

DARFUR DIALOGUE: FROM WAR TO PEACE, COEXISTENCE AND STABILITY

Kampala, Uganda, 28–30 August 2023



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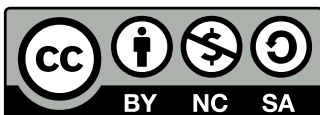
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Through the efforts of these distinguished people, the first democratic dialogue for Darfuris was held in Kampala, Uganda, on 28–30 August 2023, and it was determined that these experts would regularly hold such a dialogue to formulate lasting peace and sustainable development in Darfur.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) organized a transparent and dispassionate Dialogue between Sudanese intellectuals and experts from Darfur to discuss issues of war and peace in that region. The meeting discussed developments in Darfur following the outbreak of the war between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) on 15 April 2023. It considered the fragility of Darfur's situation and the possibility that war and human rights violations will spread in Darfur, either in connection with or separately from the ongoing bloody war in Khartoum.

Strong national ownership and leadership

Participants in the Dialogue included a number of women and men from Darfur who live outside Sudan in the diaspora, including university professors, experts in international organizations, and civil society activists. They are characterized by clarity of vision, moderation and commitment and enjoy a high degree of respect in their societies. In line with International IDEA's aim of eliciting objective and realistic recommendations from stakeholders within the region, all papers were prepared and presented by Darfuri experts and the Dialogue was likewise led and facilitated by a prominent human rights advocate from Darfur.

Key issues

Using an inclusive approach and anchoring the discussions in evidence-based information, the Dialogue discussed the immediate, mid-term, and long-term needs in Darfur. Focused on restoring peace and social cohesion and preventing further polarization and renewal of ethnic violence in the future, the topics discussed included:

- The impact of the April war on the Darfur region.
- What are the conditions of humanitarian aid and the best options for improving the delivery of humanitarian assistance to citizens in the region?

- Why did peace and stability efforts fail in Darfur? What was wrongly designed in previous agreements, and how can we provide better options to resolve the current conflict in the region?
- Challenges and opportunities of local and traditional means of conflict prevention, mediation, and peacebuilding.
- International mechanisms available to stop the war in Darfur, and the challenges and opportunities.

Among the conclusions reached was agreement that under the current circumstances in Sudan, armed conflict and instability in the Darfur region are likely to continue. The mechanisms and approaches that were adopted to solve Darfur's crises in the past, whether local or international, fell short of what was needed. The workshop outcomes emphasize the need to continue international and local cooperation to urgently develop more effective responses to stop the war. The discussions were attended by high-ranking delegates from the United Nations and the European Union working in Sudan.

Chapter 1

BACKGROUND

Darfur is the largest and most populated region of Sudan and has abundant resources. It includes five states in the current federal constitutional system, and it is one of the largest regions in terms of natural resources, livestock, and underground minerals. In terms of population, the Darfur region is the region with the highest density in Sudan and includes a huge number of tribes and ethnic groups.

Since the beginning of the new millennium, the Darfur region has entered into a long tragedy with wars of a complex and intractable nature. War broke out between the central government and armed movements in Darfur in 2003; before that, the region had witnessed continual conflicts between tribes and groups of multiple ethnicities. In the 1980s, the region had witnessed desertification, drought and famine that claimed the lives of hundreds of thousands, destroyed livestock, and made farms, valleys, and seasonal water courses dry and barren. However, the humanitarian catastrophe appeared in its ugliest form in Darfur with the spread of genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity in 2003 and thereafter. This prompted the United Nations Security Council to issue a decision to refer the situation in Darfur to the International Criminal Court (ICC) to investigate the crimes committed and bring perpetrators to justice (UNSC 2005).

Many attempts have been initiated at the local and international levels to build sustainable peace and stability in Darfur. Negotiations bringing together the parties to the conflict were held in many capitals. Agreements were concluded and the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) was sent with its troops (UNSC 2007). Still, all efforts failed to stop the war, death, and destruction. In December 2018, the revolution began against the dictatorial regime that was leading the war in Darfur, and the Constitutional Document was signed in 2019, which stipulated resolving the roots of the conflict within six months. However, on 3 October 2020, the Juba Peace Agreement in Sudan was signed between the transitional government and the armed movements

War broke out between the central government and armed movements in Darfur in 2003; before that, the region had witnessed continual conflicts between tribes and groups of multiple ethnicities.

The Constitutional Document was signed in 2019, which stipulated resolving the roots of the conflict within six months.

instead on the basis of sharing power and wealth (Al-Ali 2021). On 15 April 2023, war broke out in Khartoum between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), later spreading out in many corners of the country—not least in Darfur.

Chapter 2

ABOUT THE DARFUR DIALOGUE

Thirteen participants from Darfurian civil society and academia in the diaspora, based on technical expertise and irrespective of their political and ethnic backgrounds, were invited to attend the Dialogue to discuss the crisis and offer alternatives.

While engaging with actors in Darfur is challenging due to lack of access and communication under war conditions, there is still an opportunity to amplify the voices for peace and stability by engaging the diaspora. Through their diversity, specialist knowledge and personal experience, Sudanese from Darfur can play a crucial role in addressing problems at home—in particular by offering a practical and grounded perspective to the international community and sharing with the people resident in Darfur a deep concern to prevent the region sliding into a full-blown civil war.

OBJECTIVES AND AGENDA

The conference's main objectives were to:

- provide a platform for a thoughtful and engaging discussion among diaspora Darfurians to amplify the voices for peace and to prevent further polarization; and
- provide policy advice and concrete recommendations for action at local, national, regional, and international levels—to stop the violence and advance sustainable peace in Darfur.

On the first day, presentations established the foundation for transparent, genuine, and fruitful dialogue by providing contextual analysis and exploration of the Darfur conflict's root causes. Within the preparatory sessions on the first day, a special session was devoted to understanding trauma during

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wartime and its psychological, emotional and physical effects on civilians. The second day comprised key reflections on the issues raised through the various presentations, including a further presentation addressing the immediate need for humanitarian assistance and experiences of conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts to date (by actors in Darfur, both local and international).

Designed to produce recommendations and proposals that help decision makers in the region, the third day was divided into two. The first part consisted of small sessions of participants, each discussing proposals related to one of the identified topics but without any other constraints. The outcomes of the group work were then discussed, again in a transparent manner, in the presence of all participants.

The trauma session

The trauma expert Ghada Abdel Aziz, who specializes in training war-affected communities, gave a short session on psychological and social trauma and the best ways to treat and overcome it. The participants regarded this topic as important within the wider issue of making solutions to the conflict sustainable. The national expert, Ghada, provided an inspiring explanation, situating psychological first aid within the context of managing daily routines of social relations in a manner informed by social research.

Chapter 3

THE IMPACT OF THE 15 APRIL WAR (2023) ON DARFUR

Abdelbagi Jibril, a Darfurian human rights activist, made a presentation through a paper titled 'From the Horrors of War to the Bliss of Peace, Coexistence and Stability'. He explained how the uprising in 2019 demonstrated to the world that the war-weary Sudanese people were yearning for peace and cherished freedom and justice. It is disheartening that society was subsequently deprived of all these ideals. The presentation traced the origins of some conflicts in natural phenomena such as drought and desertification, or differences in livelihoods and cultures between populations groups (sedentary farming versus livestock herding). It is widely believed that the crisis in Darfur started as unwise competition between growing human and animal populations, in the context of a shrinking natural resource base and impoverished ecosystem.

However, these factors do not explain the outbreak of war in 2003. The presentation explained how in 2013 General al-Bashir decided to reconstitute the feared Janjaweed paramilitaries as the RSF—an especially dangerous decision made on ethnic calculations. Since April 2019 the RSF has strengthened itself and become an important actor on Sudan's political scene.

The armed aggression against civilians in Darfur is a classic example of the historical process of encroachment on African land by landless foreign settlers. Other key points included:

- Darfur is a strategic region for both the SAF and the RSF. For the RSF, it is a bastion for accessing mineral wealth and building a strong base to pursue geopolitical interests, including access to other destabilized regions nearby and use of airports for weapon movements. Darfur would be pivotal to any RSF retreat from Khartoum in case of intense attack.
- The conflict in Darfur is an armed aggression by the RSF and its allied militias against civilians using militia groups.

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The police, security services, public prosecutors and judges were all part of the institutions of dictatorship and oppression before the war and are now part of it.

- Among the rampant breaches of human rights and international humanitarian law is organized gender-based violence. In 2023, international human rights experts led by Reem Alsalem, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, condemned on 17 August 2023 use of rape and other sexual violence as a weapon of war in Darfur (UN OHCHR 2023).
- There is growing international recognition of the ethnic and racial dimensions of aggressions against civilians in Darfur.
- Three peace agreements in Sudan have all failed to yield any long-lasting results. They include the Darfur Peace Agreement signed in 2006 in Abuja (Nigeria), the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur signed in 2011 in Doha (Qatar), and the Juba Agreement for Peace in Sudan signed in 2020 in Juba (South Sudan).
- The absence of effective law enforcement authorities is an important factor in the current conditions facing civilians, but is a situation that pre-dates the 2023 hostilities. The police, security services, public prosecutors and judges were all part of the institutions of dictatorship and oppression before the war and are now part of it. Reforming these and other national institutions is a priority for achieving sustainable peace and stability and will be pivotal to implementing justice in post-war Sudan.

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PLENARY KEY POINTS

- Darfur's violence has deep roots in historical injustice. The 15 April war awoke memories of historical atrocities for Darfuris. The complexity of the situation needs addressing to deal with societal cleavages between Arab and African communities in Darfur, and the political exploitation thereof.
- The conflict dynamics have taken the shape of conflict over resources, including land-grabbing. The three peace deals among the political elites and other players have not made any contribution to finding lasting solutions to the Darfur conflict.
- The impact of war in Sudan has led to destruction of key infrastructure. Major towns in Darfur are directly affected. Children and women have borne the greatest brunt.
- The Darfur war is systemic, genocidal ethnic cleansing against African communities. Over 50,000 people evicted from their homes is a testament to this. There is rampant destruction of basic human services and burning of homes involving use of dehumanizing narratives.
- Some activists have become complicit in human rights violations by supporting either side of the conflict. Diaspora communities have a

critical role to play in opposing the cycle of violence itself. Militarization of political, economic and communal life has increased the tensions. Human displacements led to new problems along porous borders and the illicit flow of arms to the hands of militia.

- The role of the state and involvement of militia including the Janjaweed has to stop.

Chapter 4

HUMANITARIAN NEEDS AND ASSISTANCE: ACTORS, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The war has seen communities and critical civilian infrastructure—human services, food supply bridges—bombarDED by heavy artillery. Civilian casualties are on the rise.

Suad Musa, a researcher and an activist in peace and gender issues, made her presentation on Humanitarian Needs in Darfur. Her discussion focused on how the crisis in Darfur has deteriorated into a humanitarian catastrophe featuring forced internal displacement and refugee flows. Women and child internally displaced persons are the most impacted; for civilians caught up in the crisis there is no access to basic needs.

Local, regional and international intervention is urgently needed for this devastating crisis. From Geneina in Darfur to Chad, the crisis has lasted for many years. The war has seen communities and critical civilian infrastructure—human services, food supply, bridges—bombarDED by heavy artillery. Civilian casualties are on the rise. Livelihoods have been destroyed and non-governmental organizations have now gone out of service or completely withdrawn their staff due to security concerns. Destruction of markets as well as looting have paralysed farming activities. Engaging the international community to resolve this crisis remains vital but most humanitarian agencies have evacuated their staff. This deterioration in the humanitarian situation and collapse of basic state functions is self-reinforcing as it opens room for renewed hostilities, social polarization, and militarization of livelihoods and economy.

Engaging the international community to resolve this crisis remains vital but most humanitarian agencies have evacuated their staff.

KEY PLENARY POINTS

One delegate noted that the situation in Darfur is dire because 'if someone doesn't die of bullet, he will die of hunger'. It was pointed out that the refugees in Chad are now almost half a million, mainly from Geneina. They have been in the camp for 15 years. The current conflict perpetuates genocidal behaviour and enduring social polarization. At this point another delegate stressed the need is to understand the genesis and history of conflict including what happened in Libya. He went on to say that the beginning of the conflict was

between local people and government due to unresolved grievances. The following points also came up during this plenary:

- The Sudanese have a long history of fragility. The army has been complicit in the past in allowing Janjaweed (later known as the RSF) to commit atrocities. The conflict in Darfur is aimed at controlling and dominating the people of Darfur.
- The failure to hold parties accountable for past atrocities, including through compensation or reparations, has led to the current breakdown of the security situation. The effects of war in 2003, for example, are still being felt.
- The elites who control the central state have not supported peaceful coexistence, but instead promoted divisions through hate speech and other means. The media has a crucial role to play in Sudan to deal with hate narratives and misinformation/disinformation; as with human rights activists, currently local media operate in an insecure environment with constricted space for expression.
- The international community has evacuated staff making it difficult for aid to reach the neediest populations.
- Food insecurity has been complicated by destroyed infrastructure. Water sources have been poisoned and Indigenous Darfuri refugees have been discriminated against.
- The current humanitarian crisis in Darfur is a global crisis that needs a global response. The UN stated that more than 4.1 million people have been displaced internally as of 5 September 2023, and all are in need of food and 15 per cent of children are malnourished (UNOHCA 2023), but has to date underestimated the magnitude of humanitarian need.
- A paradigm shift in the response to Darfur including at the UN and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) levels is urgently needed. Humanitarian aid cannot come only through Port Sudan but must come also through Chad, since aid is not protected in some areas and relief food is diverted. The lack of a functioning state is undermining efforts to provide humanitarian aid and trust-building is needed to allay suspicions around its delivery.
- Some of the peace agreements such as Juba Peace Agreement (2020) were criticized.

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Chapter 5

WHY HAVE PEACE AND STABILITY EFFORTS FAILED IN DARFUR?

Elites have manipulated ethnic sentiments to control identity groups (such as Arabs versus Africans) without any restraint.

Sharif Harir, a prominent Darfurian researcher, gave a presentation titled: 'Why Peace and Stability Efforts Have Failed in Darfur'. The discussion highlighted that the Darfur situation is one of Indigenous communities mobilizing to counter oppression they perceive to be neocolonial. Elites have manipulated ethnic sentiments to control identity groups (such as Arabs versus Africans) without any restraint. Transformation of the conflict is thus also an intergenerational challenge that requires bringing together the old and young, men and women.

Dr Sharif gave an overview of the Abuja and Juba agreements and their similarities. In his view, the Doha agreement is different in many ways. The alliance and movements in 2003 and different party manifestos were at variance with community aspirations. When dialogue collapsed, local communities resorted to armed struggle including fighting with Masalit, Fur and Zaghawa against the central government. Moussa Faki as Prime Minister of Chad in 2003 organized meetings with the president, who requested a ceasefire in Zaghawa. The discussions moved into engaging the local leaders in affected areas. A meeting was organized for the president to meet the youth in local areas where conflict was rife. These efforts were all aimed at trust and confidence building leading to an agreement of ceasefire. The meeting invited a broad-based participation around the country. Eventually these efforts collapsed, and the divisions spread.

The Sudanese Government went to learn ceasefire plans from Sri Lanka to adopt in Sudan. The international community through senior ambassadors got involved and, against government resistance, extended humanitarian support to affected communities. US intervention together with international organizations brought the Darfurian rebels and Sudan's Government together to dialogue with the state. The international community persuaded parties not to use words that encouraged dehumanization and so a peace agreement was signed. Concessions from rebel movements were rejected and the government instead tried to force parties to sign the agreement. The Abuja Agreement

(2006) was resisted by local leaders, victims of violence and communities; it was seen as only useful to those needing jobs. The Doha Peace Agreement in Darfur (2011) lacked credibility because the State of Qatar was supporting the regime in Khartoum and helping it achieve political stability with the intention of placing Sudan within the regional political alliance supported by Qatar. The main Darfurian armed groups refused to join the negotiations, allowing small splinter groups from the Darfurian movements to join the negotiations and sign the Doha Agreement. The weakness of the Doha Agreement signatories paved the way for the government to hijack the agreement, which led to a lack of trust and confidence.

KEY PLENARY POINTS

- There is a need for national vision on the part of all different regions and groups in Sudan. Freedom, fairness and dignity is the struggle of all Sudanese people, a struggle that must be inclusive regardless of religion, ethnicity, colour or tribe.
- The Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) is a military movement in Darfur built on what was already there as a way to resist government persecution.
- All the agreements on Darfur were made under pressure, reflecting both the political context in the country and the key influence of the international community.
- Promoting peaceful coexistence in Darfur is to be pursued through negotiated dialogue and the identification of conflict issues, and supported by putting human security mechanisms in place.

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Chapter 6

LOCAL AND TRADITIONAL MEANS OF CONFLICT PREVENTION, MEDIATION AND PEACEBUILDING

Local and traditional (or 'Indigenous') peacebuilding approaches are informal and experiential, unlike the Western methods which are formal and linear in orientation.

Abdelrahim Abbulbasher of Qatar University made a presentation titled: 'Local and Traditional Means of Conflict Prevention, Mediation, and Peacebuilding—Challenges and Opportunities'. He presented several case studies of mechanisms that have been used globally and have attracted growing attention, and recommended that such local and traditional approaches might be found useful to be applied to the Darfur context. Dr Abbulbasher elucidated their effectiveness especially when integrated into international and modern approaches. Local and traditional approaches include the role of elders and customary law, among others. Advantages include cultural relevance, trustworthiness, community empowerment, ownership, adaptability, complementarity, being asset-based (rather than deficit-based) and being directly concerned with accountability and justice at the operational level.

However, the presenter stressed that some of these traditional and local mechanisms might only be effective at the lower level of conflict intensity (unstable peace and open conflict). They might not be effective at the war and crisis levels where the conflict intensifies. Challenges of their use also include clash with the dominance of Western legal systems; gender and ethnic inclusivity concerns; and shortcomings in enforceability.

Bringing contenders face to face, they are often concerned with restorative justice or truth and reconciliation processes rather than adversarial win/lose contest.

Local and traditional (or 'Indigenous') peacebuilding approaches are informal and experiential, unlike the Western methods which are formal and linear in orientation. Bringing contenders face to face, they are often concerned with restorative justice or truth and reconciliation processes rather than adversarial win/lose contest. Examples include the Judiya mechanism in Darfur and Gacaca in Rwanda. *Ajaweed* (respected elders and traditional leaders) play a central role as mediators in Judiya. The presentation explored the potential for using Judiya in the context of the Darfur crisis. It may be more promising as a resource in humanitarian diplomacy than in political rounds of negotiation.

KEY PLENARY POINTS

- Armed attacks and violations continue, hindering mediation efforts towards peace and stability. The Judiya contributed to encouraging criminal behaviour in Darfur. The Judiya system was established on a notion that tribal leaders represent the conflicting parties in negotiation sessions, and that victims and perpetrators do not attend. The tribe is obligated to pay compensation to the victim's tribe on behalf of the perpetrator. This approach to conflict resolution does not punish perpetrators but rather keeps them away from criminal accountability. Under the Judiya, truth-telling and reconciliation no longer help with coexistence. Perpetrators do not attend hearings, do not commit to accountability, and do not pledge to stop committing violations. Supportive systems are needed to enhance mediation in the Darfur context. Crimes against humanity and genocide cannot be addressed through these local approaches; they fall within international systems of accountability.
- An integrative approach must be taken to issues of accountability in the context of violations committed in large-scale armed conflicts such as in Darfur. In such an approach, local and international means are integrated to achieve the ultimate goal, which is peace and justice combined.
- When talking about applying local and traditional mechanisms to address the bitterness of war and prosecute the perpetrators of humanitarian atrocities in the Darfur region, the extent to which the regional mechanisms are able to take into account common principles and values related to human rights and dignity must be considered.
- Some local mechanisms can be strengthened, and some can be excluded because they are not applicable in light of the current conflict and will not achieve the required goals.

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Chapter 7

AVAILABLE INTERNATIONAL MECHANISMS TO STOP THE WAR IN DARFUR

The UN Security Council under Chapter 7 of the UN Charter may impose a ceasefire, economic sanctions and embargoes.

Niemat Ahmadi, founder of the Darfur Women Action Group, made a presentation titled: 'Review of the Available International Mechanisms to Stop the War in Darfur: Challenges and Opportunities'. Her presentation focused on the following main points.

Instruments and treaties are key in building global peace in Darfur. The United Nations has played a vital role in maintaining peace and security in the world, through its Security Council. The UN Security Council under Chapter 7 of the UN Charter may impose a ceasefire, economic sanctions or trade embargoes. In March 2005, after the conflict in Darfur escalated and violations had been systematically committed against civilians in Darfur, the Security Council passed Resolution 1593 (UNSC 2005) and determined that violations in Darfur posed a serious threat to international peace and security. Accordingly, the Security Council decided to refer the case of Darfur to the ICC. The first such referral in the ICC's history, this reflected the level of concern.

At the regional level, the African Union established the African Union Peace and Security Council. Under this, the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel for Sudan, a body of high-level delegations, facilitates the mediation between the conflicting parties. The high-level panel has played essential roles in peacebuilding efforts in Sudan to date.

The Security Council passed Resolution 1593 (UNSC 2005) and determined that violations in Darfur posed a serious threat to international peace and security.

There are also hybrid mechanisms of regional and international bodies, such as the UNAMID established by the Security Council Resolution 1769 (UNSC 2007). The mission had a mandate to protect civilians and maintain security for humanitarian assistance, assist an inclusive political process, and promote human rights and good governance. As an intergovernmental organization of eight member states including Sudan, IGAD has played many essential roles in promoting peace and stability in Sudan.

KEY PLENARY POINTS

- Major international institutions such as the United Nations are subject to pressure and influence from great powers among their members, the best example of which is decision making in the Security Council.
- In regional institutions decisions are made according to regional balances, depending on the influence of a given state in the region, its role in regional policies, and its relations with the rest of the member states—as is the case with the relationship between the Sudanese Government and the African Union.
- International and regional organizations need to carefully study the nature of the conflict in Sudan rather than adopt policies hastily. Decisions that lack prior analysis and understanding are the reason why mechanisms at both levels have failed to solve the Darfur question once and for all.
- On 24 February 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine in an escalation of the Russo-Ukrainian War which began in 2014. This new reality and the involvement of all great powers in it, directly or indirectly, means it is not easy to produce consensus resolutions at the Security Council. It is imagined that both Russia and the USA—permanent Security Council members who are opposed on Ukraine—have interests and partners inside Sudan they want to protect, as do the rest of the Security Council member states.
- Under these circumstances the role of regional organizations, in particular the African Union and IGAD, is even more especially important.
- Relations between the Sudanese army and the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS) have reached a low point since the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Sudan declared the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative Volker Perthes persona non grata in June 2023.
- The Jeddah Platform for a ceasefire and peace in Sudan facilitated by the USA and Saudi Arabia must be comprehensive and discuss all issues of the war in Sudan, including the armed conflict in Darfur. Darfur's communities and institutions should be considered in the platform. The Jeddah Forum is gaining importance as the only negotiating platform at the present time. It is important that this platform be inclusive, transparent and participatory.
- Non-governmental organizations that work in delivering relief and humanitarian aid, those that work in the field of training and awareness in human rights, and those that work in human rights monitoring do not have a significant impact in times of war. Even governmental organizations do not enjoy adequate protection and the security services in the state place

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many limits and restrictions that limit their freedom of activity. Therefore, it is difficult for either type of civilian body to play an effective role in Darfur given the absence of the rule of law, the spread of chaos, and the absence of functioning public authorities.

Chapter 8

RECOMMENDATIONS

The participants in this Dialogue emphasized that peacebuilding processes in Sudan are interconnected, and according to experience, partial peace will not succeed. With that caveat, the participants sought to provide recommendations for peacebuilding in Darfur specifically. Organized into self-selecting groups according to knowledge and experience, the attendees arrived by consensus at the following.

8.1. PEACEBUILDING MECHANISMS

8.1.1. For the international community

1. Supporting peacebuilding processes in Sudan must be an international partnership among all the international community, including the regional and international institutions. It is necessary to distance the peacebuilding process from international competition and polarization.
2. The international community—through its support for peacebuilding processes in the region—must link the peacebuilding process to sustainable development, political stability and democratic governance in the country.
3. Diligent, impartial analysis informed by social and political science methods should be employed in technical assistance for peacebuilding and in diagnosing the nature and root causes of the conflict. The selection and formulation of appropriate methods and mechanisms implies an analysis of the peacebuilding approaches that were adopted in previous agreements and which proved unsuccessful. While imposing negotiations on the parties may have been intended to bring about a lasting peace, it nonetheless resulted in two major distortions:

Diligent, impartial analysis informed by social and political science methods should be employed in technical assistance for peacebuilding and in diagnosing the nature and root causes of the conflict.

The national army and all forces warring with or against the national army must adhere to the agreements regulating the behaviour of militaries during armed conflict war and refrain from violating international humanitarian law.

- a. the agreements reached did not represent the will of the people, rather they were power, and wealth-sharing agreements; and
- b. the process failed to build trust either between the international community and the armed groups, or among the armed groups themselves.

8.1.2. For the national authorities and the warring parties

1. The central government and its subsidiary institutions in the Darfur region must adhere to their international pledges and obligations related to respecting human rights and provide the necessary protection for citizens in war zones. In this regard, the national army and all forces warring with or against the national army must adhere to the agreements regulating the behaviour of militaries during armed conflict war and refrain from violating international humanitarian law.
2. The warring parties must abide by the commitments they make at the negotiating table, especially those related to a ceasefire and opening corridors for those working to provide humanitarian aid. They should not curtail access to the civilian population. There must be unfettered humanitarian access to civilians.
3. Reforming national institutions, including law enforcement authorities and security sector institutions is a priority for sustaining peace, stability, and implementing justice in post-war Sudan. This is crucial to avoid the recurrence of past abuses and violations.
4. Inclusion of women in the planning and management of the peace process is essential when embarking on the formulation of peacebuilding mechanisms.
5. The peace making process should ensure greater inclusivity to reflect Darfur's complex social composition.

8.1.3. For the civil society organizations (CSOs) and local communities

1. Local CSOs must build awareness campaigns promoting peace and coexistence, rejecting hate speech, and combating exclusion, extremism, and violence. CSOs should take advantage of the media available in the region to maintain the social fabric.
2. Local CSOs must create a broad network of local voluntary organizations—to include all population groups, including women and youth groups, displaced persons, pastoral groups, and nomads—in order to build a strategy to prevent the war's continuation and limit its effects.
3. With the support and assistance of international organizations, CSOs must work to prepare the local population and their institutions to participate in negotiations for peace in the region—including the civil administration, tribal leaders, resistance committees, displaced persons, and unions.

Local CSOs must build awareness campaigns promoting peace and coexistence, rejecting hate speech, and combating exclusion, extremism, and violence.

8.2. HUMANITARIAN CRISIS AND CIVILIAN PROTECTION

8.2.1. For the international community

1. The process of organizing urgent and effective humanitarian aid requires launching an international appeal. Such an appeal should include the establishment of a fund dedicated to supporting humanitarian assistance in Darfur, and agreed protocols regarding the security and safety of those delivering aid and humanitarian services.
2. Defining the humanitarian aid needed requires mapping the war-affected areas, including the villages that have been destroyed. It also means compiling information about countries, institutions, and individuals willing to provide in-kind, financial, or logistical assistance.
3. The next stage of the outbreak of war will leave multiple levels of disasters that must be prepared for early. The region has been suffering from war and disasters for some time, and therefore there have been experiences in confronting such conditions, and it is possible to re-evaluate them and begin building a short-, medium-, and long-term plan to confront all scenarios related to the deterioration of health and food situation in the region.
4. Safe humanitarian corridors for the delivery of humanitarian aid must be identified, organized and managed. These safe corridors are determined by agreement with the warring parties. Urgent needs require that humanitarian aid be delivered through Chad and Libya and possibly by air drop.

The next stage of the outbreak of war will leave multiple levels of disasters that must be prepared for early.

8.2.2. For national authorities and warring parties

1. The de facto authorities in Khartoum or in Darfur must develop a plan for humanitarian aid with civil society institutions as its backbone and ensuring the participation of donor institutions and countries in the management and distribution of aid. Government policies relating to the management, protection and distribution of humanitarian aid must be fair, transparent, and non-partisan. It is important that this plan includes the formation of committees to cooperate with donors and CSOs.
2. All humanitarian needs of civilians must be met urgently—and the ceasefire must be respected by all parties to the conflict engaged in hostilities.
3. The right of access to information is crucial for CSOs and beneficiaries of humanitarian aid. Among the important information that public authorities must share is information related to security conditions and safe passages.

Government policies relating to the management, protection and distribution of humanitarian aid must be fair, transparent, and non-partisan.

8.2.3. For the CSOs and local communities

1. There should be representation of all local stakeholders in the humanitarian action committees formed by CSOs. This means ensuring the

The CSOs must pay special attention to the role of women in times of war, build policies and campaigns to protect them from rights violations, and ensure their effective participation in negotiations.

involvement of refugees, internally displaced persons and other affected groups in planning, mobilizing and managing humanitarian efforts.

2. The CSOs must work to build trust between civil society and the donor institutions, government authorities, and warring parties. Building confidence helps expand the scope of work of local organizations working in the field of humanitarian aid and helps in reaching all affected populations.
3. The CSOs, traditional, and local community institutions should monitor plans and methods for distributing humanitarian aid. Such monitoring helps protect humanitarian aid from corruption, the exploitation of humanitarian aid for political purposes, or the deprivation of some groups because of their ethnic, tribal, religious, and political affiliations, or geographic locations.
4. The CSOs must pay special attention to the role of women in times of war, build policies and campaigns to protect them from rights violations, and ensure their effective participation in negotiations. Such support for women in Darfur must be carried out in accordance with the strategy of Resolution 1325 issued by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC 2000).

Increasing ethnic, geographic, and political polarization obligates the international community to swiftly respond to stop the ongoing atrocities and undertake appropriate measures to prevent it from happening in the future.

8.3. PEACEMAKING AND ACCOUNTABILITY MECHANISMS

8.3.1. For the international community

1. Increasing ethnic, geographic, and political polarization obligates the international community to swiftly respond to stop the ongoing atrocities and undertake appropriate measures to prevent it from happening in the future. Among other things, maximum pressure should be placed on the parties to immediately implement a ceasefire and adhere to the principle of civilians' protection.
2. While peace is paramount, it should not be at the expense of accountability for the abuses committed. It is the prevalence of impunity and the lack of accountability that has encouraged the persistence of abuses in Darfur. To break the cycle, the international community must reinforce the role of the ICC and all other accountability mechanisms including targeted human rights and anti-corruption sanctions.
3. The international community should extend the ICC's mandate to include the whole of Sudan. This would allow the investigation of crimes within the ICC's jurisdiction committed in regions other than Darfur.
4. The international community should learn from unsuccessful peace agreements signed previously. Peace agreements should not be an elite-driven process, rather a people-centred and, most importantly, a victim-

centred approach. Moreover, diplomatic efforts should support national consensus-building among the Sudanese people.

8.3.2. For the national authorities and the warring parties

1. The warring parties must immediately cease hostilities and abuses against the civilian population as an indication of good faith before they engage in any negotiations.
2. The national authorities must cooperate with the international community—especially the ICC, UN bodies, and regional mechanisms—with respect to human rights abuses committed in the 15 April war and prior. In this regard, the national authorities should without any reservation extradite those who are wanted by the ICC for crimes committed in Darfur, including the former president Omar al-Bashir.
3. The national authorities should consider additional accountability mechanisms (such as the Gacaca courts in Rwanda), given the wide scale of violations and massive number of perpetrators involved. Both successes and shortcomings of the Gacaca system should be learned from to ensure that no perpetrators evade justice. Whether senior or low-ranking, all must be held to account.

8.3.3. For the CSOs and local communities

1. History demonstrates that atrocities begin with words (hate speech, dehumanization, etc.). Local communities and CSOs play a crucial role in combating intercommunal hate, hence preventing atrocities. However, what is happening in Darfur should not be misunderstood as a mere intercommunal conflict; rather, it betrays a well-coordinated plan to destroy communities and deny them their traditional lands.
2. The CSOs and local communities should play a critical role in regional and international peace initiatives. The participation of Darfurians in all peacebuilding mechanisms is critical to ensure that their voices are central to the process and outcomes, especially regarding promotion of accountability.
3. Women's and young people's involvement (and gender and youth analysis) is of particular importance to achieving the greater inclusivity of local initiatives.
4. Local communities and CSOs should engage through the establishment of local reconciliation committees to maintain peace. However, local reconciliation processes should not undercut accountability for the atrocities committed. This is critical to avoid acts of retaliation prolonging the cycle of violence.

The participation of Darfurians in all peacebuilding mechanisms is critical to ensure that their voices are central to the process and outcomes.

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Sami Abdelhalim Saeed, PhD, has been the Head of the International IDEA Programme for Sudan since 2020. In his previous positions at the United Nations as a legal advisor in the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (from 2006 to 2020), he delivered numerous analyses and research on post-conflict legal issues in transformative communities. Saeed's previous experience includes having practised law before the Constitution Court in Sudan; teaching public law; and supporting CSOs in developing training on peacebuilding, preventing and countering violent extremism in the Horn of Africa, and women's political participation in the post-conflict environment.

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International IDEA organized a democratic and transparent dialogue for academics, experts, civil society activists, and youth groups from Darfur in the diaspora, in Kampala, Uganda, between 28 and 30 August 2023, titled: 'From the Horrors of War to the Bliss of Peace, Coexistence, and Stability'.

The conference aimed to bring together the people of Darfur in the diaspora, regardless of their political and ethnic backgrounds, to discuss challenges and potential solutions. The conference allowed the people of Darfur in the diaspora to interact with each other and benefit from the knowledge, expertise, experiences, and skills shared by those who attended this dialogue. Despite the political and ethnic turmoil in the region, the participants showed a high degree of objectivity, acceptance of others, and openness towards new opinions. A group of distinguished experts presented scientific papers that discussed issues of peacebuilding in Darfur in a professional and scientific manner.

The conference summarized its recommendations to all actors so that they could serve as a guide for policymakers. The final session of the conference was attended by representatives of international organizations, including the United Nations and the European Union. This Report is issued as part of the proposals emphasized by the participants in the Darfur Dialogue.