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## **Darfur: A Complicated Peace Process?**

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***Abstract:** Darfur, the western region of the Sudan, has been plagued with a destructive war since 2003 when two major rebel groups took up arms against the central government. The open confrontation was a culmination of the internal wrangling that had been going on between the government and the rebels over time but which the central government has persistently rebuffed. The groups have complained of marginalization in government appointments and also about abject neglect in socio-economic development of the region. The international community especially the African Union (AU) has not folded its arms and allowed the carnage to go on unabatedly. The AU had deployed its first mission in the region as early as 2004 to stem the escalation of the conflict and when this could not stop the conflict, the UN and AU deployed a combined mission christened UNAMID. The climax of the efforts of the international community was the signing of the mediated Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) in 2006. This has also not brought the required peace. This article seeks to analyse the peace process and why it has not succeeded in engendering the much needed peace.*

**Keywords:** Darfur, Government of Sudan, Darfur Peace Agreement, Sudan Liberation Army/Movement, Justice and Equality Movement.

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## **1. Introduction**

The war in Darfur started in 2003 when the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) took up arms against the Government of Sudan (GoS). A peace process initiated by concerned people which was eventually taken over by the African Union was set in motion; auspiciously to stem the opposition to humanitarian activities, stopping the killings of innocent civilians especially women and children and the destruction of their properties and of course to eventually end the crisis. It took sometime, before the (GoS) and the rebel movements agreed that the peace process should go on especially the modality to be adopted. It is going to eight years since this peace process began, but it appears there is no sign of light at the end of the tunnel. One begins to be apprehensive whether there could be an end to the crisis in the nearest future. The continuous war in Sudan portends a gloomy future for the poverty ridden region of Sudan; in this case many more innocent people will die not out of bullets but from hunger, penury and diseases and the already economically degraded condition will get worse.

This paper discusses the background to the conflict in Darfur and the efforts by individuals and the international community to end it. The paper also examines the role of the African Union (AU) and the part played by the United Nations (UN) to end the crisis. It also analyzes African Mission in Sudan (AMIS) and the AU-UN hybrid peacekeeping efforts to end the war in Darfur. Furthermore it discusses the peace process that led to the signing of the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) and the failure of the DPA. The paper concludes with recommendations.

## **2. Background to the Conflict in Darfur**

Communal conflicts had been ongoing in Darfur for a long time prior to the rebellion that broke out in 2003. According to Hoile (2005), the inter-tribal and intra-tribal conflicts in Darfur, some between nomadic communities and farmers, and some within nomadic and farming communities themselves, were a feature from the late 1950s onwards which culminated into the open confrontation of 2003 led by two rebel groups, the JEM and SLA/M. Between 1957 and 1989, there had been thirteen different conflicts in Darfur region of Sudan. Six of these conflicts were fought between Arab nomadic communities; four were between two parties who were both non-Arabs. These were Hoile (2005) serious armed confrontations, sometimes involving thousands of tribesmen, with combatants increasingly well armed with automatic weapons and vehicles. As is also apparent from the tribes involved, the violence was both within and across ethnic divides.

Ryle (2004) noted that, low-level fighting among communities in western Sudan has been endemic since the late 1980s when a war broke out between the Arabs and two of the ethnic groups in the present conflict. This low intensity conflicts that claimed so many lives and resulted to so much carnage between the nomadic and farming communities, were disputes over land occasioned by the droughts that ravaged the entire belt in the 1980s. The drought of the 1980s with its attendant hardship forced Arab herders and African farmers to scramble for land. It is to be noted that these two groups of people had peacefully co-existed before Mother Nature forced the drought on that land. Power (2004) argues that as a result of this natural disaster with the attendant damages caused to their crops, “the resentment of the North Darfur’s nomads against the seasonal forays of Zaghawa herdsman into Arab-occupied grazing lands commenced in earnest. African farmers grew hostile to camel-riding Arab nomads from the north who increasingly trampled on their farmland as they roamed in search of pasture. Arab farming group: who had once celebrated the annual return of Arab nomads, whose animals had fertilized their farmland and helped carry their harvests to market, began to impede their migration”.

The 1990s were marked by three distinct conflicts (Hoile, 2005). There were many insurgencies including an unsuccessful one led by a Fur activist, Daub Bolad, among non-Arab communities which the government ought to have played its role to settle but did nothing about them, hence the imbroglios of today. Equally, in 1996 there was a long-running conflict between the Rezeigat and the Zaghawa; and from 1997-99 there was fighting in western Darfur between the Massaleit and some Arab tribes. The SPLA- inspired insurgency was defeated within a matter of months and, generally speaking, intertribal conferences and conciliation, *ajaweed* and *mutamarat al sulh*, settled most of the other disputes.

It could be seen that in Darfur, “both Non-Arab and Arabs are black, indigenous, African and Muslim. Nevertheless, while Arabs traditionally have been nomads, non-Arabs have made their living from farming, which partly explains the trend of conflict in Darfur along ethnic lines. Following the drought and farming in Darfur from 1984 to 1985, local conflicts erupted between these groups over the scarce natural resources” (Alex de Waal, 2004). It was this low level tribal/ethnic conflicts that extended into a larger conflict represented by two rebel groups of SLM/A and JEM which finally broke out in 2003. These movements have accused the government of marginalization and neglecting the socio-economic development of the region and gradually reducing the region to a crunch. The situation in Darfur is typical of the observation by Deng (1993) of colonial state creation as he argues that “colonial institutions...divested the local communities and ethnic groups of much of their indigenous autonomy and sustainable livelihood and replaced them with a degree of centralized authority and dependency on the welfare state system...the outcome was often conflict—over power, wealth, and opportunities for development—that led to gross violations of human rights, denial of civil liberties, disruption of economic and social life, and consequent frustration of development”. Badmus (2009) has also argued that the February 2003 conflict and its escalation is linked to the signing of the Naivasha agreement of 26 May 2004 between the GoS and the SPLM/A. The exclusion from the peace process of all, except the GoS and

the SPLM/A, apparently became the *deadly price* of the agreement...In order to stop being further marginalized as a result of the Naivasha agreement, the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLA/M) and Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) mounted a series of attacks on government positions in Darfur and vowed to continue fighting until Khartoum acceded to its demands and end the region's marginalization. With this determination these groups started killing and attacking key government positions especially the military installations in 2003. The open confrontation should however not be seen as a surprise because the GoS had had enough opportunities to come to the aid of the Darfurians but consistently failed.

The Sudanese government compounded the situation by weakening rather than strengthening the existing native administration. In addition, though the country was poor that it was obvious that it might be very difficult for government to surmount the various requests and grievances put forward to it by the Darfurians, a routine government presence rather than total abject neglect that was the order of the day would have been a panacea. Appointments into central government should not have been selective based on only the loyalists of who is in power at a particular time. The cumulative effects of neglect by government over the years were ominous signs that cannot be disputed as factors that led to open confrontation in 2003 which has now become a monster that the international community is struggling to grapple with.

There are also notable cross-border dimensions to the conflict in Darfur which affected communities, such as Salamat, often straddling the Sudan-Chad frontier. Fred Aja Agwu (2009) argued that the war in Darfur actually began as a spillover from Chad and since then the two countries have remained in this entanglement. The conflicts have continued to be fueled, inflamed and reinforced by each other; and they both involved the competition for power and land. Chad and Sudan are clearly fighting a proxy war against each other—the Sudanese government encouraging the *janjaweed* attacks across the border inside Chad, while the Chadian President Idris Deby is supporting Darfur's groups. Ostensibly, it was because President Deby was unable to

control his Zaghawa kinsmen who formed the bulk of the SLA and JEM Dafurian rebels that he was completely sucked into the Darfur conflict as a direct support of the rebels (Agwu, 2009). The interference and the involvement of other countries such as Eritrea, China, Libya and even Chad through their financial and/or military support to one Darfurian group or the other has further confirmed the international dimensions to the serious tension along Sudan-Chad border.

### **3. The African Union and the United Nations in Darfur**

The role of the African Union in peace-keeping and civilian protection in Africa and in particular within Darfur has been crucial. The international community's (UN) lack of immediate needed commitment to intervene in the crisis in Darfur obviously ceded the responsibility to AU in order to stem the humanitarian disaster that was gradually looming in the region. The need for Africa to take this responsibility squarely on its shoulders is two folds. One arose out of the recent reluctance of the western countries to intervene in African conflicts following the US debacle in Somalia and the tragedy in the Rwanda. Two, the Darfur conflict is a threat not only to Sudan but could possibly spread and become a regional problem. It is better managed within the country's border for control and logistical and financial prudence. It was no surprise that the Chadian president Idris Derby quickly took the bull by the horn, initiated and arranged a peace-talk that led to the first cease fire agreement between the GoS and the rebel movements.

The approach of the international community to the crisis in Darfur was characterized by rhetoric accompanied by half measure commitment and inaction. This general apathy and lack of committed political will to actively intervene in this crisis encouraged continued escalation and widespread attacks carried out with impunity against innocent civilians and humanitarian aid workers and which led to haphazard delivery of humanitarian services. Most Western states justified their failure to be actively involved by citing an array of diplomatic, bureaucratic and political

hurdles and constraints (Oche, 2009). The initial deployment by the AU was grossly inadequate for the tasks assigned to it and was forced to expand to make a measure of impact. By October 2005, the AU Mission in Sudan (AMIS), established by ceasefire protocols signed by all parties to the conflict in April 2004, had deployed 6,171 military personnel and 1,586 police officers in Darfur. AMIS had also been supported logistically by NATO. (Dombey, 2005)

The deployment of AMIS began with the arrival of a handful of Military Observers (MILOB) in El Fashir in June 2004 without the required functional equipments such as vehicles and communication equipments and of course without proper pre-induction briefing. The AU MILOBs was starkly confronted with difficulties of lack of knowledge of the environment and no reception to coordinate their activities. There was no representative of the AU to brief them on the ground. It was critical for these personnel in view of the fact that there was no pre-deployment assessment and training. The only resemblance of pre-induction training was organized by NATO in Nairobi, Kenya in April 2005 when a handful of Military Observers (MILOB) were sent for two weeks training. This group of five MILOBs of both military and police were trained and became trainers for subsequent MILOBs in the mission area in El-Fasher as they arrive. This cannot be described as pre-induction but “post-induction” as it took place after they had been deployed in the mission area. In actual fact, there was no room for such pre-deployment training because it was less than a month that deployment was ordered by the AU that the actual deployment took place. With this scenario, it was obvious that AMIS was in for a very tough moment in its mission in Darfur.

The deployment of protection force by Rwanda and Nigeria in July and August 2004 respectively did not help the situation because the strength of about 310 officers and soldiers was too inadequate to cover an area as big as the size of the present day France. As the humanitarian and security situation deteriorated, the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the AU approved the boosting of AMIS strength by the deployment of 3,320-strong AMIS II personnel, made up of 2,341 military personnel, 450

MILOBs, 815 civilian police and 26 international civilian staff/CFC members.

The increase in the number of personnel deployed for peacekeeping in Darfur did not still help the precarious security situation more so that the personnel lacked the required logistical support and clear cut mandate. From the inception of the mission, many role-players and observers had advocated for a more robust mandate that would enable the mission to extend its protection to civilians in Darfur. Having suffered fatalities towards the end of 2005, critics started to strongly contend that the AMIS mandate was not robust enough. It became clear that “AMIS was not able to keep the ongoing violence in check and consequently displacement camps were becoming larger and more permanent with some very negative consequences as a vicious cycle of dependency developed in displacement camps” (Mann, 2006). The AMIS which started deploying mid 2004 was underfunded, understaffed, undertrained, and ill-equipped with restricted ceasefire-monitoring mandate could scarcely offer protection to themselves let alone the Dafurians (Adebajo, 2007). The AU troops are only allowed to use force to protect themselves--or civilians in their immediate vicinity. Most experts agree that this limited mandate severely hampered their ability to secure the area (Peper and McLaughlin, 2005). This resulted in the violation of the first cease fire agreement and the subsequent ones. It undermined the confidence of the factions in negotiations dealing with security, and also increased the impunity of the GoS attacks on the villages occupied by the rebels. With this high level of insecurity and escalation of displacement and deaths, imperatively therefore, something had to be done to put the situation in check.

The UN-AU hybrid Mission in Darfur was conceptualized for more sustainable peacekeeping. Cilliers convincingly argues that African peacekeeping will at some point have to be placed on a more sustainable basis. In this regard, he asserts that more can and should be done by the UN and the African Union (AU) in pursuit of an integrated system that will play a meaningful role in keeping peace on the African continent (Cilliers, 2008). Othieno and Samasuwo (2005) also argue in favour of a hybrid



peacekeeping mission in Darfur. They asserted that the establishment of UNAMID is furthermore one of the most notable of recent efforts in the field of security co-operation and hybrid arrangements involving both global and regional actors, namely the UN and continental bodies such as the EU and the AU. Hence questions arise whether these initiatives in co-operative security introduce a new and more promising future for peacekeeping on the African continent, and whether they will provide a more sustainable basis for African peacekeeping endeavours. There was no doubting the fact that the cooperation between the UN and the regional body would yield a good effect and in realizing this, the UN hesitated no more to reach a resolution on the issue and considering the deteriorating security situation.

The decision to deploy a hybrid UN-AU mission in Darfur was therefore consequence upon the worsening security situation. Initially, while the conflict in Darfur was escalating, the UNSC's priority in Sudan was the negotiation in Naivisha, Kenya to end the north-south civil war. One could sympathize with the global body for placing priority on Naivisha agreement in view of the need to end the conflict that had caused a lot of damages to the integrity of the international community for its aloofness for so long before coming together to end the war. It was also unfortunate that part of the period of the war in the south coincided with the period the Cold War was raging and the two powers involved were having a field day selling their ideologies to either the central government or the SPLA/M in the south. It would have been disastrous if the UNSC had allowed the opportunity to sleep off its hands this time around. However, it was a fatal mistake for the UN and other stake holders to have looked entirely the other way while Darfur was burning with the brutal response that the GoS visited on the actions of the rebels. Michael Clough (2010) writes that "as a result, even in June 2004, when the Security Council passed Resolution 1547, which established a UN mission in Sudan to prepare to monitor implementation of a final agreement between the government of Sudan and the SPLM/A, Darfur was barely mentioned. Before late July 2004, the Security Council's only action on Darfur was a May 25, 2004 statement by the Council's president calling on the

government of Sudan to disarm the *janjaweed* militias. This statement came after the council was briefed on the findings of two UN missions of massive human rights violations and grave humanitarian need, and after months of insisting that Darfur was not “on its agenda.” “The UN Security Council Resolution 1769 of 2007, later called for the establishment of an AU-UN hybrid force in Darfur to replace AMIS with UNAMID on account of its non-effectiveness as observed by the international analysts. The resolution (1769 of 2007) authorized a force which would incorporate AMIS personnel and consist of up to 19 555 military personnel, including 360 military observers and liaison officers; a civilian component with up to 3 772 police personnel; and 19 formed police units comprising up to 140 personnel each”. The hybrid mission was authorized for two important reasons. One was the envisaged fact that the hybrid deployment would cover more areas that were hitherto without security coverage and would be able to stem the escalation of security problems in the region. Furthermore, it would engender more confidence, prepare AU for more experience in future peacekeeping and above all increase cooperation between the two organizations. Equally, the action of the UN has countered African conflicts analysts which argue that the UN has always viewed African conflicts with impunity by not acting promptly citing the genocide in Rwanda as an example of such a lukewarm attitude. “It is further acknowledged that hybridization in African peacekeeping has assumed great significance. In this respect the establishment of UNAMID as a joint UN-AU peacekeeping operation in Darfur (Sudan) is one of the most notable efforts in the field of security cooperation and hybrid arrangements involving both regional and global peacekeeping instruments and resources” (Neethling, 2007)

#### **4. Assessing the Peace Process**

The need to find lasting solution to the Darfur conflict became imperative in view of the tragedy its feature portends not only to Sudan but also humanity. However, the road to the peace process has been winding and somehow

treacherous. From early 2003, the GoS-backed Arab militias destroyed hundreds of African villages, killed and raped thousands of the inhabitants, and displaced more than a million and a half others. This had been the pre-occupation of the GoS and the Arab militias against the innocent people of Darfur since the conflict started. The disaster that is befallen Darfur now is not unconnected with the “scorched-earth policy unleashed across large tracts of the Darfur province by the government of general Omar Hassan Almad al-Bashir in response to the insurgency on the part of the rebel group” (Badmus, 2009).

Burning and looting of villages in the rebel held areas, mass raping of women and killings of men, thereby, forcing hundreds of thousands of ‘lucky’ survivors to flee westward into the neighbouring Republic of Chad, while many are still internally displaced in the Sudan (Badmus, 2009) became the order of the day. Analysts are of the view that it would have made more sense for the Sudanese president, Omar al-Bashir if he had employed dialogue and diplomacy in the resolution of the Darfur crisis rather than reprisal attacks which have led to the massacre of the innocent people of Darfur. He absolutely ignored the fact that the rebels genuinely or as the case may be were demanding greater political representation in the country which they actually deserved. The government did not only mobilize its own forces, but also militia forces from Arab tribes popularly known as the *janjaweed* in properly coordinated military operations to launch ferocious attacks on rebel forces, but primarily targeting African villages (Pruneier, 2005). Additionally, the action of the GoS was not unconnected with the government’s perceived view that the eruption of the Darfur conflict was a Western conspiracy aimed at undermining its political authority otherwise the government ought to have taken a more subtle approach in its reaction to the rebellion of 2003. It would be recalled that Sudan was speculated as harboring Osama bin Laden at the wake of the 911 bombing and naming Hassan Turabi a Sudanese Islamic Fundamentalist as his arrow head. “Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda network has ties to Iraqi intelligence that date to the mid-1990s, when they came together in Sudan to support

Islamic insurgencies in Algeria and across the Middle East” (Eisler, 2001). Till date Khartoum has not forgiven the West for linking Sudan with the 911 bombing. After all, there are African traditional ways of settling disputes which could have been adopted by the GoS instead of going into full scale war using the Arab militias to disrupt and destroy lives and properties in Darfur till now.

It was expected that the international community would have no hesitation whatsoever reacting sharply and countering the GoS’s action to reduce or stop the carnage and avoid the type of shame that the Rwanda genocide foisted on humanity. Bellamy (2006) reacting to the genocide in Rwanda had observed that, it is highly unlikely that the Security Council would have objected had others used force to halt the 1994 Rwanda genocide. The international community’s initial lack of political will to act promptly rekindled the events that led to Rwanda’s genocide. Even in the shadow of Rwanda, the Security Council in 2004 failed to muster the collective will necessary and decisively to end the humanitarian catastrophe in Darfur and hold accountable those who are responsible for creating it. (Michael Clough, [www.responsibilitytoprotect.org](http://www.responsibilitytoprotect.org)) However, the appalling human suffering in the region and the fear of the ricochets such as refugee issue and the possibility of turning the congruent states as hideouts for criminals and terrorists would not allow the stakeholders in the international community to go to bed over Darfur crisis. The conflicts therefore gradually became the cynosure and a priority project of the international community. Alex de Waal (2005) has argued that Darfur’s peace process is in some respect more challenging. There is no cohesive leadership on either side and the political issues that divide the belligerents have yet to be thrashed out—the agenda for negotiations is itself a matter of acrimony. Meanwhile, the best hopes for settlement may come from connecting external peacemaking to internal initiatives.

Since 2003, neighboring countries, the AU and the UN have worked to bring Darfur’s rebel and GoS to the negotiating table. The Chadian president Idris Deby led the first peace initiative largely because he feared a spill-over effect in Chad if the conflict in Darfur escalated. Although

violated by all the parties to the ceasefire agreement of September 2003, the SLA and GoS signed the first ever ceasefire agreement through the instrumentality of the Chadian president Idris Deby. The ceasefire agreement which was violated with impunity notwithstanding, in April 2004, Chad with the AU's assistance, mediated yet another ceasefire agreement to allow humanitarian access to Darfur. However further Chadian attempts failed because the rebels questioned the impartiality of President Deby as a mediator (Marchal, 2006). In subsequent Chadian-brokered peace talks, the rebels proved to be intransigent. Chadian government mediators declared in December 2003, for example, that the rebels had stalled the peace talks: "There has been a breakdown in negotiations due to unacceptable rebel demands. The talks have been suspended: it's a failure". (News Article by Associated Press 16 December, 2003) The Chadian president in frustration of the situation had lamented and described the rebels demands as "unacceptable". Part of the frivolous demands and which was counted as a deliberate attempt to derail the peace talks, was the SLA's demand of military control of the region during a transitional period, 13 percent of Sudan's oil earnings, and SLA autonomy in administering Darfur. (International Crisis Group, 2004).

The issue of immediate ceasefire among the warring factions was considered very paramount to the peace process; at least to facilitate humanitarian aid to displaced civilians. A Ceasefire Commission (CFC) was therefore established for coordination between the fighting parties and to investigate any violations of the ceasefire. The CFC, based in El Faher, Darfur, was composed of Chad as the mediator of the agreement; GoS, SLA, and JEM as conflict-parties; and the US, EU, AU and the UN as observers. The CFC was to supply data to the Joint Commission (JC), which was based in N'djamena and included all parties in the CFC. The CFC was intended to collect and collate information on violations and make reports to the JC, for use by the negotiating team at Abuja that was already preparing bases for talks. The CFC, however, ultimately lacked the capacity to monitor the ceasefire and the JC was not provided with sanctioning powers against violators. The African Union

Mission in Sudan (AMIS), formed in July 2004 as an observer unit to monitor the ceasefire, was also ineffective, failing largely as a result of lack of manpower and equipment, but also hindered by a mandate that prevented it from engaging armed groups who violated the ceasefire (Senait, 2010). Another observable fundamental flaw of these initial ceasefire agreements in the peace process is the issue of the grievances of the rebels that were not given immediate and adequate attention.

It was a costly omission that some of the issues that led to the outbreak of the Darfur crisis especially by the rebels were not tabled and properly discussed to calm fray nerves. Alex de Waal (2007) has observed that, "The Inter-Sudanese Talks on the Conflict in Darfur began inauspiciously in the Chadian capital, N'djamena, in April 2004, with an unworkable ceasefire agreement. One fatal shortcut was that the agreement had no maps attached, and so there were no details about which territory was controlled by each side" This is a negation of Licklider's argument that a workable and sustainable peace settlement usually must address root causes of the conflict, involve all parties in the conflict, and deal with the security dilemma of actors (Roy, 2010). It would not surprise a discerning mind therefore that the first waves of ceasefire agreements were expressly violated. There is no doubt that the SLA and JEM--the factional parties involved in Darfur conflicts had their grievances which necessitated their taking arms up against the GoS. These grievances were not given priority or exhaustively discussed during the discussions on the ceasefire agreement at N'Djamena. Without these questions being properly addressed the issue of non-violation of any agreement cannot possibly work. The peace process, ab initio therefore lacks proper decorum and required luster to make it work. The two rebel groups had cited similar reasons for the rebellion, including socio-economic and political marginalization of Darfur and its people.

There had been six peace talks since Darfur peace process began in 2004 and as many as that number of the ceasefire agreements have been violated. "The May 2006 peace agreement otherwise known as the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA)...mediated by the AU at Abuja marked a

turning point in the Darfur peace process. The Declaration of Principles of July 2005 signed by the two movements and the GoS who committed to enter all agreements into parts of the national constitution was an important aspect of the document” (International Crisis Group, 2006). The main security terms included the disarming the *janjaweed* militias; the disarmament, reintegration and demobilization of the resistance movements’ forces; and provision of security for internally displaced persons (IDPs). The responsibilities of disarming the *janjaweed* who had wreaked so much havoc in Darfur was placed on the GoS since it was responsible for arming them to execute its nefarious plan to canalize the rebels. The GoS has more often than not failed to disarm the militias despite earlier agreements and UNSC resolutions requiring the GoS to do so. Compounding the problem was the task of monitoring this situation given to AMIS which obviously was not adequately equipped and staffed for the job. The rebel movements on the other hand have remained adamant to not only refusing to disarm but also preventing anybody or group to visit their locations as long as the GoS refuses to adhere to the instructions of the mediators of disarming *janjaweed* militias.

Other aspects of the DPA included the establishment of buffer zones around IDP camps, the withdrawal of national army and militia forces from those areas, and the formation of community police from among the IDPs for security of the IDPs. The task of identifying the buffer zones, the control and protection/maintenance was given to AMIS which again lacked the prerequisite forces to handle. The rebel movements advanced some demands that were turned down by the GoS and the mediators. Such that was made by the SLA/Abdul Waheed (AW) to be part of the security forces to protect the IDPs and guarantee the safe return of the refugees and also to be part of the group to disarm the militias. In the final analysis, the DPA did exclude the security arrangement for the safe return of the refugees but it included the reintegration of parts of the forces which may have been affected by demobilization and disarmament exercises on the part of the rebel movements (Alex de Waal, 2006).

One of the major and far reaching questions of Darfur peace process is the issue of power sharing especially at the center. The resistant movements had demanded for greater share in national power. In particular, they demanded representation in the Presidency, parliamentary seats commensurate with Darfur's population, and other positions in government. Darfur in the political evolution of Sudan had been divided into three states of the North, South and West and the administration had been run along this line. During the peace process, the rebel groups demanded that the three states be merged into one as an entity with a governor to direct its affairs. To the chagrin of the rebel leaders this particular demand was turned down and of course, the central government was not even in the mood to negotiate the presidency and the seats in the national assembly because they were already divided by the earlier North-South CPA which is the basis for the future government of national unity. But as a measure of compromise, an advisory position of Senior Assistant to the Presidency which is not constitutionally binding was created with advisory powers.

Another conciliatory mechanism created to satisfy this regional unification desire was the issue of power sharing which gave the rebel movements the 4<sup>th</sup> highest position in the GNU. There was the formation of the Transitional Darfur Authority (TDRA), chaired by the Senior Assistant to the President to administer regional issues—including land disputes, reconstruction and development, and peace and reconciliation, among others. However, the TDRA has no powers and the appointment of the Senior Assistant was determined by the president from the list of preferences submitted by the movements (Kevani, 2006).

On the issue of wealth sharing, rather than focusing on national wealth sharing, the DPA was in favour of compensation. This is to say, that, rather than programming Darfur for partaking in the sharing of national revenue or on revenue collected from the region, the government accepted compensating for lives lost, property destroyed and looted occasioned by the violence caused by the conflict. The final document also commits the international community to holding donors conferences to pledge additional funds for Darfur, and invites the Chairperson of the TDRA to present



to that conference a summary of needs and priorities (Mohamed, 2007).

Finally, the DPA calls for Darfur-Darfur Dialogue and Consultation (DDDC) in which representatives of all Darfur stakeholders can meet to discuss the challenges of restoring peace to their land, overcoming the divisions between communities and resolving existing problems to build a common future. The idea of the DDC in the DPA was to ensure that, the full array of Darfurian community leaders--excluded from the Abuja talks--can meet to resolve the myriad local disputes (Alex de Waal, 2007). However, the DPA did not clearly define the DDC specific objectives, the process for achieving them and the mechanisms for implementing its outcome (Mohamed, 2007).

The DPA did not go down well with all the parties as it was rejected by both the SLM/AW and JEM on three grounds: Procedural, Legal and Technical. As regards Procedural, the AU decided to classify the negotiation process into three commissions; namely, Power sharing, wealth sharing and security arrangements, and has further decided to proceed in the negotiation of these commissions in a concurrent manner (Reeves, 2007). The two movements were not comfortable with the procedure because according to them it would create confusion and would not yield fair results citing land issue as very crucial to Dafurians. Another weakness pointed out by the rebel movements was the lack of enough time for them to study the document. It was claimed that the document had been prepared six weeks before it was presented to the movements and were not given adequate time to study it as only five days was allowed for them to respond and sign.

The international community AU-UN has worked assiduously to ensure that peace returns to Darfur. These efforts started with the peace initiative by Chadian president Idris Deby which culminated to the signing of a peace agreement popularly called DPA between the GoS and a faction of SLA in Abuja, 2005. The DPA has however not been smooth sailing as expected by the protagonists. Soonest after the signing of the DPA, the parties to the agreement started renegeing on implementing the terms of the agreement. Instead of the DPA ushering in the long awaited

peace, Darfur and its inhabitants started witnessing a new wave and barrage of attacks. In mid-September 2006, government's and Minawi's forces launched a coordinated offensive to crush the rebel groups who did not sign the DPA, and also targeted communities who supported those rebels (Nathan, 2006). However, the problems hindering the success of the DPA cannot be located in one domain. That is, it cannot be rested on the part of only the GoS, the rebel movements, the international community or the negotiators. In other words the problems are multi-faceted and it appears that all the participants have a share of the blame.

In the first instance, the norm of non-intervention in the "internal affairs" of a sovereign state which every state fiercely defends swings in favour of the GoS and on many occasions has invoked this principle of non-interference not to accede to appeal by the international community and block international efforts to end gross abuses of its citizens. On several occasions, Khartoum has violated ceasefire agreements even as we write it has remained adamant to disarm the *janjaweed* militias who have unabatedly tormented the people and committed so many atrocities in the region. The opposition to the deployment of the hybrid AU-UN peacekeeping operation in Darfur shows nothing but intransigence on the part of the GoS. The hybrid operation endorsed by the AU and the UN in December 2006, was not approved or accepted by the GoS until June 2007. In this interim, both the GoS and the rebel movements were not only at each other's throat as they clashed several times making life uncomfortable for the inhabitants, humanitarian efforts were also heavily hampered and haphazardly conducted. There has been abduction of the humanitarian workers and even the killing and the adoption of the Military Observers and also of the peacekeepers. This condition negatively impacted on the peace process and in this way, both the rebel movements and the GoS should accept the blame of wrecking havoc in the region.

Closely related to the issue of sovereignty is the issuance of warrant of arrest to the president of Sudan. Observers have commented that the warrant of arrest at this moment was ill-timed, ill advised and counter-productive. There is no doubt that the issuance of an arrest warrant for

the Sudanese president has left some consequences many of which run counter to the motive behind the issuance of the warrant. “The obvious victim of the decision would be none other than the Darfur Peace Process which may be put on permanent hold despite the assurances given by the GoS that it would continue with the peace process. Furthermore, the apparent show of support and solidarity with Sudan against the issuance of the warrant by some radical states and organizations around the world underscores the political risk of issuing the warrant” (Ahmed-Sambo 2009).

The apparent lack of cooperation among the rebel movements is a great hindrance to the peace process. The Darfur peace process has become a distant concept since the failure of the DPA in May 2006. The DPA ended any semblance of unity within or between the SLA/A and the JEM when major factions refused to sign the agreement. “Since then, the once strong rebel movement has fragmented into several factions. At one point in 2008, the UN recognized in its report five major groupings: the Sudan Liberation Army, SLA Unity, SLA/AW, SLA Abdul Shafi, JEM Khalil Ibrahim and the United Resistance Front (URF). However, other analysts claim the existence of 12 to 27 different movements today in Darfur” (Campbell, 2010). This is not in the spirit of the peace efforts. The rebel groups are expected to cooperate and act in consonance and in the spirit of their grievances in order that the international community can take them serious and not being seeing as self centered groups.

The strategy adopted for the negotiation of the peace process in Abuja that produced the DPA has been attacked. Some of the proposals or the information leading to sitting at the conferences look somehow ‘regimented’ or ‘imposition’ as against the need for negotiation at every stage of the peace process to ensure that every party was carried along. Decisions were taking by the mediators and passed to the rebel groups at short notice without allowing enough time for them to study it. Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo, the US deputy secretary of state, Robert Zoellick, the British international development secretary, Hilary Benn, and others in less than a week, compelled government and rebels to come to a comprehensive agreement. In the late afternoon of

5 May, after a final 20-hour negotiating session, the GoS and the SLM faction led by Minni Arkoy Minawi signed the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA). What these major negotiators did was a great departure from the spirit of reconciliation which if properly employed would carry every party along. “It was a joyless climax: the Sudanese president knew that the wheels had come off, and that the agreement was, like its predecessor, unworkable. But the US and AU had staked all on a huge gamble, and were still determined to make it work against the odds” (Alex De Waal, 2006). The document containing the DPA is extremely lengthy...and full of tables of illustration that make it prone to misunderstanding (Nureidin Netabay, 2003). The parties should have been allowed enough time to study the document for proper understanding and to raise objections where they needed to but that were not the case. “As a result, two of the three major movements present in Abuja negotiations refused to sign an agreement over which they had no ownership nor did they necessarily agree with its provision. Therefore, the mediators’ deadline diplomacy, of limiting time and rushing into a decision, undermined the credibility of the DPA of May 2006.

A major point of disagreement put forward against the DPA by the rebel movements was the issue of power sharing in which they have used the CPA of January 2005 as a yardstick. They have argued against few and un-proportional representation of the Darfurians in the parliament which likely contributed to the competition among the factions—and to further fragmentation. In wealth sharing, the SPLM opposed the Compensation fund based on the absence of such a provision within the CPA for the individual losses of Southerners (International Crisis Group, 2006). Besides, the rebels had demanded the position of national vice-presidency for Darfur and the establishment of Darfur as a unified region with its own regional government which the GoS turned down.

Finally, the external dimension to the peace process has created delays and suspicions between and among the parties to the process. Even though Chad has played a prominent role in putting the initial peace process together,

Chad's position could not be truly placed or ascertained in view of the Chadian president's relationship with Zaghawa--a major tribe in the conflict. It would be recalled that the first disagreement that the rebels ever had came consequent upon their doubts in the Chadian president's neutrality. There have also been proxy wars between the leadership of Sudan and Chad; each using the opportunity it had to wreck havoc at the borders. As reported by Roughneen (2008), the Sudanese army has been tormenting the peacekeepers by firing at their convoys in western Darfur, near the Chadian border and the Chadian air force has been bombing Sudanese army positions inside Darfur making the borderlands in Darfur become a proverbial 'hornet's nest' and potential source of conflict between Sudan and Chad, backed by China and France, respectively.

## **5. Some Conclusions**

This paper has traced the origin of the 2003 open rebellion against the GoS to an age long internal wrangling that emanated from the disagreement between the nomad Arabs and the sedative farmers in Darfur. Conflicts between different ethnic groups in Darfur have been part of Darfurian society for many years. There have been conflicts over grazing and water rights but also over local politics and administrative boundaries which have pitched nomads against farmers. The environmental degradation of the 1970s that became acute in the 1980s compounded the already grave situation. All these contributed in exacerbating the parlous economic conditions and intensified the conflict.

The rebel capitalized on these lingering and unsettled disputes to launch the 2003 open confrontation. The peace process that ensued was so prolonged that at the end instead of engendering peace; it resulted into producing disenchanted splinter groups as resistance movements disagreed over terms of peace and found themselves shifting

positions in the light of new terms and promises of power and resource sharing (Senait 2008).

Even though, for now the DPA has failed to achieve the purpose for which it was established, the international community cannot fold its arms and allow the innocent people of Darfur to continue to be killed and maimed under a terrible insecurity that has pervaded the region. It is therefore imperative that the international community initiates a resumption of the peace process. This time, proper strategy must be adopted such that negotiation arrangements are made inclusive and specific arrangements are made for implementation of agreements. Efforts must be made to avoid the imposition of decisions on parties. This way, there could be light at the end of the tunnel and Darfur may see peace once again.

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