

**Meeting of ASSECAA Committee on Peace and Conflict**  
**Resolution held at Bujumbura, Burundi 2-3-2009**

**Darfur Facts-Sheet**

*By: Canon Clement Janda, \**  
*Chairman, Peace Committee, Council of States.*  
*Khartoum. Sudan*

1- The problem of Darfur started a long time ago. Like many other parts of the Sudan, Darfur was complaining of marginalization, lack of development and poor participation in the Central government since independence in 1956. Expression of the problem took different political forms and shapes in the past including disputes between the farming community and the nomads over grazing land and watering points. These disputes were localized especially during the drought of the 1980s. However, in 2003, it took a dramatic turn when a group of Darfurians organized the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM), and a military wing (SLA), under the leadership of Abdal Wahid Mohammad Noor, with Arkow Mini Minawi as his deputy. The movement carried out some military activities, including a daring assault on El Fashir airport in 2003 which was repulsed by the Sudanese Armed Forces.

2- In 2004 the problem in Darfur caught the international community's attention. This led to pressure being mounted on the rebel movement and the Government of the Sudan to accept mediation and talk peace. Consequently many meetings took place within Darfur in Haskanita, abroad in Chad and, eventually in Abuja, Nigeria. Between 2004 and 2006, seven sessions were held. The seventh session was the longest. It lasted from November 2005 to May 2006, resulting in the signing of the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) of May 5, 2006 in Abuja. The Agreement spelt out some measures of Power

Sharing, Wealth Sharing and Security Arrangement. The DPA was widely supported by regional and international organizations such as the Arab League, The African Union, the United Nations, European Union and many governments of the West including USA, UK, Norway, Sweden, Netherlands and France.

3- After Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A) launched its operations in 2003, a second group, Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) also joined in the military campaign. Whereas the SLM/A was secular in its ideology, and fighting to restore Darfur as a single Region, also with hope of equally effective participation in the Central Government, JEM was Islamic in its orientation and wanted a complete change in the government of the Sudan. Nevertheless, both SLM/A and JEM were willing to cooperation, tactically in the field and, politically in the negotiation table.

4- In 2005 Sudan Liberation Movement/Army split into two. One wing was led by Abdal Wahid Mohammad Noor and the other wing was led by Arkow Mini Minawi. So the Darfurian rebel groups negotiating in Abuja, at the seventh round, rose to three, with the Government being the other party.

5- Although the three groups: SLM/A of Abdal Wahid Mohammad Noor, SLM/A of Arkow Mini Minawi, and JEM of Khalil Ibrahim, were fighting the Government of the Sudan, a new group emerged in the scene: the JANJAWIID, (an acronym for Jins {spirits} mounted on Jawad {horses} carrying Gim 3 rifle). On the surface it was simplistically stated that the three rebel movements were "African" in composition and were fighting against "Arab" domination. The local Arabs organized the JANJAWIID, as their own militia to defend themselves against the three "African" movements. It was alleged that they were armed by the government. But the government vehemently denied any connection with this group.

6- Clashes between the three movements on one hand, and the government forces and the JANJAWIID on the other hand led to many deaths and destruction of homes, villages and property, leading to the wild accusations that the government was waging war to eliminate the Africans in Darfur Region. The government continued denying any such actions. But charges of genocide against the Government of the Sudan and the JANJAWIID were made by the international community. While the international community claimed that over 300,000 people were killed, the Sudanese government states that the deaths were exaggerated, but reported that about 10,000 were killed. Camps of internally displaced rose to millions and thousands of other Darfurians crossed into Chad to seek refuge.

7- With so many relief organizations getting into Darfur in response to the humanitarian needs, and as the African Union responded by sending peace-keeping forces into Darfur, the documentation of deaths, rapes, displacement and destruction took centre stage in the international media, drawing sharp reactions from world governments against the government of the Sudan and the JANJAWIID militia. There were calls to impose sanctions on the government of the Sudan. Progressively the international community accusations led to the demand to prosecute the alleged perpetrations of killings of Darfurian civilians at the International Criminal Court (ICC). Names of alleged leaders of the JANJAWIID associated with the indiscriminate killings were circulated in the media; among them were Ali Kosheeb, the JANJAWIID leader and Ahmad Haruun, former State Minister of Interior, who was accused of arming the JANJAWIID. The Government of the Sudan's position was that no Sudanese, whether from the government or from the rebel movements would ever be surrendered to the ICC. It maintained that the Sudanese judicial system was capable of trying any crimes committed on its soil. Moreover, the Sudanese government did not ratify the Rome Convention establishing the International Criminal Court in The Hague.

8- Since the stalling of the Darfur Peace Agreement of 5<sup>th</sup> May 2006, by the refusal of Abdal Wahid Mohammad Noor of SLM/A and Khalil Ibrahim of JEM to sign, the problem had continued to get more complicated. On the one hand, the group of Abdal Wahid Mohammad Noor started re-splintering until there are now so many factions. On the other hand the group of JEM of Khalil Ibrahim equally re-splintered into many other factions. The result is that it has become too difficult for the government to meet these groups for peace talks because they do not all agree on one program!

#### **9- SPLM- Initiative:**

From March 2007 the Chairman of SPLM/A, General Salva Kiir Mayardit initiated a process of contacting the many factions that have not signed the Darfur Peace Agreement, with a view to uniting them so they could negotiate effectively with the government of national unity to end the war in Darfur. Many groups from SLM/A and JEM were brought to Juba, Southern Sudan. After many months they seemed agreed to unite and form a common front to negotiate an end to the war. But soon thereafter many other commanders broke away to continue the process of re-splintering. Moreover neither Abdal Wahid Mohammad Noor nor Khalil Ibrahim accepted to participate in the SPLM/A Initiative in Juba. However, the SPLM initiative is still continuing.

10- After many attempts to boost the capacity of African Union Peace keepers to a robust force, the United Nations Security Council voted to transform the African Union force into a hybrid force to include other non- African soldiers who would be better equipped to handle the problem of insecurity in Darfur. The number was to be boosted from 7,000 to 26,000. However the UN/AU hybrid force has never taken off effectively. The Government of the Sudan has refused to allow certain nationalities, especially Europeans, into the UN/AU hybrid

force. Moreover, the supply of sophisticated military equipments, including helicopters needed by the force for effective actions on the insecurity in Darfur, were not forthcoming.

### **11- Humanitarian Situation:**

The international agencies operating in Darfur claim that the humanitarian situation on the ground has not improved. The Sudanese government maintains that the situation is better than before, and that some people have left the camps and gone to their traditional homes. However, many people in the camps of the displaced have not moved because they claim adequate security has not been assured. Many others are still in refugee camps in Chad. This continues to be a source of irritation between the two governments.

### **12- Sudanese People's Initiative:**

In October 2008, an initiative launched by the President of the Sudan, called "Sudanese People's Initiative" took place. It was attended by many political parties and groups in the Sudan. This forum produced some recommendations on resolving the problem of Darfur. The issues of one Region for Darfur, participation of the Region in the central government, and the issue of compensation for the loss arising from the war were further examined some solutions recommended. However, some Darfurian Movements (non-signatories to DPA) did not take part in the initiative.

### **13- Qatar Initiative:**

The State of Qatar has offered to host peace talks between the government of the Sudan and the rebel Movements under the mediation of AU/UN. Many Western countries, including USA and France, are supporting this initiative. Contacts have been made with rebel movements and leaders like Abdal Wahid Noor and Khalil Ibrahim. Some have indicated their willingness to attend; others are lukewarm, while a few others are rejecting the initiative off hand!

#### 14- **Dilemma:**

The problem of Darfur has reached a point of dilemma! Who will actually solve the problem; will the Sudanese people do it or will the international community?

While many believe in the ability of the Sudanese people to solve their problems, as was the case with the problem in the Southern Sudan resulting in signing of the CPA, and Eastern Sudan leading to the signing of EASP, many others including leading Darfurain rebel leaders like Abdal Wahid Noor, believe that the international community should solve the problem and hand Darfur to them on *silver Plata!* This is a very unrealistic expectation.

Secondly, the insecurity resulting from continuous infighting among the rebel groups, and between them and the government forces and their militias is retarding development. In addition the spate of robberies, high jacking and looting of relief agencies by armed gangs is equally reducing chances of addressing issues of development in Darfur.

Thirdly, the problem of Darfur has become so internationalized that many feel confused about emergency of any solution. The confusion between solving the humanitarian problem, the political problem, and the security problem would need to be clarified, if an end is to be brought to this problem. Moreover, the interests of many governments, both in the region and beyond, continue to be complicating any attempts to solve the problem. The issue of indicting the President of the Sudan, Field Marshall Omar Hassan Ahmad El Bashir by ICC is a case in point. This will complicate the case of Darfur as it might lead to anarchy in the country, even outright civil war might break out if, for instance, the CPA implementation is disrupted. There is need, therefore to address the implications of ICC, calling for urgent convening of the Qatar initiative to produce a solution to the problem of Darfur and steady implementation of the CPA.

Otherwise Darfur will continue to bleed when there doesn't seem to be any solution in sight! How easy it is to start war, but how difficult it becomes to end it!!

ooooooooooooooooooooooooooooXXXoooooooooooooooooooooooooooo

\*

- Canon Clement Janda participated at the 7<sup>th</sup> Round of the Darfur Peace Talks in Abuja, Nigeria.
- He was Chair of the SPLM Task Force on Unification of Darfur Factions.
- He is Envoy of the Chairman of SPLM to Darfur.
- He participated at the CPA and ESPA negotiation.