplied in previous years by these states have been rapidly transferred and used in Darfur. Indeed, one significant feature of arms used in Darfur since 2010 has been the prevalence of recently delivered weapons, including newly manufactured small arms and light weapons ammunition, in use by both SAF and allied militia forces (UNSC, 2011; 2012b; AI, 2012; *Africa Confidential*, 2012).

Ironically, arms supplied to the Government of Sudan have also long been a major source of equipment for non-state armed groups on all sides, as indicated by commonalities between SAF arms and ammunition holdings and those of JEM, Chadian armed opposition groups, and some dissident militias formerly allied with the government (Lewis, 2009, pp. 51–52). In a mobile war in which all sides routinely measure military strength in terms of cars as much as men or weapons, and in which all armed actors' ground forces use essentially the same suite of easily transported equipment (Toyota Land Cruiser and Hilux vehicles, and largely Soviet-calibre small arms and light weapons), mili-

Box 2 **UN sanctions on Darfur: an inadequate—and largely ignored—set of tools**

The sanctions regime: an overview

The international sanctions architecture on Sudan was first established by UN Security Council Resolution 1556, adopted in July 2004. This resolution demanded that the GoS ‘fulfil its commitments to disarm the Janjaweed militias’ and established a ban on supplies of arms and related materiel to ‘non-governmental entities and individuals, including the Janjaweed’ operating in North, South, and West Darfur (UNSC, 2004). By referring to ‘janjaweed’, the Security Council meant to include GoS-supported groups, yet the vague phrasing made it possible for the GoS to argue that the embargo did not cover state-backed militias.

In the absence of tangible improvements in Darfur, the Security Council reshaped the sanctions regime in March 2005 with the adoption of Resolution 1591, which extended the arms embargo and the ban of military assistance to all parties to the N’Djamena Ceasefire Agreement (AU, 2004)—thus including the Sudanese national security forces and any other belligerents operating in the three states of Darfur. This resolution also established a Sanctions Committee with a mandate to monitor the implementation of the sanctions regime, to designate individuals to be subject to targeted sanctions, to consider requests submitted by the Government of Sudan for movement of military equipment and supplies to Darfur,¹⁰² and to appoint a Panel of Experts to assist the Committee’s work. Importantly, Resolution 1591 also established a prohibition on offensive military flights in and over the Darfur states (UNSC, 2005a).

In parallel, the Council of the European Union (EU) integrated the UN sanctions—and, in particular, its exemptions on assistance and supplies provided in support of the implementation of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA)—to its existing regime of restrictive measures on Sudan, which had first been imposed in March 1994 (CEU, 1994). The EU embargo, however, covers the entirety of Sudanese territory rather than just the Darfur states (CEU, 2005).¹⁰³

In April 2006, the Security Council slightly enlarged the scope of the sanctions regime, while also adopting targeted sanctions—a travel ban and the freezing of personal assets held outside Sudan—against four individuals (UNSC, 2006b). After the establishment of this initial list of individual sanctions, the architecture of the regime remained unchanged until October 2010, when Resolution 1945 was adopted. In response to robust evidence that weapons supplied lawfully to Khartoum were being moved with impunity into Darfur, Resolution 1945 introduced a requirement for states to seek end-user documentation for all arms exported to the whole of Sudan; this measure was designed to prevent their deployment in contravention of resolutions 1556 and 1591 (UNSC, 2010a).

Ineffective sanctions: a breakdown

A review of the impact of several years of UN sanctions on Sudan raises fundamental concerns about the appropriateness and effectiveness of the existing embargo. This analysis questions not only whether the embargo can indeed function as an effective mechanism to prevent arms supplies to Darfur, but also whether it can serve as a political tool to mitigate the development of Darfur’s conflict dynamics and to change the behaviour of the armed actors targeted by the sanctions.

Publicly available Panel of Experts' reports and other studies on Darfur have documented numerous violations of every provision established by the Security Council since 2005, by both the GoS and armed groups. The arms embargo and other sanctions measures are easily and regularly breached. None of the measures—whether on arms, aviation, or individuals—has actually prevented the activity each is intended to stop.

Furthermore, while some parts of Sudan have experienced a relative reduction of violence in recent years, the conflict as a whole has continued to evolve and is far from approaching a sustainable resolution. Threats to regional stability are still present (if not enlarged), and vulnerable local communities—some newly displaced during 2011—continue to bear the high humanitarian cost of the conflict. These factors point not only towards the failed or partial implementation of the UN sanctions regime, but also, more importantly, to its ineffectiveness as a broader tool for conflict mitigation.

While it is beyond the scope of this report to undertake a comprehensive assessment of the sanctions regime on Darfur, it is clear that the following five key elements have systematically prevented the sanctions from being effective at either a practical or a political level.

- The **limited scope** of the sanctions regime on arms and military activities—which only covers the states of Darfur—complicates the already difficult tasks of preventing and monitoring arms flows into the embargoed region. Since the embargo does not prohibit transfers of military equipment to the rest of Sudan, the ability of UN and other observers to detect arms transfers delivered into Darfur is critically compromised, as the transfers are carried out entirely within the chain of custody of the Sudanese authorities and inside a sovereign national space.
- The Government of Sudan's **negative perception** of the sanctions has a direct impact on the degree to which they are respected and implemented. The GoS unambiguously considers the UN sanctions an illegitimate and unjust set of measures arbitrarily imposed by foreign powers. Following this logic, Khartoum has never fulfilled its obligations under the sanctions regime—for instance, in terms of requesting exemptions from the UN Sanctions Committee to authorize movements of military equipment, or establishing a domestic legal framework to implement the individual sanctions nationally. As a result, the GoS has been actively undermining the efficiency and coherence of the sanctions regime.
- Within the Security Council, **weak political consensus** on Darfur—and on other Sudan-related issues more generally—has undercut the impact of the international response since 2005. Particularly now that the Security Council has a range of other, more sensitive Sudan-related and regional issues on its agenda, some member states clearly regard it as risky to engage in in-depth debates on Darfur issues, partly due to fears that they might jeopardize other higher-priority issues. The resulting political inertia—a direct product of the Security Council's structure and mode of operations—partially explains why the sanctions regime has been similarly paralysed, unable to evolve with the dynamics of the conflict and the realities on the ground.
- The fact that there has been **limited follow-up on violations** stems from the same political inertia, which prevents the UN Security Council from ensuring that national authorities investigate sanctions violators. Although the UN Panel of Experts has identified various individuals, armed groups, organizations, and companies as responsible for violations of the sanctions regime—in some cases over several years—none has suffered any tangible consequences since the initial and only sanctioning of four individuals in 2006. As is the case in other UN sanctions regimes, such a lack of meaningful response to the monitor-

- ▶ ing process has progressively eroded the credibility of the overall sanctions mechanism and the ability of the international community to use the threat of sanctions as leverage for behavioural, humanitarian, or political change. Similarly, the only four individuals thus far targeted by the UN sanctions do not appear to have altered their behaviour, left their respective armed forces or groups, or disengaged from the conflict as a result of the sanctions.¹⁰⁴ Those sanctioned seem to have either misunderstood the sanctions regime, or to have considered it illegitimate. They were not implemented by the relevant national authorities in Sudan or elsewhere and have been easily violated. At least three of those sanctioned have reportedly travelled internationally since being placed under a travel ban, and one of them actually publicized the fact (*Sudan Tribune*, 2012a; *Africa Confidential*, 2012).
- In general terms, the international community exhibits a **lack of understanding and interest** in the sanctions regime on Darfur. Of the 28 national reports on the implementation of the sanctions regime received by the Sanctions Committee—whose submission from all 193 member states has in theory been urged by Resolutions 1891 and 1945 (UNSC, 2009a; 2010a)—only two were submitted by African countries (Burundi and South Africa),¹⁰⁵ and none by the predominant manufacturer of new weaponry found in Darfur, the People's Republic of China.¹⁰⁶

'No discernible impact'

The evidence discussed above clearly indicates that UN sanctions have created no substantial difficulties for the belligerent parties' procurement chains. Indeed, the documented presence in Darfur of recently manufactured small-calibre ammunition of Chinese origin indicates that the arms embargo has not led exporting states to moderate their arms supplies to Sudan, despite clear evidence that their arms are being diverted to Darfur. In the words of the UN Panel of Experts charged with monitoring it, the sanctions regime 'remains without discernible impact' (UNSC, 2011). Ironically, the rapprochement between N'Djamena and Khartoum, and the recent regime change in Libya, appear to have had a far greater impact on the availability of military materiel for Darfur's armed movements than the long-standing UN embargo itself.

In addition to reducing a conflict's military, material, and financial resources, sanctions should provide an incentive for the targeted entities to modify their behaviour and disengage from the conflict. Yet the Sudanese experience indicates that the UN sanctions regime has produced no incentive for behavioural change on the part of the targeted government, armed movements, companies, or individuals.

During 2011, several Security Council members, along with the UN–AU mediation team for the Doha peace negotiations, raised the possibility of adding SLA-AW leader Abdul Wahid Mohamed al Nur to the individual sanctions list, hoping that this threat might pressure his movement to attend the Doha negotiations (*Sudan Tribune*, 2011d; PANAPRESS, 2010). The fact that Abdul Wahid has yet to join the negotiations casts further doubt on the credibility of the sanctions regime and its political leverage.¹⁰⁷

If the sanctions regime is to be a relevant political and diplomatic tool, it must be redesigned to produce concrete, positive outcomes. It must be adapted to the changing dynamics of the conflict; its current scope must be extended, at least to the whole of Sudan; it must be lent coherence across its components; its role must be better understood by the relevant actors, and, critically, it must be backed by political will for enforcement within the Security Council. In this context, a review of the Security Council's approach to sanctions—not only those applied to Sudan, but also elsewhere—is long overdue.

tary capacity in Darfur is highly fungible between state and non-state forces on all sides. All that is required is the ongoing availability of such materiel as well as weak state control over proxy forces in Darfur and the border regions in which they operate.

With the closure of state-sponsored supply lines to rebel groups from Chad and Libya in mid-2010 and mid-2011, respectively, SAF and its allied forces have probably become more important sources of rebel equipment. The rapidity and ease with which new weapons flow into Darfur to SAF and allied forces thus also ensure that SAF's enemies have access to comparatively new weapons supplies. The modalities of rebel arms supplies are discussed at the end of this section.

In addition to underlining the 2010 judgement of the UN Panel of Experts that the UN embargo on Darfur has had 'no discernible impact', the speed with which arms supplied to Khartoum are moved into Darfur shows that GoS security forces enjoy efficient embargo-violating logistics by ground and air (UNSC, 2011; see Box 2). GoS aerial logistics—as well as the maintenance of its military aerial capacity—are sustained and in some cases carried out by a second constellation of international actors in Sudan, Eastern Europe, and the Middle East, discussed in more detail below.

Thus, while the Government of Sudan continues to be both the major perpetrator of military violence and the primary agent for arms supplies into Darfur, these activities are made partly possible by two sets of international actors: 1) the Sudanese government's regular set of largely governmental arms suppliers, and 2) commercial logistics suppliers and facilitators.

Weapons in Darfur: 'just-in-time' delivery

In many intra-state conflicts, particularly those subject to international arms embargoes that engender illicit arms transfer mechanisms, the arms transfer process from international supplier to state stockpiles to combatant armed forces—and on to non-state proxy forces—may take several years, and several intermediate steps (Florquin and Berman, 2005).¹⁰⁸ Weapons and ammunition used in intra-state conflicts thus often originate from old stockpiles (including surplus stockpiles), may have been previously circulated among a number of

different users, and are correspondingly difficult to trace ‘forward’ from their manufacturers to their most immediate suppliers (Bevan, 2009; Gobinet and Gramizzi, 2011). In Darfur, by contrast, new ammunition and newly delivered weaponry often predominates.

Small arms and light weapons ammunition

Small arms and light weapons recently used by SAF and opposition forces in Darfur have occasionally included some newly manufactured or otherwise unusual models, including Chinese-made QLZ-87 35 mm grenade launchers first documented in use in West Darfur in 2006 by members of a Chadian opposition group under then Khartoum-backed Mahamat Nour Abdelkarim (AI, 2006).¹⁰⁹ Nonetheless, the majority of GoS security forces, allied militia, and rebel forces continue to share the same basic suite of Soviet-pattern small arms and light weapons familiar to all observers of the Darfur conflict:

- 7.62 × 39 mm AKM-type or Type-56/1-type assault rifles;
- 7.62 × 54R mm PKM- and SGM-type medium machine guns;
- 12.7 × 108 mm DShK-type heavy machine guns;
- 14.5 mm and 23 mm anti-aircraft guns, generally mounted on adapted Land Cruiser vehicles;
- RPG-7-type 40 mm rocket-propelled grenades;
- B-10 82 mm and SPG-9 73 mm recoilless rifles; and
- 60 mm, 82 mm, and 120 mm mortars.¹¹⁰

The critical supply ‘bottleneck’ for the ongoing utility of these often comparatively old weapons thus concerns fresh supplies of consumable items, such as ammunition. Since 2010, ammunition has been identified in Darfur in the hands of government forces, allied militia, and rebel forces barely 12 months after its manufacture, indicating an extremely short supply chain and rapid resupply.

The prevalence of newly manufactured ammunition among both SAF and rebel groups was initially documented in detail by the 2010 UN Panel of Experts (UNSC, 2011; *Africa Confidential*, 2012). Non-governmental organizations and previous UN Panels had also documented some ammunition in use in Darfur that had been produced since the embargo (UNSC, 2008, paras. 200–10; 2009b,

paras. 130, 138, 202; Lewis, 2009, p. 52). But a much larger sample of several hundred cartridges obtained by the 2010 and 2011 UN Panels from separate incidents between August 2008 and May 2011 confirmed that the majority of ammunition used by all sides in Darfur was of post-embargo manufacture; a significant proportion had been manufactured between 2007 and 2010, during the period under scrutiny (UNSC, 2011, paras. 52–57; 2012b; *Africa Confidential*, 2012). Four of these post-embargo ammunition samples observed in 2010 were probably manufactured in Sudan and two in Israel; the latter were transferred to the Government of Chad in December 2007 and subsequently diverted to or captured by JEM forces (UNSC, 2011). All of the remaining samples carried markings consistent with Chinese-manufactured ammunition, including those produced in 2010 and carrying the Chinese factory code ‘41’ (UNSC, 2011; *Africa Confidential*, 2012).¹¹¹

At the time of writing, the Panel of Experts’ 2011 findings had yet to be authorized for publication by the 1591 Sanctions Committee.¹¹² New evidence from South Kordofan, however, indicates that the trend of ‘just-in-time’ ammunition resupply identified by the UN Panel of Experts in 2010 and 2011 appears to have continued. For example, 12.7×108 mm ammunition manufactured in 2010 and carrying the ‘41’ factory headstamp code indicative of Chinese-produced Type-54 API ammunition was captured from SAF forces at El Hamra in July 2011. Large quantities of $7.62 \times 54R$ mm ammunition marked with 2009 and 2010 manufacture dates and the Chinese manufacturing code ‘945’ have also been observed among these seized weapons.¹¹³

These findings corroborate evidence that SAF’s procurement chains continue to funnel international supplies of recently manufactured Chinese ammunition into Sudan’s various conflict zones.¹¹⁴

The Chinese government has stated that the markings of ammunition found in Darfur match those of Chinese-manufactured ammunition and has not provided any evidence to refute their purported Chinese origin; China has nonetheless disputed the Chinese provenance of such ammunition found in Darfur, reportedly to the extent of blocking the publication of the UN Panel’s 2010 report (UNSC, 2011, paras. 49, 58; BBC, 2010). The contention that this ammunition hails from China is further supported by the fact that the UN Panel observed Type-54 ammunition boxes in the hands of JEM in 2007–08,

alongside 2007-manufacture ‘factory 41’ Type-54 12.7 mm ammunition, which matches those repeatedly documented in the possession of SAF forces (UNSC, 2008). These boxes carry batch numbers and markings matching those used for boxes of commercially available Chinese Type-54 ammunition since at least the mid-1980s (DIA, 1984, pp. 74–75).

Aircraft

While GoS security forces—and non-state forces that receive or capture GoS weaponry—have enjoyed rapid ammunition resupply since 2009, apparently sustained by ongoing international supplies during this period, the GoS has also rapidly deployed newly acquired military aircraft into Darfur.

- At least ten SAF Su-25 ground attack aircraft have been observed in Darfur.¹¹⁵ These were introduced into SAF’s inventory among 20 Su-25s imported from Belarus in 2008–10.¹¹⁶
- Likewise, SAF received 12 Mi-24 attack helicopters from the Russian Federation each year between 2007 and 2009.¹¹⁷ While it is difficult to match the tail numbers of those observed in Darfur with their supply dates, the sequence of their tail numbers nonetheless suggests that they are being moved into Darfur shortly after their supply dates. Mi-24s with the highest tail number (948) of any SAF Mi-24 observed anywhere in Sudan, and thus presumably among the most recently supplied, were observed in Darfur for the first time in 2010 (UNSC, 2011, para. 86); the three helicopters prior to it in the sequence (945–47) were first seen in 2009 (UNSC, 2009b, para. 190). Photographs taken in May 2011 in Saint Petersburg suggest that this supply is ongoing; they show an Mi-24P attack helicopter with Sudan Air Force insignia, carrying the tail number (949) that immediately follows those of the latest Mi-24s seen in Darfur (948) and apparently awaiting export (AI, 2012).
- Similarly, SAF’s fleet of Mi-17 military transport helicopters appears to be expanding, although precise delivery dates cannot be confirmed. While all those previously observed in Khartoum and Darfur carried tail numbers within the range 525–37 (UNSC, 2009b), photographs taken in Nyala in late January 2012 show a SAF Mi-17 with the tail number 543 and a distinctively new camouflage scheme.¹¹⁸

Armoured vehicles

In contrast to non-state actors, SAF began using armoured fighting vehicles in ground combat in Darfur in 2011. While GoS has imported a series of BTR-80, BTR-70, and BTR-3 armoured fighting vehicles from Belarus and Ukraine since 2004, none of these had previously been reported in use.¹¹⁹ However, photographs indicate that SAF ground attacks on the SLA-MM and Zaghawa villages in eastern Darfur during early 2011 were accompanied by armoured vehicles, including BTR-80As, an upgraded variant of the standard BTR-80 with more powerful 30 mm cannon and a 7.62 mm co-axial machine gun (AI, 2012). AML-90 armoured fighting vehicles have also been observed near Al Geneina's new airport; they were apparently under repair, although it remains unclear whether they were deployed by SAF or Chadian forces that form part of the Joint Border Force stationed in Al Geneina.¹²⁰ These vehicles' international suppliers and dates of entry into Darfur have not been verified; nonetheless, the growing number of sightings of armoured vehicles in Darfur indicates that, despite international attestations of a de-escalation of the conflict, the escalation of light to heavy ground weaponry that characterized the Darfur conflict in 2005 continued into 2010–11 (Lewis, 2009, pp. 46–47).

The GoS military logistics chain

One explanation for the rapid appearance of new weaponry in Darfur is the efficiency of the GoS military logistics chain. Land convoys have arguably become a more effective method of resupply than they were earlier in the conflict, when attacks on convoys of military supplies and fuel moving from Khartoum and North Kordofan into Darfur were more common and more successful. Nevertheless, SAF continues to operate regular supply flights between Khartoum or El Obeid—North Kordofan's largest airport and a major SAF airbase—and all of Darfur's major airports at El Fasher, Nyala, and Al Geneina; these deliveries constitute military overflights that are prohibited by the UN Security Council and, in many cases, they directly contravene the UN arms embargo (UNSC, 2009b; 2011; 2012b).¹²¹

This air bridge exploits SAF's own fleet of white Antonov 24/26/32 transport aircraft, distinguishable by their tactical (military) tail numbers and red–

white–black ‘cheatline’ markings; some of these planes are also used directly for aerial bombardment.¹²² A Chadian rebel source alleges that, in addition to documented flights by such aircraft between El Obeid and Darfur, he also witnessed a Sudanese government aircraft with these distinctive markings being used to transport 500–600 fighters under Abdelwahid Aboud Makaye from Darfur to Abyei in October 2010.¹²³

While aerial logistics for SAF have expanded in terms of capacity, they have also been progressively commercialized and internationalized. Since at least 2007 SAF has used commercial air operators to supplement its own aircraft in operating the Darfur air bridge, drawing upon Sudan’s well-developed commercial air cargo industry (UNSC, 2007; 2011; 2012b). These flights operate under Sudanese Air Force (‘Gadir’) call signs and are accompanied by Sudanese military personnel (UNSC, 2007; *Africa Confidential*, 2012).

Other nominally civil-registered Sudanese aircraft appear to have continued to participate in this military air bridge during 2012. For example, aviation sources supported by recent photographic evidence indicate that a civil-registered IL-76 aircraft, previously operated by Azza Transport and first identified by the UN in 2007 as operating embargo-violating flights for SAF into Darfur, has continued to operate on behalf of SAF during 2012, although its current operator remains unknown (UNSC, 2007).¹²⁴ Despite the fact that this aircraft has been publicly identified by the UN as having undertaken these activities since at least 2007, it continues to fly unhindered, not only within Sudan, but also more widely within East and West Africa, operating under its civil registration but with a SAF call sign.¹²⁵ Perhaps significantly, photographs taken in late January 2012 suggest that it was also operating in El Fasher, Darfur, although its cargo and operators could not be confirmed on that occasion.¹²⁶

In addition to exploiting both military aviation assets and civilian aircraft flying under both Sudanese and foreign registrations, SAF appears to benefit from increasingly sophisticated commercial aircraft maintenance facilities within Sudan. Undated online photographs from the state-owned Safat Aviation Complex in Khartoum—opened for aircraft maintenance and overhaul in 2006, but reportedly only fully operational in 2009 (SAC, n.d.a.; SUNA, 2009)—show the overhaul of both SAF Antonov and Mi-17 military transport helicopters, including one with a tail number matching an Mi-17 observed by the UN

Panel in Darfur in 2009 (SAC, n.d.b).¹²⁷ On its website, Sudan's Military Industry Corporation lists Safat as one of its 'strategic projects' (MIC, 2007).

This key state facility is sustained by a network of companies based in the Russian Federation and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Production management, repair, and maintenance engineering at Safat is undertaken by a Sharjah-based aviation company (part of a larger UAE-based corporate group), according to online company documentation.¹²⁸ A 2008 letter from Safat states that the group was then appointed as its general agent 'in Sudan, Africa and in the Middle East' for the maintenance and overhaul of 'any kind of Russian made helicopters' (SAC, 2008). Safat itself was built in collaboration with a Russian aircraft repair plant, linked to the UAE-based company.¹²⁹ In 2008 the Russian aircraft maintenance certification authority officially authorized the Russian plant to maintain a range of Mil-type¹³⁰ transport helicopters in Khartoum, including Mi-8, Mi-17, and Mi-171 types (SCCARF, 2008).

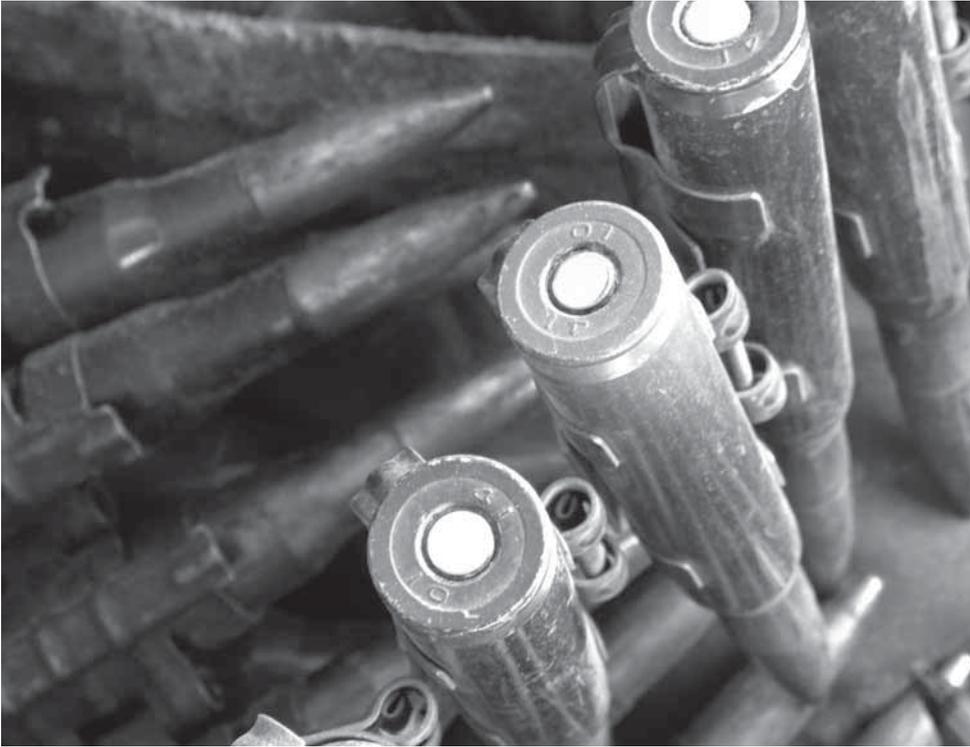
The UAE-based group publicly states that it is involved only with civilian aircraft at Safat, and there is no suggestion that any of these companies have acted unlawfully in any way. They have nonetheless helped to construct and operate the key government facility through which SAF's aerial capacity is also maintained.

Arms acquisitions by Darfur rebels

Testimonies and reports gathered during 2011 and 2012 confirm that the major Darfur rebel movements are no longer able to rely on previous external sources or supply routes for material support. That said, the Libyan uprising and subsequent conflict did temporarily generate favourable conditions for obtaining materiel from unguarded Libyan caches and stockpiles during 2011.¹³¹

In the absence of significant external support, three main procurement mechanisms continue to sustain Darfur's rebel groups:

Capture from SAF troops operating in Darfur. All rebel group representatives interviewed for this report confirmed that weapons and ammunition captured from SAF and, to a smaller extent, affiliated militias represent a non-negligible—and, for most movements, crucial—source of supply. Dozens of



Manufactured in 2010, this 12.7 mm Chinese ammunition is in the possession of JEM forces operating alongside SPLM-N, May 2012. This ammunition was reportedly captured from SAF forces near Jaw in February 2012. It matches ammunition regularly identified as in use by SAF in both Darfur and South Kordofan since 2008. © Claudio Gramizzi

ambushes and military confrontations against SAF convoys were reported in Darfur during 2011, particularly during the first half of the year.¹³² While not always successful, this ‘indirect’ means of supply clearly contributed to some rebel forces’ holdings of small-calibre weapons, ammunition, and vehicles. A limited sample of arms and ammunition observed in rebel forces’ hands in Darfur since 2010 confirms that rebel movements rely on a standard suite of weapons that generally matches that of SAF and affiliated militias; the arms include AK-type (mainly T-56 and T-56-I model) automatic rifles, PKM 7.62 mm and DShK 12.7 mm heavy machine guns, RPG-7 launchers, and 82 mm and 120 mm mortars.¹³³ Likewise, a very limited number of numerical codes appear in the headstamps of cartridges used by all sides (largely ‘41’, ‘71’, and ‘945’

codes consistent with Chinese-manufactured ammunition and tri-position '39-batch number-year' codes of distinctive brass-cased 7.62 × 39 mm ammunition believed to be of Sudanese manufacture).¹³⁴ These findings lend credence to the view that SAF contingents in Darfur and rebel groups are both, ironically, the final terminus of the government's supply chain.

Capture of weapons and ammunition from Libya. Between the eruption of the Libyan uprising in February 2011 and the fall of Muammar Qaddafi's regime in July, reports from Sudanese authorities and diplomatic sources, often undocumented and unverifiable, alleged that JEM received weapons supplies—including machine guns, RPGs, and possibly more sophisticated equipment—in early 2011 as a reward for alleged support to Qaddafi loyalist fighters in Libya (*Sudan Tribune*, 2011e; 2011f).¹³⁵ Accounts of officially sanctioned supplies during the last days of the Qaddafi regime have not been verified; in contrast, JEM and other rebel sources assert credibly that the fall of the *Jamahiriya* further shrank the field of international support to Darfur armed movements in general, and to JEM in particular.¹³⁶

According to three senior JEM personnel who were interviewed separately, JEM nonetheless took advantage of southern Libya's volatile environment to capture some military equipment.¹³⁷ One JEM interviewee, who had travelled in the convoy that secured the late JEM chairman Khalil Ibrahim's exit from Libya on 28 August 2011, stated that weapons and ammunition were mainly collected from materiel found abandoned along the rescue mission's route. Collecting weapons was not, however, the main objective of the mission and the convoy intentionally avoided raiding Libyan military facilities in order to avoid passing too close to populated and urban areas.¹³⁸ Yet the operation itself suggests that the Sudan–Libya–Chad tri-border is relatively porous despite border reinforcements on both the Sudanese and Chadian sides; indeed, JEM sources who participated in the operation say it involved a convoy of some 150 vehicles with which neither Sudanese nor Libyan National Transitional Council (nor Chadian) ground forces were able to engage, although it was targeted unsuccessfully by GoS airstrikes.¹³⁹

Foreign diplomatic and Darfur rebel sources also allege that SLA-MM took advantage of the suddenly unmonitored Libyan stockpiles.¹⁴⁰ The authors were unable to verify this allegation, which was refuted by SLA-MM representatives.¹⁴¹

Acquisition of equipment from Chadian armed opposition groups. Despite the cutting of major state-sponsored supply lines from Chad to Sudan following the two countries' rapprochement in late 2009 and early 2010, some Darfur rebel groups have actually benefited from the programme initiated under the 2010 N'Djamena agreement, which was intended to end the Chad–Sudan proxy war and to disarm armed opposition groups previously supported by each government.¹⁴² Taking advantage of their close relationship with Chadian groups that had previously been supported by Khartoum and, in some cases, common tribal identity, the SLA-MM and the United Revolutionary Front faction of LJM obtained technical vehicles and weapons that had originally been provided by the GoS. Separate testimonies confirming these transfers cited between one dozen and several dozen Land Cruiser vehicles. The authors obtained photographic evidence—whose veracity was confirmed by rebels from both Darfur and Chad—of several of these vehicles in use in Darfur, with mounted weapons including 12.7 mm DShK heavy machine guns and SPG-9 73 mm recoilless rifles.¹⁴³

Arms supplies from South Sudan and the SPLM-N. Despite the Sudanese government's repeated accusations that the Government of South Sudan recently supplied weapons or vehicles to Darfur rebel movements, there has as yet been no concrete evidence to substantiate such claims (*Sudan Tribune*, 2011g). Similarly, there has been no concrete proof of direct military supply to Darfur groups from the SPLM-N, despite the signing of a framework for strategic alliance in Kaoda, South Kordofan, on 13 November 2011¹⁴⁴ and the establishment of the common Sudan Revolutionary Front opposition platform.

The isolation of each front of the chain of conflicts across North Sudan has meant that operational coordination among SRF members has proved challenging. Both Darfur rebel and SPLM-N interviewees cited differences in fighting tactics and environments in Blue Nile, Darfur, and South Kordofan, as well as the logistical difficulty of merging troops and equipment located in areas separated by SAF-held zones.¹⁴⁵ Nonetheless, the first indications of more effective military and material coordination are now emerging. These include the participation of JEM troops in the fighting between SAF and SPLM-N forces in southern Kordofan and Pariang county of northern Unity state in late

February 2012 (*Sudan Tribune*, 2012d; JEM, 2012a), and the recent agreement on the role of each leader of the different components of the SRF, publicly announced on 21 February 2012 (*Sudan Tribune*, 2012b). Should operational coordination truly be improving, supply routes for Darfur rebel groups may well expand southwards in the future, a development discussed in more detail in Section III. 📄

III. The future: war on Darfur's southern and eastern frontiers?

Over the past decade, the international community's attention has swung conspicuously from one of Sudan's crises to the next. With Darfur off the table at the Naivasha negotiations, which paved the way for the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, war in Darfur escalated in early 2003 without significant international or multilateral action until mid-2004.¹⁴⁶ By 2007, with the implementation timetable of the CPA already slipping, major international actors were almost myopically focused on Darfur. Since 2010, their attention has once again slid unstoppably southwards and eastwards: southwards towards the numerous parts of South Sudan's border regions where border issues, resource-sharing, and self-determination have remained unresolved since the end of the CPA transitional period; and, since mid-2011, eastwards towards the mounting conflagrations in South Kordofan and Blue Nile.

These pendulum swings have overlooked the complex connections between Darfur and conflicts beyond its southern and eastern borders. The links between Darfur and South Sudan, intermediated particularly by the mainly Kordofan-based SPLM-N, are now threatening to escalate in the Darfur–Kordofan–South Sudan triangle. These links are not simply opportunistic efforts by Darfur armed groups to gain political and material support by acting as bargaining chips for Juba against Khartoum, or by joining conflicts currently much higher up on South Sudan's political agenda than Darfur. Rather, they are rooted in long-standing ambiguities regarding territory and identity in Darfur and South Sudan's borderlands.

As outlined below, these ambiguities are the basis of the current presence and activity of Darfur armed actors in South Sudan and South Kordofan; they may also become the basis for Darfur rebels to play a significant role in larger North–South conflicts in Bahr al Ghazal, the Nuba Mountains, and elsewhere along the North–South border.

The Darfur conflict and South Sudan

During the 1980s and the 1990s, when the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) still maintained a national agenda under John Garang, it was both politically active in Darfur and an important pole of opposition for Darfur communities. In spite of the movement's early failure to establish a full Darfur front as part of its rebellion in 1991–92, significant numbers of Darfuris nonetheless joined the SPLA. According to diplomatic sources, at the time of independence, there were some 14,000 Darfuris in the SPLA's ranks, as compared to 15,000 to 20,000 Nuba.

Nonetheless, both during the CPA interim period and since independence, the SPLM/A has maintained a profoundly ambivalent position towards Darfur armed movements. On the one hand, the SPLM/A leadership has been tempted to increase its involvement with groups like Darfur rebels that may destabilize the regime in Khartoum; on the other hand, it faces the risk of undermining its political capital, particularly with its most supportive international partners, in the context of ongoing conflict and negotiations with the Government of Sudan (*Sudan Tribune*, 2011h).¹⁴⁷ This ambivalence also exists among senior GoSS political figures, some of whom express dissatisfaction with the fragmentation and isolation of the Darfur movements and fear insufficient guarantees of rewards in return for SPLA support.¹⁴⁸ Many members of the SPLM/A remain hostile towards Darfuris in general, a legacy of the predominance of Darfuri recruits among SAF forces in the South during the second Sudanese civil war. One Darfuri SPLM-N officer explained:

*some SPLA figures are against the idea of supporting Darfurian movements. Some of them cannot forget that Darfurians were used by Khartoum to fight against the South while others consider that the first priority for South Sudan should be peace, and that peaceful relationship with Khartoum might be severely damaged by any form of support to Darfur rebels.*¹⁴⁹

Finally, in practical terms, the SPLA simply lacks the capacity to support Darfur rebels' military operations with substantial direct supplies of equipment or other military support. As noted by one Darfuri SPLM-N officer in

Western Bahr al Ghazal in December 2011: 'The SPLA cannot help Darfurians. The Southerners need assistance for themselves first.'¹⁵⁰

It is also clear that Darfur rebels' links to the SPLM/A have been based only partly on identification with the SPLM/A's (former) national agenda or its role as a revolutionary vehicle for fighting Khartoum. Rather, alliance with or membership in the SPLM/A has provided opportunities for communities on both sides of the border to advance particular local interests and identities. Beyond national-level politics, these more local ties and shared interests between Darfuris and the SPLM/A remain significant factors in exchanges of personnel and safe haven between Darfur and South Sudan.

For some, particularly those in the South Darfur–Bahr al Ghazal borderlands, membership in the SPLA—or, alternatively, in Khartoum-backed militias—has been a viable way of promoting the local interests of their communities, to the extent of holding overlapping allegiances between North and South. In the words of a former member of SAF-aligned PDF militia in Kafia Kingi, the disputed enclave south of the 1956 border that was incorporated into Darfur province in 1960:

I was in the PDF in 1992. They forcibly recruited us when [the SPLA Darfur expedition led by] Daud Bowlad and Abdul Aziz al Hilu went to Darfur through our area. But for me the aim was to protect my people in Kafia Kingi. In 1995 I came here [to Raja] with 30 people by bicycle to find out whether Kafia Kingi was part of South Sudan. Ali Tamim Fartak [formerly NCP governor of Western Bahr al Ghazal] said it was not, so I went back [. . .]. Then, in 1997, during a conference with Dr. John [Garang] to discuss the border, I found that my place [Kafia Kingi] was in South Sudan. In that year I joined the SPLA secretly in South Darfur.¹⁵¹

There has even been recruitment, including since the CPA, of semi-autonomous units of *baggara* Rizeigat Arabs from South Darfur into the SPLA's 3rd and 5th Divisions in Northern and Western Bahr al Ghazal, respectively, arguably as assets against northern-aligned armed Rizeigat groups in the borderlands. This recruitment has relied on Rizeigat dissatisfaction with the poor rewards for their service in the PDF during the second Sudanese civil war. When the CPA was signed in 2005, the SPLA had some 2,500 Rizeigat integrated into the

Abu Matareq brigade (named after the southernmost locality of Dar Rizeigat); the unit was led by Khaled Abu Hijer, the most prominent SPLA Rizeigat leader, who died in early 2011. At independence, some Rizeigat still remained in the SPLA, although many have joined the SPLM-N, according to SPLA commanders.¹⁵² But 418 men of the Abu Matareq brigade remain within the SPLA's 3rd Division based in Wenyik, close to Aweil in Northern Bahr al Ghazal. According to 3rd Division commander Gen. Santino Deng:

*as Southerners, we cannot risk deploying them [the Abu Matareq brigade] in direct military operations. In the future they could be part of an exchange of forces with SAF, as many Southerners are also still serving in the army of the North.*¹⁵³

Some Darfuri Arabs who also left the SPLA after the referendum, dissatisfied by its outcome, returned as civilians to the North, but maintained contact with the SPLA. Should full-scale conflict resume on the Darfur–South Sudan border, some of these Darfur Arabs may be re-recruited to serve in the border area. In the short term, those still in the SPLA are being encouraged to join the SPLM-N in the Nuba Mountains or elsewhere.¹⁵⁴

The Bahr al Ghazal–South Darfur borderland is perhaps the least scrutinized part of the North–South border. In terms of deaths and displacement, this area is currently among the more peaceful of Sudan's borderlands. Yet it is in fact playing host to an increasingly combustible mixture of elements, of which a 'silent' wave of airstrikes and bombardments in 2010–12 is the most overtly violent symptom (see below). Occupations in disputed territory on both sides—with SAF building up their forces in a north-western crescent in Western Bahr al Ghazal–Kafia Kingi, and the SPLA recently reinforcing its presence in the disputed area between the Kiir–Bahr al Arab river and the 1956 border—would provide ample excuse for retaliation or seizures of further territory.

The area itself is already primed with potential proxies and other armed actors. On the one hand, the borderland is home to semi-autonomous Rizeigat militias that are variously aligned with both SAF and the SPLA, against the background of restricted access by the Rizeigat to grazing areas south of the Kiir–Bahr al Arab river (see Box 3). On the other hand, at least until very recently, the area also hosted a clutch of non-Arab Darfur rebels with long-standing ties

Box 3 **Other Abyeis? Darfur's flexible southern frontier**

Although the CPA makes relatively clear stipulations concerning the location of the 1956 border between South Darfur and Western/Northern Bahr al Ghazal (Johnson, 2010, pp. 41–55), its assessment differs markedly from those of the GoS, GoSS, SPLA, and both the Malwal Dinka and *baggara* Rizeigat Arabs.

The western tip of the 1956 delineation lies at Jebel Mishmira, at the border with CAR, from where the line runs straight east until it meets the Rugaba Umbelasha river, which it follows until it meets the Kiir–Bahr al Arab river near Radom, leaving the Kafía Kingi enclave in South Sudan. It then follows the Kiir–Bahr al Arab river until its northernmost extremity, a few kilometres before the 26th meridian east. From there it heads south for 14 miles (22.5 km). It then follows the 1924 Munro–Wheatley line, which runs another 14 miles southwards and parallel to the river, until it reaches the Abyei area (see Map 2).

Of the disputed border areas in Bahr al Ghazal, the Kafía Kingi enclave is the most prominent, not least due to its ongoing occupation by SAF and South Darfur's insistence that it remain part of Darfur in accordance with a 1960 administrative decision (Johnson, 2010, p. 54; USIP and Concordis International, 2010, p. 32). As the enclave is very sparsely populated, however, this border dispute is not necessarily the most contentious.

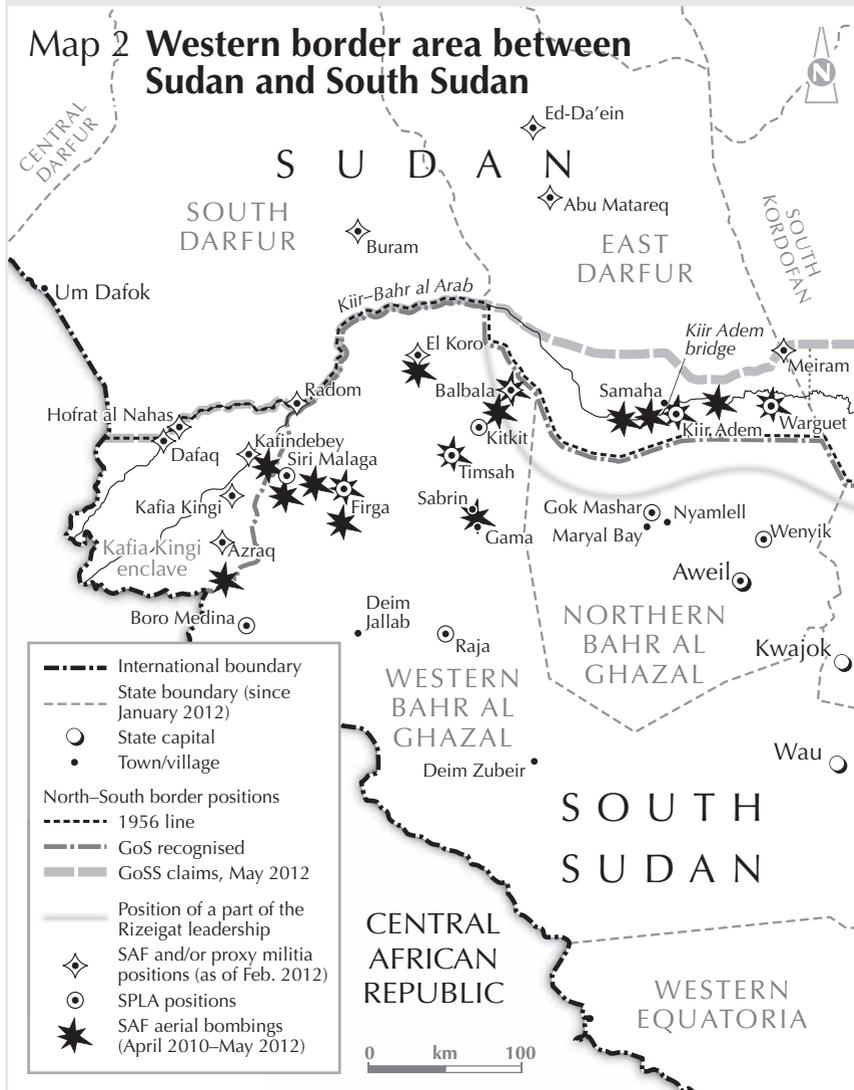
More serious flashpoints are disagreements over both border location and access rights in the South Darfur–Northern Bahr al Ghazal borderlands. Notably, all GoSS and SPLA interlocutors interviewed for this report asserted that the border ran along the Kir–Bahr al Arab river itself—as opposed to the 1956 border farther south. This remains a major source of tension in addition to reported movements of SAF-aligned Rizeigat militias.¹⁵⁵ GoSS security forces report that during 2010 Rizeigat herders were present in this area, armed with RPGs and light machine guns, outgunning the lightly armed GoSS Wildlife Service rangers who encountered them.¹⁵⁶ Since 2009, tensions have been increased by road closures that block Northern Bahr al Ghazal's access to northern markets, including the road between Meram (on the South Kordofan–South Darfur–Abyei tri-border) and Aweil.¹⁵⁷

There appears to be political will and economic motivation on both sides to maintain both South Sudanese and Rizeigat access to the disputed strip. The major road from South Darfur to Northern Bahr al Ghazal via the Kiir Adem bridge remains open, despite its December 2010 bombardment; relations also seem comparatively harmonious between Rizeigat traders at the market of Samaha, about 2 km north of Kiir Adem, and uniformed SPLA forces north of the river, who sometimes attend the market.¹⁵⁸ Nonetheless, the Rizeigat elite in Ed Da'ein and Khartoum have reacted strongly to the SPLA presence in what they believe is their territory. Mohamed Issa Aliyo, head of the Rizeigat *shura* council (tribal association), published articles in Khartoum newspapers in which he warns that this section of the border could be an 'Abyei 2'.¹⁵⁹ With SPLA reinforcements in the disputed strip itself during 2011, multiple reports of militia recruitment in South Darfur south of Abu Matareq in December 2011, and (unverified) GoS allegations that the area is a conduit for JEM personnel and weapons, there remains ample scope for conflict along this section of the border.

It is worth noting that since Kiir Adem is north of the 1956 border, SPLA deployment may constitute a violation of the UN embargo on Darfur. From the SPLA's perspective, the border lies along the Kiir–Bahr al Arab river itself, yet this view does not prevent Southern forces and UNMISS from making regular (and peaceful) incursions north of the river to the

neighbouring Samaha market, which is unambiguously in South Darfur. Not surprisingly, GoS has treated the presence of UNMISS personnel around the Kiir river as a violation of its territory. On 24 February 2012, GoS police arrested two UNMISS personnel visiting the Magidi–Magare (Kiir Pal) area near the Kiir river to verify reports of SAF bombing there. The two were taken into South Darfur to the Abu Matareq police station and then to Ed Da'ein for questioning by the National Intelligence and Security Service, before being released on 15 May 2012.¹⁶⁰

Map 2 Western border area between Sudan and South Sudan



to the area and cross-border connections with populations in South Darfur, Chad, and the Central African Republic (CAR). These borderlands, in short, are not simply the conduit for the movement of equipment and personnel in and out of Darfur; they are the ground on which confrontation itself might take place, risking a spill-over of the Darfur conflict into long-standing North-South disputes.

Armed groups in the South Darfur–Bahr al Ghazal borderlands: proxies or house guests?

During the CPA's interim period, the most significant attempt by the SPLA to support Darfur's rebels, and a major missed opportunity for the resumption of that support, took place in 2008. With SPLA support, several SLA splinters in Juba formed a new coalition called the Juba Group or SLA-Juba. Strongly backed by the GoSS, Ahmad Abdeshafi 'Toba', concurrently the main Fur dissident of the SLA-AW and an SPLM member, was appointed as chairman.¹⁶¹ Siddiq Abdelkarim Naser 'Masalit', an ex-SAF soldier from the Masalit tribe, was made chief of staff in acknowledgment of the fact that his 300 to 400 Masalit troops formed the majority of the new group, which was based in the Boro Medina area of Western Bahr al Ghazal, close to a predominantly Masalit IDP camp. Siddiq's troops had been recruited among Masalit IDPs and residents of Western Bahr al Ghazal, as well as Masalit communities of the Kafia Kingi enclave and southern Darfur and refugees in CAR.

Tension immediately arose between Siddiq and 'Toba', as the Masalit proved loyal only to Siddiq, not to the movement's chairman. Since SPLA support was going to the Fur group, notably through the then commissioner of Raja county, Rizig Zakaria, Siddiq demanded greater support in exchange for his loyalty, before finally deciding in October 2008 to move his troops to Darfur, without the permission either of 'Toba' or of the SPLA. SPLA soldiers, accompanied by a few Fur combatants, tried to intercept Siddiq's troops, and subsequent fighting saw lives lost on both sides. The SPLA arrested Siddiq, who was found dead a few days later.¹⁶²

This fractious episode, coupled with greater GoSS caution about overt support to Darfur groups during and after the referendum, arguably diminished



A South Sudanese soldier crosses the bridge linking Samaha to the North and Kiir Adem to the South of the Kiir–Bahr al Arab river. The river is an important resource for people on either side: Rizeigat Arabs of Darfur to the north and Malwal Dinka to the south. The 1956 line that should legally constitute the border between Sudan and South Sudan runs 14 miles (23 km) south of the river, leaving it in Sudan. But the border is disputed by the Government of South Sudan, which has positioned its army at Kiir Adem on the southern bank of the river, and controls and sometimes crosses the bridge. Similarly, Khartoum forces are occupying some areas south of the 1956 line, such as the Kafia Kingi enclave at the border of the Central African Republic. © Jérôme Tubiana

hopes of building a unified Darfur movement under the GoSS's wing. Much liaison in Bahr al Ghazal—while not necessarily unsanctioned—nonetheless appears to take place under the auspices of senior SPLA officers with a history of involvement with Darfur groups in that region.¹⁶³

Another major impediment to the GoSS committing more substantial support is the continuing fragmentation of Darfur rebels, reflected in the alphabet soup of groups present in Bahr al Ghazal and Juba. Almost all rebel group members interviewed in South Sudan for this report—whether military or political personnel—asserted that the SPLA had urged rebels to join one of the major Darfur groups, usually the SLA-MM or JEM, or to move to the SPLM-N (whose connections to Darfur are discussed below).¹⁶⁴ While Juba has provided basic logistical support and transport facilities to Darfur rebel leadership in South Sudan,¹⁶⁵ and while it has tolerated the establishment of 'safe areas' for

small numbers of rebel fighters, there is no concrete evidence that the GoSS provided these fighters' vehicles or military equipment.¹⁶⁶

Despite the GoSS's ambivalence, since mid-2010 there has been some increase in the presence of Darfur armed groups in South Sudan. Some rebels assert that the SPLA also acts as a necessary intermediary between them and the Ugandan government, naming an SPLA military intelligence officer formerly present in Kampala as the key liaison.¹⁶⁷ Between the referendum and the independence of South Sudan, Khartoum intensified its pressure on Juba to expel Darfur rebels. Among them was Minni Minawi, who consequently left South Sudan for Kampala in March 2011, along with some other Darfur rebel representatives. The GoS has also alleged that Darfur rebels were training in Uganda; yet, while these claims have been mirrored by Western diplomatic sources, they remain unconfirmed (Tubiana, 2011a, p. 58).

Nonetheless, the centres of Darfur rebel politics moved conspicuously to Juba and Kampala during 2011.¹⁶⁸ Although Minni Minawi has left South Sudan for Kampala, representatives from almost all Darfur rebel factions are still present in South Sudan, including senior political leaders from JEM, the SLA-MM, the SLA-AW, and smaller splinter factions from the original SLA.¹⁶⁹ Military commanders from (at least) JEM and the SLA-MM were also based in or transited through Juba in late 2011 and early 2012.¹⁷⁰

One sign of the GoSS's increased commitment to Darfur rebels—at least to stemming their fragmentation, if not yet to providing material assistance—was the arrest by South Sudan security services, in Juba in September 2011, of seven JEM members, among whom was JEM's military spokesman Ali al Wafi. They were arrested and jailed in Yei at the request of JEM leaders who accused them of preparing to align with a splinter faction under Mohamed Bahar Ali Hamadein.¹⁷¹ Mohamed Bahar, formerly head of JEM's delegation to the Doha negotiations, split from JEM around the same time, in late September 2011, and was accused by JEM of entering into secret negotiations with Khartoum (*Sudan Tribune*, 2011c).

Mohamed Bahar himself asked UNAMID to press JEM to free the seven, presenting them as his supporters, and thereby justifying their arrest in the eyes of the SPLA. In fact, however, it appears that the seven did not intend to join Mohamed Bahar, and that the motivation for some in the JEM leadership

to ask for their arrest was based on ideological differences. In the context of negotiations between JEM and the (secular) SPLM-N to form an alliance, the seven, among others, had advocated for a more secular JEM against some more Islamist senior leaders.¹⁷² The fact that some JEM senior leaders refused the concept of 'secularism' (misinterpreted by some JEM members as 'atheism') also delayed the formation of the SRF.¹⁷³ Once tensions had eased, following the establishment of the SRF and the appointment of Jibril Ibrahim as JEM's new chairman, the seven were released in March 2012.¹⁷⁴

A further resonant signal of reinforced links between the GoSS and JEM (at least from Khartoum's perspective) was the accommodation of JEM members in Juba in the villa that previously belonged to dissident SPLA general George Athor, before he became the main anti-SPLA Southern rebel leader in 2011 and was killed by Juba in December 2011. Accommodating JEM members in the house of the rebel leader that Juba considered a mercenary armed by Khartoum arguably sent a clear message to the GoS that any support from Khartoum to Southern rebels could now be paid back by GoSS support to JEM.

The political presence of Darfuris in Juba has been matched by small but significant groups of rebel personnel in Western Bahr al Ghazal—at least until late December 2011, when the rebels reported that the GoSS, under pressure in the Addis Ababa talks, had pushed them to return over the border into Darfur.¹⁷⁵ Individuals directly connected to the groups concerned confirmed rebel presence in the following locations:

- As of late 2011, the SLA-Justice maintained a small camp north of Timsah in Western Bahr al Ghazal, very close to the border with Darfur, with three or four vehicles previously captured from SAF, one of which the authors viewed. This presence illustrates the ability of groups to move equipment between Darfur and South Sudan.
- Former members of Siddiq's group retain a presence near Raja, across the border in north-eastern CAR near Sam Ouandja, and also reportedly in the Kafia Kingi enclave.
- SLA-MM members also stated in late 2011 that their movement maintained a camp in Raja county, and two separate members of other Darfuri groups present in the area reported that this camp was located near an SPLA base not far from Raja.¹⁷⁶

Rebels present in Western Bahr al Ghazal also reported that JEM maintained a camp in Timsah area, as well as some troops near Wau, the state capital. This claim—echoed by the GoS assertion that JEM ‘forces are currently based in the Tumsaha [Timsah] area, south of the 1956 border [thus in South Sudan], and their wounded are being treated at Gog Mashar hospital’ (UNSC, 2012b, p.14; *Sudan Tribune*, 2011i)—could not be confirmed with JEM members themselves, who insist that their southernmost position is near Radom, immediately north of the Kiir–Bahr al Arab river, and thus clearly inside Darfur.¹⁷⁷

The UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) also reported that more than 40 JEM cars were present in the Boro Medina area west of Raja in January 2012 (UNSC, 2012b, p. 14).¹⁷⁸ In a letter to the UN Security Council dated 29 December 2011, the GoS complained of JEM’s presence in this area as well as other parts of South Sudan, claiming that:

*[the] number of rebel JEM troops present in the above-mentioned areas of South Sudan is some 350. They are in possession of 79 armoured vehicles and 28 stolen commercial trucks loaded with Libyan weapons [. . .]. A camp has been established in the area of Raja, South Sudan, for the purpose of mobilizing and training JEM fighters (UNSC, 2012b, p. 14).*¹⁷⁹

This assertion followed claims made in 2010 that wounded JEM combatants had been treated in Aweil, Northern Bahr al Ghazal, and that the movement maintained a camp of 25 combatants in Gok Mashar north of Aweil (Tubiana, 2011a, p. 58). The authors visited Gok Mashar three times in December 2011 and were unable to confirm these allegations.¹⁸⁰

Nonetheless, the Darfuri presence in Bahr al Ghazal since 2010 is unambiguous and has coincided with an escalation of military incidents along the South Darfur–South Sudan border. Most of these have gone unreported, partly because international attention has focused on more populated, strategic, and violent border regions adjacent to the Transitional Areas; partly because UNMISS patrols are prevented by internal regulations from going within 10 km of the North–South border; and also because the GoSS regularly denies UNMISS long-range patrols access to large parts of Western Bahr al Ghazal.¹⁸¹ This upswing of borderland violence began in April 2010, when fighting with

armed Rizeigat, who the SPLA alleged were backed by SAF forces, temporarily pushed the SPLA out of Balbala, north-east of Timsah, in the contested area south of the Kiir–Bahr al Arab river.¹⁸² According to witnesses, the SPLA regained its position in a sequence of fighting accompanied by aerial bombardment using SAF Antonovs and ‘Mij’ jet aircraft;¹⁸³ the fighting was not limited to the area around Balbala but reached as far south as Timsah,¹⁸⁴ reportedly leaving 150 people dead.¹⁸⁵ According to SPLA officers and GoSS officials, a significant slice of Western Bahr al Ghazal between the South Darfur border and Balbala remained a no-man’s land with frequent SAF presence until mid-February 2012, when the GoS retook the area without opposition.¹⁸⁶ In addition, SAF has continued to occupy the Kafia Kingi enclave, including positions in Azraq, Dafaq, Hofrat al Nahas, Kafia Kingi, and Kafindebey.¹⁸⁷

GoSS officials assert that a new three-month wave of bombardments began in November 2010 in the northern part of the state; they cite aerial attacks around Balbala, Kitkit, Um Selil, Firga, and Siri Malaga, between Siri Malaga and Kafindebey, and between Gama and Sabrin.¹⁸⁸ Although it is difficult to verify all these reports, it is clear that at least some were sizeable attacks. One attack next to an SPLA base at Firga around 21 or 22 February 2011, which was verified by the authors, involved two Su-25 ground-attack aircraft delivering dozens of S8 air-to-ground rockets.¹⁸⁹ Since the area is sparsely populated, these bombings have rarely resulted in casualties.¹⁹⁰ Officials could cite only one incident that caused civilian deaths or injuries. Ironically, that incident involved migrating Habbaniya Arab pastoralists from South Darfur, who were reportedly caught in a bombing raid near Um Selil near El Koro around 4 or 5 January 2011 in which two adults were reportedly killed, four children injured, and some livestock killed.¹⁹¹

The bombings fuelled GoSS suspicions that the attacks were an exercise in vote rigging, intended to move populations away from their places of origin to deny them the opportunity to register for the January 2011 referendum.¹⁹² That suspicion was reinforced by the destruction of a registration centre in the (better-publicized) airstrike at Kiir Adem in the South Darfur–Northern Bahr al Ghazal border area in November 2010.¹⁹³ SAF claimed this airstrike targeted a major southward movement of JEM forces, an assertion corroborated by a Western diplomatic mission in Khartoum, which reported a general supply



Fragments of 80 mm S8 air-to-ground rockets fired by SAF Su-25 aircraft next to an SPLA base, Firga, South Sudan, February 2011. © Confidential

convoy. Air attacks in the borderland resumed again in December 2011, with bombings between Firga and Siri Malaga in the first week of December 2011,¹⁹⁴ and in Bahr Tumbak north of Boro Medina on 28 December.¹⁹⁵ There were further reported ‘Antonov’ bombings northwest of Boro Medina on 16 April 2012 and near Siri Malaga on 15 May 2012—the latter provoking the displacement of some 4,500 civilians.¹⁹⁶

While the bombings have not been matched by major ground confrontations since the April 2010 Balbala episode, SAF and the SPLA have significantly increased their strength on their respective sides of the border. In October 2010, SPLA forces from Aweil moved to Kiir Adem, stationing an SPLA platoon at the strategic Kiir Adem bridge—the only crossing over the Kiir–Bahr al Arab river in this area—along with a company stationed farther south. Following the November 2010 bombings on and around its positions, the SPLA platoon was increased to a battalion-sized force, stationed predominantly at the bridge

itself,¹⁹⁷ and reinforced with several additional T-55 tanks whose gun barrels were pointed north across the river.¹⁹⁸ Similarly, during 2011 SPLA forces grew in the northern part of Western Bahr al Ghazal, particularly around Timsah, from two brigades to at least four stationed between Firga, Kitkit, Siri Malaga, and Timsah.¹⁹⁹

While SAF movements and reinforcements on the South Darfur side are more difficult to verify, GoSS and UN sources in Northern Bahr al Ghazal consistently reported a build-up of armoured SAF troops near the border in December 2011; one such report concerned a company-sized SAF reinforcement around 13–16 December between Abu Matareq and the river.²⁰⁰ Unlike in the more violently contested borderlands to the east and west, however, SAF have remained surprisingly tolerant of the presence of SPLA forces north of the 1956 line and even of incursions north of the river. The only major report of North–South fighting since 2010 came in late May 2012, when the SPLA reported that SAF ground forces and aircraft attacked SPLA positions in the Warguet area of the Northern Bahr al Ghazal–South Kordofan borderland. Like Kiir Adem, these positions appear to be in the disputed area north of the 1956 line.²⁰¹

After the SPLA's movement to Kiir Adem in October 2010, the Rizeigat elite, which considers the area part of their territory, asked the Sudanese government to deploy the regular army, which, until then, had reportedly been absent from the area south of Ed Da'ein, the capital of Dar Rizeigat, some 300 km northwards. According to local Rizeigat, Abdelhamid Musa Kasha, then governor of South Darfur and a Rizeigat himself, asked Ed Da'ein traders to contribute financially to SAF deployment, while other officials suggested that the Rizeigat should deploy their own militias instead.²⁰² It is unclear whether the government wanted to use the Rizeigat as proxies against the South or whether it was simply reluctant to support a tribe whose loyalty to NCP policies was considered questionable.

GoSS and UN sources also reported renewed efforts by SAF, during early December 2011, to recruit Rizeigat into PDF units near the South Darfur border. Important Rizeigat traditional leaders reportedly refused to contribute, a refusal that echoes the Rizeigat *nazer's* commitment to host displaced victims of PDF attacks farther north.²⁰³

Much better publicized are ongoing allegations that SAF is supporting remnants of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), which have been moving between South Darfur, CAR, and the Kafia Kingi triangle.²⁰⁴ Darfur rebels and the SPLA provide unconfirmed but consistent reports of a semi-permanent LRA presence in SAF-occupied Dafaq, in the Kafia Kingi enclave south-west of Hofrat al Nahas;²⁰⁵ skirmishes in late November 2011 between Darfur rebels and both LRA and Arab militias between the Kafia Kingi triangle and north-eastern CAR;²⁰⁶ and the capture of Congolese and Ugandan LRA combatants by Darfur rebels in north-eastern CAR during 2010, and by the SPLA in Deim Jallab, west of Raja in Western Bahr al Ghazal, in late 2011.²⁰⁷ Nonetheless, in contrast to the reinvigorated international attention on the LRA during 2012, GoS efforts to recruit Rizeigat into borderland militia forces appear to be by far the predominant concern of local GoSS officials regarding Northern proxy forces in the area, and not the weakened LRA.²⁰⁸

A proxy war in South Kordofan?

Like Darfur since 2003, South Kordofan is now the theatre of different conflicts: a war between the GoS and the SPLM-N and a growing proxy war between the North and the South. Should the SPLM-N decide to extend its war to Darfur, or should the SPLM (North or South) increase support to the Darfur movements, both conflicts could easily extend into Darfur and the border between Darfur and South Sudan. Growing operational links between Darfur groups, the SPLA, and the SPLM-N in South Kordofan make this a real and growing prospect.

A new rebel alliance in South Kordofan

The resumption of the conflict between the government and the SPLM-N in South Kordofan and southern Blue Nile during 2011 was seen by most Darfur rebel movements as possible oxygen for their cause. Talks between the SPLM-N and the main Darfur movements started quickly, particularly with JEM, the SLA-MM, and the SLA-AW, and less directly with smaller factions, such as the SLA-Justice and other SLA dissidents regrouped in the newly formed Juba-based SLA-United. Led by the military leader of the SPLM-N, Abdul Aziz al Hilu, these talks aimed to unite the divided Darfur groups with the SPLM-N.



A Land Cruiser in use by JEM forces operating alongside SPLM-N, May 2012. This vehicle was reportedly captured from SAF forces near Jaw in February 2012. © Claudio Gramizzi

On 13 November 2011, following lengthy negotiations, the SPLM-N, JEM, the SLA-MM, and the SLA-AW announced the formation of a coalition, the Sudan Revolutionary Front.²⁰⁹ It took further uneasy talks to agree, on 20 February 2012, the leadership of the new structure, largely dominated by the SPLM-N, whose leaders Malik Agar and Abdul Aziz al Hilu became SRF chairman and deputy chairman, respectively. Jibril Ibrahim of JEM, Minni Minawi of the SLA-MM, and Abdul Wahid Mohamed al Nur of the SLA-AW were each given a vice-presidency, with responsibility for external affairs, political affairs, and finance, respectively (*Sudan Tribune*, 2012b; HSBA, 2012). More recently, a joint military command was decided, with Abdul Aziz al Hilu as head and JEM's general secretary for presidential affairs, Suleiman Sendel, as deputy in charge of operations; the SLA-MM and SLA-AW received the less important deputy positions of administration and logistics, respectively.²¹⁰



Nuba combatants of JEM, on the border between South Sudan and South Kordofan, May 2012.

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The alliance presents many possible advantages for the Darfur movements. In particular, it promises to:

- put an end to the fragmentation of rebel groups by uniting them under Abdul Aziz al Hilu, whose leadership is difficult to challenge for the less experienced and less popular Darfur rebel leaders;
- challenge the GoS's strategy of isolation—which tends to present the various armed opposition movements as purely local groups with a narrow agenda, and their conflicts as mostly inter-tribal—and introduce a broad, national agenda for Sudan, including the objective of national regime change;
- provide access to the Nuba Mountains, which can serve as a good rear base for possible raids on Khartoum, such as that attempted by JEM in 2008 (then without the support of other groups), and as a geographically convenient area for sustaining material and political links with South Sudan; and

- improve links with Juba through the intermediation of the SPLM-N, with the potential to increase support from South Sudan, including rear bases there, a prospect already held out by the fact that Juba has encouraged the Darfur rebels to unite with the SPLM-N.

Yet the alliance also faces serious obstacles, including:

- the persistent rivalries between Darfur rebel leaders. In particular, SLA-AW's Abdul Wahid Mohamed al Nur and JEM both sought to lead the alliance, although their rivalry ultimately prevented either from obtaining a better position within the joint leadership structure.²¹¹
- ideological differences. Playing for the favour of the SPLM-N, SLA factions still insist that JEM has not renounced the previous Islamist stance of many of its leaders. JEM, for its part, has sought to resist secularist outbidding by SLA factions, which they believe would separate the new alliance from an important part of the Sudanese non-armed opposition (including not only the Islamists of the Popular Congress, but also the Umma Party and the Unionists).
- challenges for increased military cooperation. The SPLM-N seems to be prepared for a patient mountain guerrilla war in the Nuba Mountains, while the Darfuris are keen to pursue their customary lightning raids with Toyota Land Cruisers (not necessarily adapted to the mountain terrain), preferably aimed at targets in Sudan's centre. As a JEM member put it: 'Both SPLA-South and North have primitive tactics. Our tactics, we got them from the Chadian army, and those are French tactics [*sic*], while SPLA have tactics from the British. Now we hope SPLA is trying to change its tactics because of [the way we fought in] Hejlij.'²¹² An SPLM-N cadre confirms: 'Our strategy is the British one: occupy areas, settle administration. We don't like JEM tactics of raids. We do artillery shelling first, then tanks, then infantry. We use mostly the cars for transport.'²¹³
- frustration among SPLM-N officers regarding the loss of some fighters to JEM. Some SPLM-N cadres are irritated by the fact that JEM has recruited South Kordofan (Nuba and Missiriya Arab) members from its ranks, attracting them thanks to JEM's military might as well as the possibility of obtaining higher ranks in JEM. SPLM-N Missiriya cadres complained that more than 50 Missiriya fighters had moved to JEM, beginning with JEM's main commander in South Kordofan, Fadel Mohamed Rahoma (see below). SPLM-N

fighters also complain of JEM monopolizing cars and arms captured from SAF during battles, a practice that previously caused divisions among Darfur rebels (Tanner and Tubiana, 2007, p. 56).²¹⁴

- unfulfilled demands for Darfuris to be represented in the SPLM-N leadership itself and the SPLM-N's own divisions. Not only are Darfur groups dissatisfied with the SPLM-N's dominance in the SRF, but they also remain sceptical about the power-sharing inside the SPLM-N itself.²¹⁵

In ideological terms, the greatest challenge—yet potentially also the greatest incentive—for the SPLM-N in the alliance is collaboration with JEM, which clearly remains the strongest of the Darfur movements in military terms. As one JEM leader noted: 'The alliance between the SPLM-N and JEM is possible because they need us, not because they like us.'²¹⁶ JEM's national agenda is well known and its attempts to extend the Darfur war into Kordofan started shortly after the crisis in Darfur itself (Tubiana, 2011a, p. 61). Until 2011, JEM's Kordofan ambitions were largely focused on the Missiriya Arab tribe, which was frustrated by the government's suppression of a (Missiriya-dominated) state of West Kordofan. JEM managed to recruit a number of dissatisfied Missiriya, notably among members of Hassan al Tourabi's Popular Congress Party and of the armed group Al Shahama (meaning 'valiant' or 'noble' in Arabic), which had also been founded by Missiriya ex-members of the party.²¹⁷ The appointment of Mohamed Bahar Hamadein—a Kordofan Missiriya and JEM vice-president in charge of Kordofan—as leader of JEM's delegation to the Doha talks likewise reflected the movement's will to expand its ambitions beyond Darfur (Tubiana, 2011a, p. 61).

JEM's Missiriya recruitment does not seem to have been much undermined by Mohamed Bahar's defection from JEM in 2011. JEM retains some Missiriya in its leadership, including Fadel Mohamed Rahoma, second deputy of the general commander, and JEM's main commander in South Kordofan and the border area with South Sudan.

JEM has also attempted to promote leaders from other Kordofan tribes. In February 2012, replacing his late brother Khalil Ibrahim as JEM chairman, Jibril Ibrahim made several new appointments. Notably, he gave the deputy chairmanship for Kordofan (Mohamed Bahar's position) to Mohamed al Bilel Issa Zayid (also known as 'Wad Bilel') from the Hamar Arab tribe, who was

already a member of JEM's executive office and a field commander active in Darfur, South Kordofan, and South Sudan (JEM, 2012b).²¹⁸

Even before the resumption of war in South Kordofan, JEM had also been attempting to recruit among the Nuba. As early as 2002, while the SPLA Nuba branch was signing a ceasefire, JEM was forming a secret Nuba cell headed by Abdelbagi Ali Garfa (an ex-SPLA Nuba cadre who later returned to the SPLA), with At-Tom Hamid Tutu, also Nuba and deputy secretary of Tourabi's Popular Congress Party in South Kordofan, as deputy. A March 2008 record of JEM's executive office members lists several Nuba, including Amir al Likka Kuku An-Nur, a former captain of the NISS in Darfur, who joined JEM in 2002 and was appointed JEM's 'governor of South Kordofan'; As-sir Jibril Tiya, political adviser; and Yazid Defallah Abderrahim Rashash, deputy secretary for youth and students (now adviser to the chairman for cultural affairs).

In December 2010, At-Tom Hamid Tutu was released from prison and officially (re-)joined JEM. When war restarted in the Nuba Mountains on 5–6 June 2011 he immediately started to form a JEM Nuba 'section' with the support of Ahmad Adam Bakhit in South Sudan. He was given two or three cars and recruited some 50 men. On 29–30 June, he led a JEM delegation to Abdul Aziz al Hilu in order to start joint operations in South Kordofan.²¹⁹ In July 2011, the GoS arrested At-Tom and another JEM member as well as one of Abdul Aziz's bodyguards after their car was destroyed during an attack by a joint force of the SPLM-N and JEM against the garrison of Tess south of the South Kordofan capital, Kadugli (*Sudan Tribune*, 2011a; 2011b).²²⁰ After At-Tom's arrest, Amir al Likka became the most senior Nuba politician in JEM while Col. Mohamed Sherif Adam Shatta, an ex-SAF officer and a Borgo (a tribe originally from Chad) from the Nuba Mountains, became the main field commander of the Nuba section. At-Tom's arrest did not prevent the nucleus he had founded from growing to 150–200 men and six to seven cars after another battle in Tess that same month, or from participating in other battles alongside the SPLM-N, including the battles of al Hamra in July 2011 and al Ithemir in August.²²¹ JEM Nuba recruits include many young graduates, some originally in Tourabi's Islamic Students Association, but many more from the SPLM-N.

In late February 2012, the SPLM-N announced its first official joint attack with JEM in Jaw and Troji areas, at the border between South Kordofan and Unity state (South Sudan), an attack in which SPLA-South also participated.²²²

The GoS also claimed to have killed JEM soldiers fighting alongside the SPLA-S during its 26 March 2012 attack on the disputed Hejlil oil fields in South Kordofan. While both JEM and the SPLM-N have publicly played down their roles in the fighting in Hejlil to avoid being accused by Khartoum of acting as Southern proxies, JEM indeed fought in the Hejlil area and around Kharasana (farther north in South Kordofan) during both the late March offensive and the occupation of Hejlil by the SPLA from 10 to 20 April 2012.²²³ Some JEM leaders claim their troops were the first to enter Hejlil and the most instrumental in SAF's (temporary) withdrawal. It is unclear whether JEM's operations were really integrated with SPLA (South and North) troops or whether they pursued their own goals in capturing vehicles and arms from SAF, while diverting SAF forces in fighting north of Hejlil, thus preventing SAF reinforcements from the North. Some JEM leaders also claim their forces had almost succeeded in taking Kharasana when the withdrawal of Southern troops from Hejlil on 20 April, and prospective SAF reinforcements, obliged them to abandon their target.

The Hejlil episode reflects more fundamental tensions between the SRF's pan-Sudanese agenda and its cooperation with the SPLA. Both JEM and SPLM-N leaders admit that the GoSS's compliance with international calls for the SPLA's withdrawal from Hejlil was a political victory, in that it allowed Juba to reintroduce the issue of SAF presence in Abyei into the ongoing North-South negotiations. Yet some have also indicated regret that the Southern claim over Hejlil might give Khartoum international and domestic support against what could be described as foreign aggression, while the Northern population and the Missiriya Arab tribe, which generally consider Hejlil part of their territory, may have seen Northern rebels' activities in the area as more legitimate.²²⁴

It is worth noting that JEM troops in the area (some 75 cars) were led by Fadel Mohamed Rahoma, the main Missiriya commander, and were partly composed of Missiriya; the SPLA-N troops in the same area also included a Missiriya section, led by Lt. Col. Bokora Mohamed Fadel (Fadel Mohamed Rahoma's uncle).²²⁵ JEM and SPLA-N Missiriya sections had already fought together in Kharasana in August 2011, and in Meram area farther west in July 2011 and April 2012.

JEM's growing presence in South Kordofan is significant. Indeed, according to JEM leaders, the group essentially stopped fighting in Darfur altogether

after 23 June 2011—although fighting resumed in March 2012 in Baashim, north of El Fasher (Radio Dabanga, 2012a).²²⁶ When Khalil Ibrahim was killed by a SAF airstrike at the border between North and South Kordofan on 23 December 2011, he had been moving to South Kordofan together with a large part of JEM's forces. In early 2012, JEM claimed that the bulk of its forces—some 200 to 300 vehicles—were operating in the triangle between South Kordofan, eastern Darfur, and South Sudan, under the command of Fadel Mohamed Rahoma, and including some 30 cars based in Jaw area alongside SPLA-N until May 2012.²²⁷ JEM and SPLM-N members estimate that, by May 2012, JEM's Kordofan forces comprised some 300 to 400 Missiriya fighters and several hundred others from various Nuba tribes.²²⁸

JEM leaders also claim to have travelled regularly to South Kordofan, not only for SRF meetings, but also for their own internal meetings. The movement declared that Jibril Ibrahim's 'election' as JEM chairman in January 2012 took place during a JEM conference in Hideyat, south-west of Al Mujlad. Other parallel conferences took place in Wadi Howar area, JEM's main rear base in northern Darfur, and in Yei in South Sudan, where JEM's vice president Ahmed Adam Bakhit has been based since mid-2010 (Tubiana, 2011a, p. 58).²²⁹

The Masalit link

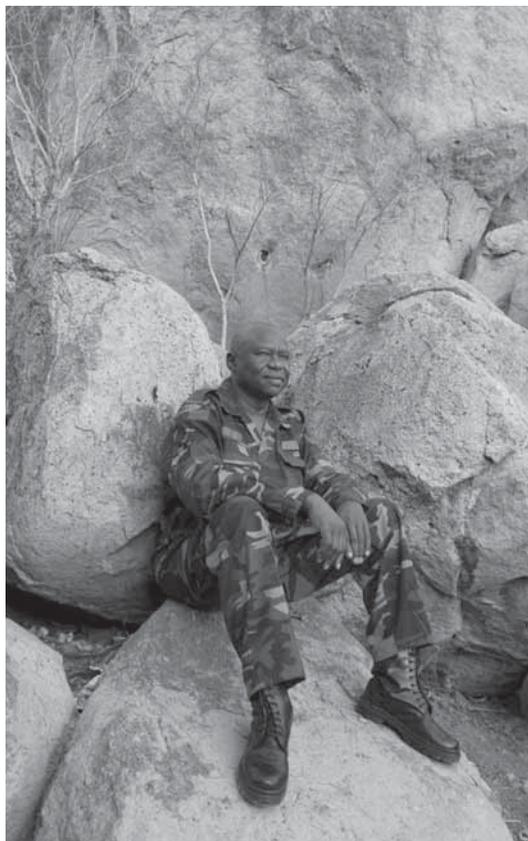
As described above, one of the main attractions of the SRF for Darfur's rebels is the possibility of increased support from South Sudan, which Juba has made clear is conditional on an alliance with the SPLM-N.

As is the case with South Darfur–Bahr al Ghazal connections, one critical link between Darfur rebels, the SPLM-N, and South Sudan is ethnic. Of particular importance is the presence of the Masalit group, which is originally from West Darfur, in both the Nuba Mountains and South Sudan.

In the 1880s, when Darfur was under Turco-Egyptian rule, the Masalit had taken advantage of the troubled situation to carve their own sultanate in the buffer zone between the Darfur and the Wadday sultanates (the latter in present-day Chad). By the end of the 19th century, following the west–east route used by Mahdists and pilgrims to Mecca, Masalit had begun to settle in the Nuba Mountains. In the 1920s, many members of a Masalit nucleus, which had previously settled in Gereida in South Darfur, moved farther south to the Kafia

Kingi enclave and to the area of Raja in present-day South Sudan. These southward movements were subsequently repeated during waves of drought migration in the 20th century, while the Masalit communities of the Nuba Mountains were reinforced by the eastward movement of Darfuris who were seeking work in the Jezira cotton schemes. They founded Darfuri—and notably Masalit—communities in central and eastern Sudan. The presence of Masalit in Raja county of Western Bahr al Ghazal as well as other areas of South Sudan, including Juba, increased further after the signing of the CPA, and after SAF and ‘janjaweed’ attacks on Masalit communities in Gereida in south Darfur and Dafaq in the Kafia Kingi enclave in 2006.²³⁰

Many Masalit from the Nuba Mountains, who had often mixed with Nuba tribes and had come to be considered Nuba themselves, joined the SPLA’s struggle in the 1980s, when the SPLA extended its areas of control from South Sudan to the Nuba Mountains under the leadership of the charismatic Nuba leader Yusif Kuwa Mekki. The most notable of these was Abdul Aziz al Hilu himself, whose paternal and maternal ancestors hailed from the area of Al Geneina in West Darfur; they were among Masalit exiles who fled heavy taxation by the Masalit sultan and settled in four villages of the Nuba Mountains as early as the 1920s.²³¹ Abdul Aziz fought with the SPLA not only in the Nuba Mountains, but also in eastern Sudan (where Masalit communities are likewise important) and Darfur. In 1991–92, in view of his Masalit origin, he was chosen to act as chief of staff for the failed SPLA



Abdul Aziz al Hilu, South Kordofan, May 2012.

© Jérôme Tubiana

expedition from Bahr al Ghazal to Darfur; when the expedition's Fur leader, Daud Yahya Bowlad, was captured and killed, Abdul Aziz managed to escape to South Sudan (Flint and de Waal, 2008, p. 24). In the late 1990s Abdul Aziz became the leader of the SPLA's 'New Sudan Brigade'—the SPLA's branch for northern Sudan. Joined by Adam Mahamat 'Bazooka', a Chadian Masalit ex-officer of the Chadian army who was seeking SPLA support to overthrow the Chadian regime, he recruited several hundred Masalit with the aim of launching a new SPLA expedition from South Sudan into Darfur.

In 2001, after Yusif Kuwa died of cancer in London, Abdul Aziz replaced him as leader in the Nuba Mountains. In 2003, together with Southern troops from Bahr al Ghazal led by the Kreish SPLA leader Rizig Zakaria (currently governor of Western Bahr al Ghazal state), Abdul Aziz's partly Masalit troops captured Raja from the government and went on into Darfur, where they were again dispersed by SAF. In 2003, as the war in Darfur started and Dar Masalit began to suffer violent attacks by 'janjaweed' militias, Adam 'Bazooka' returned to Darfur at the head of an SPLA unit that finally merged with local Masalit militias to become the Masalit branch of the SLA (Flint and de Waal, 2008, p. 88; Tubiana, 2011a, p. 15).²³²

As its negotiations with Khartoum progressed, the SPLA's interest in Darfur decreased, while the SLA became increasingly autonomous from its Southern mentors. After the CPA, Abdul Aziz was appointed deputy governor of South Kordofan. Since then, and although the GoSS gave Abdul Aziz control of its Darfur file (the 'Darfur task force') in the transition period, Darfur Masalit have felt strongly that they have lacked a strong leader, which has led them to integrate with rebel movements dominated by the Fur and the Zaghawa.

In the original SLA structure the Masalit were given the comparatively powerless position of vice president, while the chairmanship went to Abdul Wahid Mohamed al Nur as a representative of the Fur majority group, and the position of chief of staff to the Zaghawa as a recognition of their military power. The SLA Masalit vice presidency was held successively by Mansour Arbab Younis and Khamis Abdallah Abbakar, close associates with connections to the SPLA (Mansour had briefly joined the SPLA in 2002–03). But while Khamis failed to become the charismatic leader the Masalit had anticipated, and left Abdul Wahid to form his own minority faction, Mansour joined JEM in 2009,

becoming the movement's secretary for presidential affairs, and helping to recruit a significant number of Masalit, notably from the refugee camps in Chad. JEM reportedly retains a significant number of Masalit troops.²³³

In 2008, there were hopes that the Masalit would find the powerful rebel leader they were seeking in the person of Siddiq Abdelkarim Naser 'Masalit', a cousin of Mansour Arbab and an ex-SAF soldier. His death in Western Bahr al Ghazal, described above, put an end to this hope. The Masalit consider both the SPLA and the Fur SLA faction led by Ahmad Abdeshafi 'Toba' responsible for Siddiq's murder. As a consequence, according to a Fur commander, 'there is still a misunderstanding between Fur and Masalit'.²³⁴

Siddiq was replaced by Ahmad Badawi 'Hamoda', a Masalit from South Kordofan and a cousin of Abdul Aziz al Hilu, who had joined the SPLA in 1992 under al Hillu's command. The Masalit rebels were now divided in two: some joined JEM and others—including 'Hamoda', Abdelaziz Abu Numusha, and Haidar Galukoma (the latter also formally an SPLM officer since 2003)—joined LJM to negotiate with the government in Doha. By the time LJM signed the Doha agreement in July 2011, only Haidar was still with LJM; Abu Numusha had left to join the SLA-MM while 'Hamoda', after having linked with JEM, had rejoined the SPLM-N along with Khamis Abdallah Abbakar. Given the presence of these two leaders in the SPLM-N, and the popularity of al Hillu among the Masalit, it appears that the former troops of Siddiq 'Masalit', which were mostly dormant in refugee camps in Western Bahr al Ghazal and CAR, as well as in the Kafya Kingi enclave, swiftly joined the SPLM-N.²³⁵

In August 2011, a conference gathered Masalit leaders from all sides in Juba: the SPLM-N, SLA-MM, JEM, Chadian Masalit, the Masalit community in Khartoum, and politicians of the non-armed opposition in the North, including from the Umma and the Communist parties. One of the aims was to address the question of the Masalit leadership. Most of the participants agreed that the Masalit community should choose Abdul Aziz al Hilu as the best leader to defend the Masalit, including in Darfur, where the tribe has suffered considerable displacement and loss of territory.²³⁶

Beyond the Masalit, many Darfuris seem to agree that 'because of his Darfurian origin, Abdul Aziz could also be a good leader for Darfur movements, able to reunite them under a single structure'.²³⁷ Abdul Aziz al Hilu's Masalit

origin was also taken into account by JEM when it sought to link with the SPLM-N, and from there with the SPLA in South Sudan. Mansour Arbab, who was one of the first JEM leaders sent to Kampala to meet the SPLA, and one of the three JEM leaders—together with Ahmed Adam Bakhit and Bishara Suleiman—to participate in the Kaoda negotiations with the SPLM-N, explained: ‘I took advantage of my [Masalit] origin, common to that of Abdul Aziz, to establish the dialogue between SPLM-N and JEM.’²³⁸

Finally, it is worth remembering that Darfur’s war is also at issue in the conflict between Abdul Aziz al Hilu and the NCP governor of South Kordofan, Ahmed Haroun, who hails from a Borgo family that migrated to South Kordofan.²³⁹ While Abdul Aziz was one of the predecessors of the Darfur rebel movements, Ahmed Haroun has been one of their most aggressive enemies, indicted by the International Criminal Court for war crimes and crimes against humanity allegedly committed in Darfur in 2003–04, when he was minister of state at the Ministry of Interior in Khartoum, in charge of the Darfur security file.²⁴⁰

Darfuri troops in the SPLA

Beyond opportunities for the SPLM-N to recruit more Darfuri combatants to fight in Darfur or in the Nuba Mountains, questions also remain regarding the future of Darfuri soldiers who have fought with the SPLA on either side of the North–South divide.

In late 2011, UNMISS estimated that the SPLA in South Sudan retained some 10,000 combatants from the North.²⁴¹ These were mainly from the Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile, but also from various Darfur tribes, notably the Masalit.²⁴²

Justifying their demands for more representation in the SPLM-N, Darfuri sources in Juba indicate that around 1,500 Darfuris are already in the SPLM-N in the Nuba Mountains.²⁴³ They insist that Darfuris represent the third-largest group of combatants in the SPLM-N after the Nuba and those from southern Blue Nile (although each of these three groups contains various and often very disparate ethnic groups). The majority of the SPLM-N’s Darfuris are Masalit, but the movement also includes some Fur and a small number of Zaghawa.²⁴⁴ SPLM-N Nuba sources generally downplay the Darfuri presence among their ranks and claim that the overwhelming majority of their troops are Nuba.²⁴⁵ Yet Abdul Aziz al Hilu himself claims to have several hundred Masalit soldiers—‘enough to form a battalion’—within his ranks.²⁴⁶

It is unclear whether the reported 1,500 Darfuri members of the SPLM-N include the many Darfuris who have settled in South Kordofan and Blue Nile—and are no longer considered Darfuri. One such individual is the Fur leader Omar Abderahman ‘Fur’, who is originally from southern Jebel Marra and joined the SPLA as a student in Egypt in 1984. In 2005, after the signing of the CPA, he became the minister of agriculture in South Darfur. Before the 2010 elections he took refuge in Juba and then became an officer in the SPLM-N, fighting in South Kordofan in 2011.²⁴⁷ As one SPLM-N officer puts it: ‘All soldiers from North Sudan within SPLA have been ordered to join SPLM-N.’²⁴⁸ According to ‘Hamoda’, ‘we in SPLM-N are putting efforts in convincing not only Masalit but also Fur and Arabs in SPLA to join SPLM-N’.²⁴⁹ 🗨️

IV. Conclusion

Ongoing, if localized, violence in Darfur signals the failure of the international community's efforts to end the Darfur conflict. Neither the peace negotiations under the aegis of the United Nations and African Union mediators—involving only a limited set of interlocutors—nor the UN sanctions regime has succeeded in removing the drivers, perpetrators, instruments, or logistics of violence from Darfur. Meanwhile, as the international community's attention continues to drift away from Darfur towards the violence in South Kordofan, Blue Nile, and the eastern parts of the North–South border, the Darfur conflict itself continues to evolve internally. The GoS is mobilizing long-standing grievances among non-Arab groups in new ways, particularly in eastern Darfur, and the Darfur conflict is increasingly spilling over into both the new conflict of the Nuba Mountains and the dangerous North–South standoff in the South Darfur–Bahr al Ghazal borderlands.

This report has sought to show three concentric rings of the Darfur conflict:

- first, its evolving grounding in **disputes over territory and ethnic political dominance**, which continue to be manipulated both by local political leadership and by SAF's counter-insurgency strategy;
- second, the long-standing **connections between Darfur's rebellion and adjacent struggles** in other parts of Sudan, now being reactivated and enhanced as the North–South confrontation grows; and
- third, the **international channels of material support and supply** for the conflict, including Khartoum's reliable stable of international arms suppliers and the commercial networks within and outside Sudan that support SAF's logistics and military capacity.

As this report indicates, treating the Darfur conflict in isolation from the rest of Sudan not only makes increasingly little political sense, but also fatally undermines the UN sanctions regime, the major international instrument intended to mitigate the conflict. The Security Council appears powerless and unwilling

to prevent SAF from continuing to move equipment into Darfur with total impunity. As a result, the Sudanese government has had no serious difficulties in maintaining its forces' supply chain in Darfur since 2005, despite the fact that they are doing so in manifest violation of the UN embargo. SAF transfers directly contribute to the prolonging of the conflict not only because they are used in military operations against the rebels, but also because they represent a regular and increasingly significant source of weaponry and ammunition for rebel forces themselves.

Tellingly, this pattern of fresh international weapons supplies to SAF serving as a source of supply to all sides, as has been familiar for several years in Darfur, is now being replicated in South Kordofan. This underlines further the futility of the Security Council's limitation of sanctions to Darfur alone. Meanwhile, both the arms embargo and individual sanctions have failed to change the behaviour of any of Darfur's armed actors, governmental or non-governmental.

It may be possible to revive the international community's commitment to Darfur if violence spills further over its borders into South Kordofan or South Sudan. Yet, even when Darfur was at the very top of the Sudan policy agenda, international efforts to end the conflict or curb its humanitarian impact largely failed. While the local dynamics and regional political environment of Africa's best-known conflict continue to evolve, its basic tactics and technologies endure.

The most likely future scenario for Darfur is thus 'more of the same'. The GoS will probably continue an inconclusive war of attrition against divided rebel groups, further drawing from and fuelling Darfur's patchwork of inter-communal conflicts. The inevitable human consequence will be further displacement and suffering for Darfuris, now experiencing their ninth year of unresolved conflict. 📌

Annexe. Main armed opposition groups of Darfur

Justice and Equality Movement (JEM)

JEM is tribally dominated by the Zaghawa Kobe, even if there has been some recruitment among other tribes, in particular among Missiriya and Hamar Arab groups. Between 2006 and 2010, JEM took advantage of the support provided by the Chadian regime of Idriss Déby and the Libyan *Jamahiriyah* of Col. Muammar Qaddafi. It quickly became the most militarily powerful component of the rebellion in Darfur, as illustrated in 2008, when it launched a raid on Omdurman, Khartoum's twin city.

Yet the rapprochement between N'Djamena and Khartoum in 2010 significantly reduced the external support available to the movement and helped to persuade JEM to attend the Doha Peace Process. During the negotiations, however, JEM maintained a critical position towards the credibility of the overall process. In July 2011, it finally refused to endorse the peace document proposed by the African Union–United Nations mediation team. Shortly thereafter, the chairman of the movement, Khalil Ibrahim, managed to leave Libya, where he had been stuck since 2010 after being expelled by Chadian authorities. While little concrete evidence exists, many observers presume that JEM was able to take advantage of its Libyan presence and its proximity to the *Jamahiriyah* regime to collect military equipment and financial assets before leaving the country.

In July 2011, the movement also started operating in the Nuba Mountains, where a unit with a few technical vehicles was deployed to support the SPLM-N forces. The group also joined the Sudan Revolutionary Front alongside SLA-MM and SLA-AW. At the end of December 2011, Khalil was killed in an airstrike launched by SAF in the border area between South Darfur and North and South Kordofan. Jibril Ibrahim, Khalil's brother and former JEM secretary for foreign affairs, was appointed his successor. Subsequently, in February 2012, Jibril also became the Sudan Revolutionary Front's vice president, which put him in charge of foreign relations and humanitarian affairs for the alliance.

As suggested by its increased involvement in the conflict alongside the SPLM-N in South Kordofan, and despite the challenges introduced by the loss of its charismatic leader, JEM remains the Darfuri armed group with the best logistics, most effective coordination, and greatest military capacity. According to the GoS and diplomatic sources, JEM has 250–300 vehicles and around 2,000 troops, all of which are highly mobile; they are divided between their historical stronghold of Wadi Howar at the border between northern Darfur and Chad, and the triangle between eastern Darfur, South Kordofan, and South Sudan.²⁵⁰

Liberation and Justice Movement (LJM)

Created under international mediation efforts as a negotiation platform for two earlier coalitions, LJM never had a joint military command, relying mostly on relatively isolated military commanders, many of whom were previously members of the armed factions that resulted from the splintering of the SLA and JEM. Led by Tijani Sese, LJM played an important role in the Doha Peace Process and is the only movement that signed the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur with the GoS, on 14 July 2011.

The Doha process generated internal dissension and splintering that severely reduced the movement's military force, especially after the defection of its major commanders, Ali 'Kerubino' and Ali Mokhtar. As of early 2012, LJM appeared to have little popular support in Darfur—even if it was officially backed by the Fur *shura* council (tribal association)—and severe problems of internal cohesion, as illustrated by the defection of Ahmad Abdeshafi, who was deputy chairman of the movement, in January 2012. All these weaknesses, in addition to the challenges that were, at the time of writing, beginning to arise from the implementation of the provisions contained in the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur, may present a threat to the continued existence of the movement itself.

At the Doha negotiations in 2011, LJM officially claimed to have some 6,000 to 7,000 combatants, whom it hoped to integrate into SAF. However, the GoS itself reports that, particularly after the defections in early 2011, LJM has no more than 1,000 to 2,000 combatants; most of these troops are believed to be members of the (Zaghawa) United Revolutionary Front and the (Arab) United

Revolutionary Forces Front, based (separately or sometimes jointly) in pockets of Dar Zaghawa in northern Darfur and eastern Jebel Marra.

Sudan Liberation Army (SLA)

Between 2003 and the signing of the DPA in May 2006, the SLA was the main rebel group in Darfur and the origin of some of the strongest factions still operating militarily. Founded in August 2001 as the Darfur Liberation Front or Darfur Liberation Movement, it adopted the name ‘Sudan Liberation Army’ in February 2003. In 2004–05 the SLA had about 10,000 fighters, drawn largely from the Zaghawa, Fur, Masalit, Berti, Meidob, and Tunjur tribes (Tanner and Tubiana, 2007).

Prior to its split in 2005, the president was Abdul Wahid Mohamed al Nur (Fur); the vice president was Khamis Abdallah Abbakar (Masalit); and the general secretary was Minni Minawi (Zaghawa Wogi), who replaced Abdallah Abbakar Bashar ‘Juli mye’ (Zaghawa Wogi) in 2004.

Sudan Liberation Army-Abdul Wahid Mohamed al Nur (SLA-AW)

At the conclusion of the Abuja peace talks that established the Darfur Peace Agreement in 2006, Abdul Wahid—who had originally served as president of the Sudan Liberation Army—settled in Eritrea and then in Paris. Over time, he lost support from both troops and commanders, who were partly displeased by the highly centralized management of the movement, and partly disappointed by the absence of their leader from the field. Abdul Wahid has also lost support among the international community, particularly because of his rigid rejection of the peace talks in Doha. After his departure from Paris in late 2010—and in view of subsequent obstacles to returning to Europe—he settled in Kampala, Uganda. In 2011 Abdul Wahid was joined by Abulqasim Imam El-Haj, an SLA defector who had joined the DPA signatories and served as West Darfur governor between 2006 and 2010.

In Darfur, SLA-AW’s presence and sphere of influence is limited to the mountainous Jebel Marra area, one of the regions that has been regularly targeted

by SAF military operations and aerial attacks; SLA-AW is also active in some pockets in North Darfur, particularly Jebel Meidob and Jebel Issa, which are partly controlled by the largely autonomous local Meidob faction, led by Suleiman Marejan. Although its strength has declined, SLA-AW still has several hundred combatants, but only some 30 vehicles divided between its areas of operation.²⁵¹ In spite of efforts by LJM and its Sudanese and international backers to undermine it, SLA-AW's support among Fur IDPs remains significant. In 2011, SLA-AW joined the Sudan Revolutionary Front, along with the other main Darfur movements. In February 2012, Abdul Wahid was appointed vice president for political and legal affairs of the coalition.

Sudan Liberation Army-Minni Arku Minawi (SLA-MM)

Consisting largely of the Zaghawa component of the SLA, the SLA-MM gradually broke away from the Fur component of Abdul Wahid Mohamed al Nur in 2004–05, a split that was made official at the Haskanita conference in south-eastern Darfur in October 2005. SLA-MM was the predominant rebel faction fighting the government until its leader, Minni Minawi, signed the DPA in May 2006. As a result of its consequent affiliation with Khartoum, the movement progressively lost the bulk of its troops and vehicles, as well as some of its territory and popular support among its own Zaghawa Wogi kin.

In late 2010, the movement left the government and resumed its military struggle. Between late 2010 and early 2011, SLA-MM elements vacated the localities they had controlled on behalf of the government, especially in the eastern part of Darfur, moving to more remote rural areas and engaging GoS forces and allied non-Arab militias and communities with mobile fighting tactics, including attacks of military and civilian vehicles on roads. This conflict resulted in the creation of government-backed and -trained local militias (integrated into Popular Defence Forces), mainly recruited from other non-Arab local tribes, and the emergence of a cycle of violence in which Zaghawa fighters and civilians were indiscriminately targeted.

During the first half of 2011, as the Doha process progressed, a number of military commanders previously affiliated with LJM joined SLA-MM. The GoS estimates that SLA-MM has a renewed strength, with '550 combatants with 117

vehicles' (UNSC, 2012b, p. 30).²⁵² In February 2012, Minni Minawi was appointed vice president in charge of finance and administrative affairs for the Sudan Revolutionary Front.

Sudan Liberation Army-Justice (SLA-Justice)

This Zaghawa (Wogi sub-group) splinter faction from SLA-MM is politically represented by Musa Tajedin and is led militarily by Ali Abdallah 'Kerubino'. In 2010 and 2011, Kerubino's faction was considered the most militarily effective group of the LJM coalition. It was engaged in several military confrontations against SAF, particularly in Dar-es-Salam locality in North Darfur, sometimes in coordination with other movements. The GoS estimates that the group has some 17 vehicles (UNSC, 2012b, p. 30).²⁵³

Between late 2011 and early 2012, SLA-Justice was negotiating with the main Darfur armed movements, in particular JEM, in both Kampala and Juba, in order to determine its role in the scheme of the Sudan Revolutionary Front, and to establish bilateral frameworks for operational cooperation.

Sudan Liberation Army-United (SLA-United)

SLA-United has gathered former SLA commanders and politicians from various Fur and Zaghawa areas of North Darfur under the leadership of Ali Haroun Dud (a Fur from Ain Siro). The group's leadership has been based in Juba, South Sudan, since mid-2010, after it refused to join LJM in the the Doha peace process. It has received proposals to merge with the three main movements (in particular SLA-MM) to facilitate reunification of the rebellion, but at the time of writing, it was maintaining its autonomy. The leaders of the movement consider themselves part of the SRF, even if no formal endorsement has been made. 🗨️

Endnotes

- 1 This report is based on field research undertaken in Sudan and South Sudan between October 2011 and June 2012, as well as additional interviews conducted with Darfuris and international actors by telephone, email, and in person in Addis Ababa, Kampala, and London. The field research has been supplemented by a desk review of political and human rights reporting on Darfur by the United Nations, the African Union, and non-governmental and international organizations as well as documents and photographs provided by international researchers and journalists, Darfuri interlocutors, and international actors. The research and writing were conducted after the authors' service on the UN Panel of Experts on the Sudan.
- 2 This report does not assess the varying estimates of civilian deaths and displacements in Darfur. Survey-based figures cited in the 2009 report of the African Union Panel on Darfur range from 140,000 to 300,000 civilian deaths during 2003–05, principally from disease and hunger, but also an estimated 35,000 from violence. Regardless of the precision of these figures, it is undeniable that civilian deaths and displacements in this phase were larger than in any other phase, and registrations of internally displaced persons alone indicate that hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of people were forced from their homes in this period. For this range of estimates, see AU (2009, pp. 21–27).
- 3 Flint (2010b, p. 10) cites civilian casualty counts of the African Union/United Nations Hybrid operation in Darfur (UNAMID), indicating that at least 1,000 people were killed by inter-Arab fighting in the first nine months of 2010—the largest single cause of violent civilian death recorded by UNAMID in that period.
- 4 AI (2007; 2008, ch. 10); Lewis (2009, pp. 45–49); Tubiana (2011a); UNSC (2005b; 2006a; 2007; 2008; 2009b).
- 5 While little concrete information is available regarding weapons outflows from Libyan stockpiles, their largely unsecured status has been well documented. See, in particular, HRW (2011b). See also the detailed ground-level reporting by C.J. Chivers for *The New York Times*, including Chivers (2011a; 2011b). For an impressionistic summary of information from governments in the Sahel region (including Chad but not Sudan) regarding the regional proliferation of arms from Libyan stockpiles, although without substantive fieldwork, see UNSC (2012a, paras. 32–36).
- 6 Author interviews with various Darfur rebel movements and SPLM-N leaders, Juba and Raja, December 2011 and February 2012.
- 7 In the 1980s, 'janjaweed'—originally meaning 'the horsemen armed with G3 assault rifles' and later 'the devil horsemen'—was used as a pejorative nickname for livestock rustlers and road bandits. During the war in Darfur from 2003 onwards, non-Arab communities and rebels, in particular, applied the term to government-backed militias, which were largely recruited among Arab tribes. While the name became popular among Western media and policy-makers, the government and the Arab communities and militias retained its initial meaning of 'outlaws', preferring to call government-backed militias *fursan* ('knights') or use

the name of the official paramilitary forces into which the militias were increasingly integrated—such as the Popular Defence Forces, Border Guard, and Central Reserve Police.

8 See GoS and SLA-MM (2006).

9 Bassolé worked hard to keep talks open between the government and JEM, accurately regarded as the strongest movement in military terms.

10 His nickname is sometimes written ‘Karabino’.

11 Some of the signatories of the letter that announced this defection later said their name had been included without their consent. Among the reasons for the split, Zaghawa leaders cited the lack of reaction of Tijani Sese to the violence against their tribe, as detailed in this section.

12 In the 1990s, Khalil Ibrahim—like many Darfuri and then Islamist politicians who are now in the JEM leadership—fought in *jihād* against the SPLM.

13 Thus, in the 1980s, Zaghawa candidates won against Bergid and Rizeigat in Dar Bergid and Dar Rizeigat. See Abdul-Jalil (1988); Tubiana (2008); USIP (forthcoming).

14 Author interviews with Shangal Tobay leaders, locations and dates withheld.

15 Author interview with a politician from Shangal Tobay, location and date withheld.

16 Author interview with a local government official, location and date withheld.

17 Author interview with a traditional leader from Shangal Tobay, location and date withheld.

18 Author interview with a non-Arab traditional leader, location and date withheld.

19 Author interview with an Arab traditional leader, location and date withheld.

20 Author interview with a leader of the Popular Defence Forces (PDF), location and date withheld.

21 Author interview with a traditional leader, location and date withheld.

22 Minni Minawi explicitly told one of the authors he would return to the rebellion should the results of the elections not satisfy him (author interview with Minni Minawi, Khartoum, December 2009). Following the elections and the declaration of the new government in June 2010, he lost his constitutional authority and executive powers. The fact that he was not re-appointed as senior assistant to the president also appears to have increased his suspicions of the government’s real agenda.

23 Other parts of the agreement that were of much greater importance for the rebellion—such as the funding of the Darfur Development Fund—continued to be ignored, however.

24 Author interviews with SLA-MM representatives, Juba, December 2011.

25 Author interview with a PDF leader from Shangal Tobay, location and date withheld.

26 Both towns are part of Dar-es-Salam locality, of which Dar-es-Salam is the administrative centre.

27 Author interview with a member of the governor’s delegation, location and date withheld. See also AI (2012, p. 10).

28 Author interview with a witness, location and date withheld.

29 An ex-SLA-MM leader present in the convoy, whose aim was to bring back SLA-MM elements to the government’s side, reportedly tried to convince the governor that those who had shot were not part of the SLA-MM, but rather SLA-Justice elements who had mixed with the SLA-MM after Minni Minawi’s departure. Author interviews, locations and dates withheld.

30 Author interviews with government officials, locations and dates withheld.

31 Author interviews, locations and dates withheld.

32 Author interviews with traditional leaders, locations and dates withheld.

33 Author interview with an NCP politician, location and date withheld.

34 Author interview with a witness, location and date withheld.

- 35 Author interviews, location and date withheld.
- 36 Author interview with a government official, location and date withheld.
- 37 The camp is named after the Kenyan town where the Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed in 2005.
- 38 Author interview with an eyewitness, location and date withheld.
- 39 Author interview with an eyewitness, location and date withheld.
- 40 On the origins of the PDF, see Salmon (2007).
- 41 Author interview with an NCP politician, location and date withheld.
- 42 See ACJPS (2011a), HRW (2011a), and AI (2012).
- 43 Tunjur military and civilian leaders accused the lorry's Zaghawa attackers of having burnt the village after the ambush, but this seems highly unlikely. Nyortik was a Zaghawa village whose name means 'conflict' and signals an earlier conflict between Tunjur and Zaghawa, preceding the foundation of the village by Zaghawa migrants in the 1960s (AI, 2012, p. 15).
- 44 See AI (2012, pp. 13–14).
- 45 Authors' review of video and photographs taken by civilians who were present during the committee's investigation; author interview with a civilian who was present during the committee's investigation, Khartoum, October 2011.
- 46 Authors' review of video and photographs taken by civilians who were present during the committee's investigation; author interview with a civilian who was present during the committee's investigation, Khartoum, October 2011.
- 47 Author interview with a civilian who was present during the committee's investigation, Khartoum, October 2011.
- 48 Author interview with *shartay* Adam Abbakar Rashid, location and date withheld.
- 49 Author interviews with Zaghawa intellectuals, Khartoum, October 2011. See also UNSC (2012b, p. 22).
- 50 Author interviews with Shangal Tobay leaders, locations and dates withheld.
- 51 Author interview with a rebel commander, Juba, December 2011. See USIP (forthcoming).
- 52 Author interview with a Tunjur traditional leader, location and date withheld.
- 53 Author interview with a Tunjur traditional leader, location and date withheld.
- 54 Author interview with a Zaghawa witness, location and date withheld.
- 55 Author interview with a traditional leader from Am Sauna, location and date withheld.
- 56 In January 2012, Ed Da'ein became the capital of the new state of East Darfur.
- 57 Author interview with a Zaghawa IDP, location and date withheld.
- 58 Author interview with a Zaghawa IDP, location and date withheld.
- 59 Author interview with a traditional leader, location and date withheld.
- 60 The term is derived from 'militias', a name used in the past for all non-Arab self-defence forces, while 'janjaweed' is generally restricted to Arab groups.
- 61 The price of an AK-47 in this area is reportedly the equivalent of two cows, which not all civilians can afford.
- 62 'Nyor' is a nickname that was given by the Northerners to the Southerners during the North-South conflict; it would have been given to Adam Ahmad only because he fought in South Sudan.
- 63 Author interview with a Zaghawa politician, Khartoum, October 2011.
- 64 Author interview with a traditional leader from At-Taweisha area, location and date withheld.
- 65 Author interview with a traditional leader from At-Taweisha area, location and date withheld.

- 66 Author interviews, various locations, Sudan and South Sudan, 2011–12.
- 67 Author interview with a traditional leader from At-Taweisha area, Juba, February 2012.
- 68 Author interviews with North Darfur government officials, locations and dates withheld.
- 69 Author interviews with North Darfur government officials, locations and dates withheld.
- 70 Author interview with a traditional leader, location and date withheld.
- 71 Since they are appointed by the government and receive government salaries, native administration leaders may be considered government officials.
- 72 Author interview with a SAF officer, location and date withheld.
- 73 Author interview with an *agid*, location and date withheld.
- 74 Author interviews with local leaders, locations and dates withheld.
- 75 Author interview with a traditional leader from At-Taweisha area, location and date withheld.
- 76 See also AI (2012, p. 14).
- 77 Under Sudanese law, including the 1986 People’s Armed Forces Act and the 2007 Armed Forces Act, members of state armed forces, including the PDF, cannot be prosecuted without the permission of their commanding officers, leading to a form of immunity for the military, in particular regarding involvement in military operations (Nouwen, forthcoming).
- 78 Author interview with a government official, location and date withheld.
- 79 Author interviews with North Darfur government officials, locations and dates withheld.
- 80 Author correspondence with a UN official, March 2012.
- 81 Author interview with an IDP originally from Shangal Tobay, location and date withheld.
- 82 Author correspondence with a UN official, March 2012. For an official response to such criticisms from UNAMID’s head, Joint Special Representative Ibrahim Gambari, see Lynch (2012).
- 83 This same report fails to identify concretely the actors of the 2011 violence in eastern Darfur. For instance, it mentions ‘clashes between SLA/M (MM) and Janjaweed forces in the Shangil Tobaya area’ (UNSC, 2012b, p. 15), using the colloquial term ‘janjaweed’, which is used in Darfur to denote various groups ranging from government paramilitary militias to simple road bandits. The term is used widely in UN reporting to avoid mentioning the responsibility of government or government-backed forces. In this case, clashes occurred between rebel movements and SAF as well as the PDF, the latter recruited from among non-Arab groups, while ‘janjaweed’ is generally used to denote Arab militias. That said, the Panel report does cite ‘allegations that these militias belong to non-Arab tribes that were armed and supported by the GoS and directed the attacks against the Zaghawas residing in the area’ (UNSC, 2012b, p. 22). For more details on the use of ‘janjaweed’, see endnote 7.
- 84 See USIP (forthcoming).
- 85 Author interview with a PDF leader, location and date withheld.
- 86 UNSC (2005a, para 6; 2005b; 2007; 2012b); *Africa Confidential* (2012).
- 87 To distinguish between direct-fire aerial rocket attacks and the dropping of high-altitude bombs (the two predominant modalities of air attacks in Darfur), this report uses ‘airstrikes’ to refer to the former and ‘aerial bombardment’ for the latter. Both are referred to collectively as ‘bombing’.
- 88 See UNSC (2005a, para 6).
- 89 While SAF has additional tarmacked airstrips in (at least) Kutum and Malha, at which military helicopters were reportedly positioned for brief periods during 2011, larger numbers of military helicopters and Sukhoi-25 ground-attack aircraft, as well as SAF Antonov-24/26

aircraft, continue to operate primarily from Darfur's state capitals. When the landing gear of a SAF Sukhoi-25 ground attack aircraft was damaged on landing at El Fasher airport on 25 April 2011, UNAMID reportedly furnished assistance by towing the aircraft off the runway.

90 See Section III.

91 Author interview with a JEM member, London, November 2011.

92 Author interviews with SPLA officers, Kiir Adem, December 2011, and with the father of an injured child, Kiir Adem, December 2011. These figures are corroborated by written reports from the Aweil North County Commissioner dated 13 and 24 December 2010, seen by the authors.

93 Author observations, Kiir Adem, December 2011. On the location of the border, see Johnson (2010, p. 44).

94 The identification of the different aircraft used in airstrikes and aerial bombardment is discussed in more detail below.

95 Author observations of an unexploded bomb, Yida, Unity state, February 2012; interview with unexploded ordnance clearance personnel, Juba and Bentiu, December 2011 and February 2012, respectively.

96 Author observations of recovered shrapnel, Kiir Adem, December 2011.

97 Author observations and identification of recovered shrapnel, Kiir Adem, December 2011.

98 SAF Su-25 and Mi-24 airstrikes conventionally deliver several dozen direct-fire S5 or S8 rockets, even at comparatively small targets, such as single vehicles, suggesting that the 12- or 24-rocket pods carried by the aircraft are emptied with very little concern about conserving ordnance. Author observations, bombing of SPLA base, Jaw town, February 2012.

99 Since 2009, UNAMID itself has operated a no-fly zone in Jebel Marra, which was only sporadically broken by 'Operation Springbasket' humanitarian aid deliveries during 2011.

100 Author correspondence with a JEM representative, 7 March 2012.

101 The SRF is an opposition coalition that comprises the SLA-AW, the SLA-MM, JEM, and the SPLM-N. See Section III for more details.

102 As a result of the new provisions on arms transfers, the UN sanctions regime included possible exemptions for movements of equipment under the supervision of the Sudanese national security forces; the Sanctions Committee previously had to be notified of and approve such transfers (UNSC, 2005a, para. 3(a)).

103 The EU embargo establishes that 'the sale, supply, transfer or export of arms and related materiel of all types, including weapons and ammunition, military vehicles and equipment, paramilitary equipment and spare parts for the aforementioned to Sudan by nationals of Member States or from the territories of Member States, or using their flag vessels or aircraft, shall be prohibited whether originating or not in their territories' (CEU, 2005, art. 4.1). The EU's unilateral measures against the whole of Sudan are similar to those unilaterally imposed by the United States in 1997 and renewed in 2011 (US, 1997).

104 Sheikh Musa Hilal, one of the four targeted individuals, has become increasingly critical of government policy in Darfur, and he has made repeated demands to participate in the peace process. Yet his position, like those of other *abbala* leaders, has evolved in parallel with the Darfur conflict itself, rather than as a response to the embargo (author interview with sheikh Musa Hilal, Khartoum, December 2009). Another of the four targeted persons, Maj. Gen. Gaffar Mohamed Elhassan, did depart from the SAF in June 2010, but only because he reached standard retirement (UNSC, 2011).

- 105 See UNSC (2005c; 2010b).
- 106 The full list of reports is available at UNSC (n.d.).
- 107 Author interviews with Western diplomats, locations withheld, April 2012.
- 108 Even the most sophisticated of international military supply chains, such as that of the United States, has relied substantially on old weapons and ammunition from foreign state stockpiles to equip allied forces in the theatre of war. See, for example, COGR (2008).
- 109 The Chadian group was the Front uni pour le changement (United Front for Change).
- 110 Author observations, Darfur, various dates; see also UNSC (2009b; 2011).
- 111 Serbian 5,56 × 45 mm ammunition manufactured in 2006 and previously recovered in Darfur from the National Redemption Front in 2007 and JEM in 2008 appears to have had a comparable supply route, being exported to the Government of Chad for use with a consignment of Israeli-made Tavor and Galil assault rifles in September 2006 (UNSC, 2007; 2008; Lewis, 2009, p. 49).
- 112 The Panel's report was obtained by *Africa Confidential* and published online in April 2012 (UNSC, 2012b).
- 113 Photographs obtained by the authors, December 2011.
- 114 Photographs obtained by the authors, December 2011.
- 115 AI (2012); UNSC (2011, paras. 81–83; 2012b, paras. 89–91); *Africa Confidential* (2012, paras. 67–75).
- 116 See Belarus's submissions to the UN Register of Conventional Arms for 2008, 2009, and 2010 (UN Register, n.d.).
- 117 See the Russian Federation's submissions to the UN Register of Conventional Arms for 2007, 2008, and 2009 (UN Register, n.d.) and UNSC (2011, paras. 85–88).
- 118 Photographs obtained by the authors.
- 119 See Belarus's and Ukraine's submissions to the UN Register of Conventional Arms for 2004–10 (UN Register, n.d.). For a discussion of the Belorussian imports and their partial Slovakian provenance, see Lewis (2009, pp. 32–33). The UN Panel reported in 2009 that T-85 tanks had been deployed by SAF's 5th Brigade from El Obeid to South Darfur and also photographed older T-54/5 tanks (UNSC, 2009b, paras. 94, 170); however, the Panel did not document the presence or use of lighter armoured fighting vehicles.
- 120 Photographs verified and viewed by the authors.
- 121 Author observations, Darfur, various dates, 2011.
- 122 Author observations, Khartoum, El Fasher, and Nyala airports, various dates, 2011.
- 123 Author interview with Chadian rebel, location and date withheld.
- 124 Author correspondence with an aviation source, 6 March 2012; photograph taken on 26 January 2012 in El Fasher, viewed by authors.
- 125 Author correspondence with an aviation source, 6 March 2012.
- 126 Photograph taken on 26 January 2012 in El Fasher, viewed by authors.
- 127 For observation details on the Mi-17 tail number 525 in Darfur, see UNSC (2009b, para. 190).
- 128 Online company profile reviewed by authors.
- 129 Online company profile reviewed by authors.
- 130 'Mil' is the shortened form of 'Mil Moscow Helicopter Plant', the original design and manufacturing company for Mi-type helicopters, including Mi-17, Mi-18, and Mi-24.
- 131 Author interviews with representatives of various Darfur rebel movements, Juba and Wau, December 2011 and February 2012.

- 132 Author interviews with representatives of various Darfur rebel movements, Juba and Wau, December 2011 and February 2012. See also Radio Dabanga (2011a).
- 133 Author observations, various dates; photographs viewed by authors, February 2012.
- 134 For Sudanese ammunition markings, see HSBA (2011a). Sudan's national military industry manufactures small-calibre ammunition in addition to a large range of other products. According to unverified reports, the national industrial capacity has recently been increasing, in particular thanks to technical assistance received from other countries.
- 135 See also UNSC (2012b, p. 30), quoting a NISS statement according to which JEM 'obtained significant numbers of weapons from Libya'. The report is referring to a JEM convoy to Libya led by four field commanders including 'Abdul Kareem Salowi' (*sic*)—probably Abdelkarim Tcholley, JEM's former chief of staff.
- 136 Author interviews with representatives of JEM and other Darfur armed movements, Juba, December 2011 and February 2012.
- 137 Author interviews with three senior JEM personnel, Juba, December 2011 and February 2012.
- 138 Author interview with a JEM representative, Juba, December 2011.
- 139 Author interviews with senior JEM members, Juba, December 2011.
- 140 Author interviews with representatives of the SLA-MM, Juba, December 2011 and February 2012, and with foreign diplomatic sources, locations and dates withheld. See also UNSC (2012b, p. 31), which states that '[s]ources have also confirmed receipt of support by SLA/M (Minni Minawi) from Libya and NISS has stated that Mohammeddan Arkuzur of SLA/M (MM) had entered Libya for weapons'. 'Mohammeddan Arkuzur' is probably Mohamedein Orkajor, a major SLA-MM military leader who had been reported to have fought against Libyan rebels in south-western Libya. Author interviews, various locations, October 2011–February 2012.
- 141 Author interviews with representatives of the SLA-MM, Juba, 6 December 2011.
- 142 See GoS and Government of Chad (2010).
- 143 The authors could not determine whether mounted weapons appearing on the pictures were supplied in parallel with the vehicles. It is worth noting that, based on photographic evidence, different Darfur rebel interviewees were consistently able to provide details on which groups originally possessed and modified particular vehicles, based on paint and other markings, and the techniques used to modify parts of the vehicle for military use. This further supports claims regarding the provenance of the vehicles in the photographs discussed above.
- 144 The 'Kaoda Alliance' was signed by the SPLM-N, SLA-AW, SLA-MM, and JEM. See below.
- 145 Author interviews with representatives of the SPLM-N and various Darfur movements, Juba and Raja, December 2011 and February 2012.
- 146 Although UN Emergency Relief Coordinator Jan Egeland stated publicly in December 2003 that '[t]he humanitarian situation in Darfur has quickly become one of the worst in the world', the first visits to Darfur by the UN Secretary-General (and the US Secretary of State) did not occur until early July 2004; see UN (n.d.). The first UN Security Council Resolution on Darfur (Resolution 1556) was passed on 30 July 2004.
- 147 Author interviews with a GoSS security adviser, Addis Ababa, November 2011, and with representatives of Darfur rebel groups and the SPLM-N, Juba and Raja, December 2011.
- 148 Author interviews with representatives of the SPLM-N and various Darfur rebel movements, Juba and Raja, December 2011 and February 2012.

- 149 Author interview with an SPLM-N representative, Juba, February 2012.
- 150 Author interview with an SPLM-N representative, Raja, December 2011.
- 151 Author interview with a former member of the PDF, Raja, December 2011. For an excellent and thorough discussion of the fluidity of allegiances in the border area between South Darfur and Western Bahr al Ghazal, see Thomas (2010).
- 152 Author interviews with senior SPLA officers, Northern and Western Bahr al Ghazal, December 2011.
- 153 Author interview with Gen. Santino Deng, 3rd Division commander, Wenyik, December 2011.
- 154 Author interview with Gen. Andrea Dominic, 5th Division commander, Wau, December 2011.
- 155 For more details on the history of *baggara* Rizeigat–Malwal Dinka (dis-)agreements over land access and grazing rights in the strip south of the Kiir–Bahr al Arab river, which underpin this territorial dispute, see Johnson (2010).
- 156 Author interview with GoSS Wildlife Service personnel, Aweil, December 2010.
- 157 Author interviews with senior SPLA officials of the 3rd Division, Wenyik, December 2011, and with a civil society representative, Aweil, December 2011.
- 158 Author observations, Kiir Adem, December 2011; author interviews with SPLA officials, Kiir Adem, December 2011, and with a civil society representative, Aweil, December 2011.
- 159 Press articles, in Arabic, seen by the authors.
- 160 UNMISS situation report of 16 May 2012.
- 161 See Tubiana (2011a, p. 55). Abdeshafi joined the SPLM as a student in Khartoum before helping to establish the SLA, but he remained concurrently an SPLM member, and married a Southerner in Juba. Author interview with SPLM-N leader, Juba, February 2012.
- 162 Author interviews with Masalit and Fur rebels, Juba and Raja, December 2011 and February 2012.
- 163 On the ground, key liaison points with Darfur rebel groups in Western Bahr al Ghazal are two comparatively junior military intelligence personnel attached to the SPLA’s 5th Division. Author interviews with a former SLA-Juba member and SLA-Justice member, locations withheld, December 2011.
- 164 Author interviews with members of various Darfur rebel groups, Juba and withheld locations, December 2011 and February 2012. It has also been reported that Ahmad Abdeshafi ‘Toba’ was likely to rejoin the SPLM-N, having split from LJM.
- 165 Author observations, Juba and Western Bahr al Ghazal, December 2011 and February 2012. For example, during two meetings with SLA-MM representatives in Juba, the authors observed SLA-MM members being driven in what appeared to be an official GoSS security service vehicle.
- 166 The authors had limited opportunity to view Darfur rebel materiel within South Sudan. They inspected one group’s modified Land Cruiser vehicle in Western Bahr al Ghazal in December 2011; its markings, paintwork, and gun-mount appeared consistent with those used by SAF in Darfur, supporting this group’s assertion that it had indeed been captured from SAF and driven over the South Darfur–South Sudan border.
- 167 Author interview with former LJM members, Juba, December 2011; name of the military intelligence officer verified by authors.
- 168 Author interviews with members of various Darfur rebel groups, Juba and withheld location, December 2011.
- 169 Author interviews with members of various Darfur rebel movements, Juba, December 2011 and February 2012.

- 170 Author interviews with JEM and SLA-MM commanders, Juba, December 2011.
- 171 Separate interviews with two senior JEM members, Juba, December 2011, and with JEM members, locations withheld, May 2012; confidential report of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), November 2011. Ali al Wafi, a *baggara* Rizeigat Arab from Ed Da'ein in South Darfur, close to the border with South Sudan, was accused by the Government of Sudan of leading a group of JEM personnel evacuated to South Sudan in November 2010 (GoS, 2010; Tubiana, 2011a, p. 59).
- 172 Author interviews with JEM members, locations withheld, May 2012. JEM has yet to resolve this debate on the religious issue, and to solve what is also a generational conflict, with younger leaders pushing for secularism.
- 173 Author interviews with JEM members, locations withheld, May 2012.
- 174 Separate author interviews with two senior JEM members, Juba, December 2011, and with JEM members, locations withheld, May 2012.
- 175 Author interview with a former SPLM-N member, Juba, February 2012.
- 176 Author interviews with members of the SLA-MM and other Darfur rebel movements, Juba and Raja, December 2011. The GoS National Intelligence and Security Service reportedly informed the UNSC Panel on Sudan 'that Minni Minawi had attended the graduation ceremony of about 500 Darfurian armed opposition soldiers in South Sudan, trained by SPLM' (UNSC, 2012b, p. 30). Neither the location nor the date is provided.
- 177 Author interviews with members of JEM and other movements, Juba and Wau, December 2011.
- 178 The UNSC Panel on Sudan's report also asserts that the civilians in Western Bahr al Ghazal confused JEM and the LRA (UNSC, 2012b, para. 61); this assessment seems unlikely given the differences in appearance, modes of operation (cars v. foot soldiers), and targets (mostly civilians in the case of the LRA). Author interviews with civilian and military interlocutors, Raja, December 2011.
- 179 Another GoS NISS source quoted in the same report mentions 290 JEM combatants in South Sudan (UNSC, 2012b, p. 30).
- 180 See also UNSC (2012b, p. 14).
- 181 Author interviews with UNMISS civilian officials, Juba, December 2011, and with an UNMISS military official, Western Bahr al Ghazal, December 2011. See also UNSC (2012b, p. 14).
- 182 It is unclear to the authors whether Balbala is south or north of the 1956 line, which should constitute the border.
- 183 When this ubiquitous term is used in South Sudan (as well as in Darfur and South Kordofan), it generally denotes Su-25 ground-attack aircraft, not MiG aircraft (author observations of ordnance used in 'Mij' attacks in Firga, Western Bahr al Ghazal, and Jaw, Unity state).
- 184 Author interviews with the Timsah *payam* administrator, Raja, December 2011, and with a former Timsah resident, Raja, December 2011.
- 185 Author interviews with a senior SPLA officer of the 5th Division, Wau, December 2011; a GoSS official, Raja, December 2011; and SPLA spokesperson Philip Aguer, Juba, February 2012. See also Thomas (2010, p. 142), Miraya FM (2010), and USIP and Concordis International (2010, p. 32).
- 186 Author interviews with a senior SPLA officer of the 5th Division, Wau, December 2011, and a senior SPLA officer of the 5th Division, Raja, December 2011.
- 187 SPLA internal planning document, on file with the authors.
- 188 Author interviews with GoSS officials, Raja, December 2011.

- 189 Photographs of the attack site and ordnance were obtained from two separate sources; author interviews with GoSS and SPLA officials who visited the site shortly after the attack, Wau and Raja, December 2011.
- 190 Author interviews with GoSS officials, Raja, December 2011, and with medical personnel, Western Bahr al Ghazal, December 2011.
- 191 Author interview with the Timsah *payam* administrator, Raja, December 2011. The interviewee stated that these casualties were not directly verified by the government, but that news of them was brought by lorries coming from Buram in South Darfur to Timsah.
- 192 Author interviews with GoSS officials, Wau, Raja, and Deim Zubeir, December 2011.
- 193 Author interviews with GoSS officials, Raja, December 2011; an eyewitness to the Kiir Adem attack, Aweil, December 2011; and SPLA officers, Kiir Adem, December 2011.
- 194 Author interviews with GoSS officials and an NGO worker, Raja, December 2011.
- 195 Author telephone interview with the Raja county commissioner, January 2012. This bombing was erroneously reported in South Sudanese media as having taken place in Boro Medina, a sizeable settlement and home to several thousand Darfuri refugees; see *Citizen* (2011).
- 196 Confidential UN email dated 17 April 2012 and UNMISS situation report dated 28 May 2012.
- 197 Author interviews with SPLA officers, Kiir Adem, December 2011.
- 198 Author observations, Kiir Adem, December 2011; phone interview with a December 2010 visitor to Kiir Adem, November 2011.
- 199 Author interview with GoSS officials, Western Bahr al Ghazal, December 2011.
- 200 Author interviews with senior SPLA officers, Western Bahr al Ghazal, December 2011, with GoSS officials, Raja and Gok Machar, December 2011, and with UNMISS civilian staff, Northern Bahr al Ghazal, December 2011; internal UNMISS situation report, on file with the authors.
- 201 UNMISS situation and flash reports, 27–29 May 2012 and 7 June 2012. UN observers visited the area in early June 2012 but reported that they were unable to confirm that airstrikes had taken place in the locations they were shown.
- 202 Author interviews with Rizeigat politicians, locations and dates withheld.
- 203 See Section I.
- 204 Accounts of attempted LRA linkages with SAF in Darfur emerged in reports by ex-LRA combatants, which reveal that an LRA group had moved into South Darfur in October 2010. A Masalit faction of LJM, which later splintered, also claimed to have fought with LRA elements near Dafaq in the Kafia Kingi enclave in September 2010, and to have captured four LRA personnel there (author interview with an LJM spokesperson, location and date withheld). See also HSBA (2011b).
- 205 Author interviews with SPLA military intelligence personnel, Raja, December 2011, and with Darfur rebel personnel, location withheld, December 2011. Dafaq is in the Kafia Kingi triangle, not to be confused with nearby Um Dafok in South Darfur, at the border with CAR.
- 206 Author interview with Darfur rebel personnel, location withheld, December 2011.
- 207 Author interviews with Darfur rebel personnel, location withheld, December 2011, and with SPLA military intelligence personnel, Raja, December 2011; photographs of SPLA operations in Kafia Kingi and LRA prisoners, viewed by the authors.
- 208 Author interviews with GoSS officials, Wau, Raja, and Aweil, December 2011, and with SPLA military intelligence personnel, Raja, December 2011.
- 209 The name had already been used by a rebel group formed by Darfur Abbala Arab students, most of whom had finally joined JEM. The SRF is also widely called the Kaoda Alliance,

- since negotiations mostly took place in Kaoda, the main town in the SPLM-N areas of the Nuba Mountains.
- 210 Author interview with Abdul Aziz al Hilu, South Kordofan, May 2012.
- 211 Author interviews with SPLM-N leaders, Juba and Raja, December 2011 and February 2012. See *Sudan Tribune* (2012c).
- 212 Author interview, location withheld, May 2012. While locally pronounced ‘Hejljij’, the name is generally written ‘Heglig’. It is the Arabic name for the common Sahelan tree *Balanites aegyptiaca*. In Dinka, the tree is called *thou*, which serves as the root of the South Sudanese name for the place Panthou. Local Missiriya claim to have another, older, more local Arabic name—*Marafain*, or ‘Hyænas’. See Johnson (2012). Interview with a Missiriya intellectual, location withheld, June 2012.
- 213 Author interview, South Kordofan, May 2012.
- 214 Author interviews with SPLM-N members, South Kordofan and South Sudan, May 2012.
- 215 While Abdul Aziz al Hilu enjoys some popularity among Darfuris, both Darfur rebels and SPLM-N Darfuri members criticize Malik Agar and, to a greater extent, Yasir Arman for their limited military power. Such critics also consider Yasir, who hails from the Jezira in central Sudan, a ‘Jellaba’ (the term for Arab or Arabized tribes from the Nile Valley, which have held power in Khartoum since independence); they argue that Yasir has no support among his own community, which is seen as traditionally closer to the NCP. Many Darfuris claim that they are now the third of the ‘three areas’ in conflict in North Sudan, alongside South Kordofan and southern Blue Nile (this view echoes the ‘three areas’ of Abyei, South Kordofan, and southern Blue Nile during the interim period of the CPA, after which the latter two became the ‘two areas’). They contend that a Darfuri should thus replace Yasir as the third leader of the SPLM-N, together with Abdul Aziz (representing South Kordofan) and Malik (representing Blue Nile). Some Darfuris from within the SPLM-N itself even reportedly wrote to Abdul Aziz and Malik demanding the removal of Yasir from the position of secretary general. Meanwhile, some Darfuris who previously served in the SPLA have refused to fight in southern Blue Nile, while nonetheless agreeing to join the struggle in South Kordofan. Author interview with a Darfur rebel leader, Juba, February 2012.
- 216 Author interview with a JEM leader, Juba, February 2012.
- 217 Author interviews with JEM South Kordofan members, South Sudan, May 2012. See Tubiana (2011a, p. 61).
- 218 Author interview with JEM leaders, Juba, February 2012. See Tubiana (2010, pp. 301–02).
- 219 Author interviews with JEM South Kordofan members, South Sudan, May 2012.
- 220 Until these arrests, SAF had denied that JEM was present in South Kordofan and confusion persisted about whether At-Tom was acting on behalf of JEM or the SPLM-N. Author interviews with JEM South Kordofan members, South Sudan, May 2012.
- 221 Interviews with JEM South Kordofan members, South Sudan, May 2012.
- 222 While Troji is clearly in South Kordofan, the area of Jaw on the border between Sudan and South Sudan has bases of both the SPLA (South) and SPLM-N, which closely coordinate with each other (*Sudan Tribune*, 2012d; *Le Monde*, 2012). JEM has occasionally been based in the same area.
- 223 Author interview with JEM and SPLM-N members, and SPLA officers, some present in Hejljij and Kharasana battles, South Sudan and South Kordofan, May 2012.

- 224 Author interview with JEM and SPLM-N members, and SPLA officers, some present in Hejlij and Kharasana battles, South Sudan and South Kordofan, May 2012.
- 225 Author interview with JEM and SPLM-N members, and SPLA officers, some present in Hejlij and Kharasana battles, South Sudan and South Kordofan, May 2012.
- 226 Author interview with Mansour Arbab, JEM secretary for presidential affairs, Juba, December 2011.
- 227 JEM leaders have also claimed to have some 500 combatants training in SPLM-N-controlled areas of the Nuba Mountains. Author interviews with JEM leaders, South Sudan, February and May 2012.
- 228 Author interviews with JEM leaders, Juba, February and May 2012.
- 229 Author interview with a JEM leader, Juba, February 2012.
- 230 Author interview with Masalit, Raja, December 2011.
- 231 Author interviews with SPLM-N and Darfur rebel leaders, Juba and Raja, December 2011 and February 2012, and with Abdul Aziz al Hilu, South Kordofan, May 2012.
- 232 Author interview with JEM's Mansour Arbab, Juba, December 2011. 'Bazooka' was killed shortly afterwards, in February 2004, in West Darfur.
- 233 Author interviews with Masalit rebels from different groups, Juba and Raja, December 2011 and February 2012.
- 234 The Masalit generally have a much more cautious approach to the SPLA and do not insist on its role. Author interviews with Masalit and Fur rebels, Juba and Raja, December 2011 and February 2012.
- 235 Author interviews with Masalit rebels, Juba and Raja, December 2011 and February 2012, and with Abdul Aziz al Hilu, South Kordofan, May 2012.
- 236 Author interviews with Masalit rebels, Juba and Raja, December 2011 and February 2012.
- 237 Author interview with a senior Darfuri SPLM-N leader, Raja, December 2011.
- 238 Author interview with JEM's Mansour Arbab, Juba, December 2011.
- 239 *Borgo* is the name given to people from Wadday in eastern Chad who have migrated to Darfur and farther east.
- 240 On 15 February 2012, the Sudan's Borgo tribal association claimed in a statement: 'Haroun is no longer a Borgo until he goes to the International Criminal Court.' Document seen by the authors.
- 241 Author interview with an UNMISS political affairs officer, Juba, December 2011.
- 242 Author interviews with SPLM-N representatives, Juba and Raja, December 2011 and February 2012.
- 243 Author interviews with Darfur rebels, Juba, February 2012.
- 244 Author interviews with SPLM-N representatives, Juba and Raja, December 2011 and February 2012.
- 245 Author interviews with SPLM-N representatives, Unity state, February 2012.
- 246 Author interview with Abdul Aziz al Hilu, South Kordofan, May 2012.
- 247 Author interview with SPLM-N officer Omar 'Fur', Juba, February 2012.
- 248 Author interview with an SPLM-N officer, Juba, December 2011.
- 249 Author interview with SPLM-N's Ahmed Badawi 'Hamoda', location withheld, December 2011.
- 250 Author interviews, various locations, February–April 2012. See also UNSC (2012b, p. 30), whose assessment of JEM's strength cites NISS estimates, presumably from late 2011, that 'JEM has 1400 fighters, out of which 290 are in South Sudan, 240 4x4 vehicles, 10 transport trucks, 11

trucks to carry canons [*sic*] of 40 mm, 106 mm (anti-tank), B 10 and SBG -9 mm, as well as SAM 7 missiles which they obtained from South Sudan’.

- 251 Author interviews, various locations, February–April 2012. See also UNSC (2012b, p. 30), whose assessment of SLA-AW’s strength is based on NISS estimates, presumably from late 2011, that SLA-AW ‘has 350 men with 32 vehicles’.
- 252 This estimate is drawn from NISS estimates, presumably from late 2011. The UN Panel lists ‘Ali Carabino of LJM’, although Ali ‘Kerubino’ left LJM in April 2011.
- 253 These estimates are from the NISS and are presumably from late 2011.

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The Small Arms Survey is an independent research project located at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva, Switzerland. Established in 1999, the project is supported by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs and current contributions from the Governments of Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The Survey is grateful for past support received from the Governments of France, New Zealand, and Spain. The Survey also wishes to acknowledge the financial assistance it has received over the years from foundations and many bodies within the UN System.

The objectives of the Small Arms Survey are to: serve as the principal international source of impartial and public information on all aspects of small arms and armed violence; act as a resource centre for governments, policy-makers, researchers, and activists in terms of information and research on small arms and armed violence issues; be an independent monitor of national, international, and non-governmental policy initiatives on small arms and armed violence; be an outlet for policy-relevant research on small arms and armed violence issues; act as a forum and clearinghouse for the sharing of information; and disseminate best practice measures and initiatives dealing with small arms and armed violence issues. The Survey also sponsors field research and information-gathering efforts, especially in affected states and regions. The project has an international staff with expertise in security studies, political science, law, economics, development studies, sociology, and criminology, and collaborates with a network of researchers, partner institutions, non-governmental organizations, and governments in more than 50 countries.

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