



enough

The project to end genocide and crimes against humanity

Sudan

Roots of the Crisis

National identity in Sudan, Africa's largest country, has always been a contentious issue. Sudan suffered both a difficult colonial history and a series of governments that have been more interested in dividing Sudan's peoples than uniting them. Divided by religion, ethnicity, and tribe, Sudan has been at war for most of its recent history. The country's most significant conflict has been that between the north and south. A first civil war lasted from 1955 to 1972, and a second from 1983 to 2005. The genocide that began in Sudan's western region of Darfur during 2003 is best understood as yet another example where conflict was driven by political elites in the capital of Khartoum, who maintain disproportionate power and benefits at the expense of marginalized populations in the country's periphery.

From the Colonial Era to Civil War

The loose Ottoman-Egyptian colonial government in what is now Sudan collapsed in the 1880s after a national-religious revolt led by an Islamic Mahdi, or prophet. Anglo-Egyptian forces captured Khartoum in 1898 and established a jointly-administered government. The British administered the north and south separately until 1947, when the regions merged and political power was given to northern elites nine years prior to Sudanese independence in 1956.

Southern army officers mutinied in 1955, eventually forming the Anya-Nya guerrilla movement. A number of northern-dominated governments rose and fell over the next several years, with General Gaafar Nimeiri leading a successful coup in 1969. Nimeiri came to power as a socialist, recast himself as a moderate, and then adopted the mantle of Islamic nationalism. As a series of coup attempts left him politically isolated, he began to seek peace not only with former adversaries in neighboring Ethiopia and Uganda, but also with rebels in southern Sudan. The Addis Ababa peace agreement was signed by the Nimeiri government and the Anya-Nya in March 1972. The accord included provisions for Anya-Nya forces to be integrated into the national army and limited autonomy for the south.

Consistent violations of the agreement by the government eventually led to a resumption of the war. The agreement was unconstitutionally revised by the Khartoum government in 1977, and northern troops were deployed to the oil-rich southern town of Bentiu. In response, southern troops mutinied against the government in June 1983. Khartoum then imposed Islamic or sharia law in September 1983, further alienating the non-Muslim southern population.

Garang, Bashir and the Second Sudanese Civil War

Southern grievances eventually crystallized around the Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement, or SPLA, a rebel group led by Dr. John Garang. As political tensions rose in the north, the economy slumped and the war in the south again escalated. Moves toward a peace agreement between the SPLA and the government were dashed when the National Islamic Front, or NIF, led a bloodless coup in June 1989, a day before a bill to freeze sharia law was to be passed by Parliament, and in the midst of what might have been promising discussions between the government and southern rebels.

Led by General Omer al-Bashir, the NIF unraveled peace efforts, revoked the constitution, banned opposition parties, and intensified the war with the SPLA by declaring a jihad, or holy war, against the mostly non-Muslim south.

Though its cause gained greater attention at home and abroad, the SPLA was weakened in 1991 by the fall of a key regional ally, the Marxist regime of Mengistu Haile Mariam in Ethiopia, and by a major split within its own ranks. This led to serious inter-ethnic fighting in the south, which the government in Khartoum hoped to opportunistically exploit and deepen as part of a growing 'divide and rule' strategy toward its opposition. The SPLA survived through a series of alliances with northern opposition movements and strong regional support. Over time, Eritrea—the government of which had a falling out with Khartoum over the NIF's support for Eritrean Islamic insurgents—became an important base of operations.

Around this same time, Sudan was implicated by both Ethiopia and the United Nations Security Council of involvement in the June 1995 assassination attempt on Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak during his visit to Addis Ababa for an annual Organization for African Union summit. Subsequently, Ethiopia increased its support for the SPLA. Khartoum also gained notoriety for harboring Osama bin Laden and a broad array of terrorist groups throughout the 1990s, which led to further international isolation, culminating in the U.S. cruise missile attack on Khartoum following the terrorist bombings of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998.

The Comprehensive Peace Agreement

On-and-off negotiations between the government and the SPLA under the Kenyan-led regional Inter-Governmental Authority on Development, or IGAD, made little progress from 1994 to 2001. But in 2002, the Machakos Protocol—which granted the south the right to a referendum on self-determination following a six-year interim period and dictated that sharia law would remain in force only in the north—provided the framework for future, successful negotiations.

IGAD worked closely with the U.S., UK, Norway, and Italy to press the government and SPLA to reach a final deal. High-level U.S. diplomatic engagement, notably the White House's appointment of former Missouri Senator John Danforth as special envoy, provided much needed leverage to move the process toward its conclusion.

The Comprehensive Peace Agreement, or CPA, was officially signed on January 9, 2005. The CPA initially had sufficient momentum to survive the death of SPLM leader and Vice-President elect John Garang. By October 2005, a new constitution had been ratified, a new government

sworn in (with 52 percent of the executive posts for the ruling NCP and 28 percent for the SPLM), and the south's autonomous legislature and government became operational.

Genocide in Darfur

Darfur emerged as Sudan's next crisis when two rebel groups, the Sudan Liberation Army/Movement (SLA) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), took up arms against the government in February 2003. The rebels claimed years of political, economic and social marginalization in the region, and hailed primarily from the African Fur, Zaghawa, and Massaleit tribes.

After a string of rebel victories in the spring of 2003, the government responded by arming Arab Janjaweed militia. This allowed the militia to 'clear' the villages and towns of those accused of supporting the rebellion. Janjaweed tactics, directly backed by government security and intelligence forces, were brutal, and often directly targeted civilian populations rather than rebels. Village after village was burned to the ground as inhabitants were killed or fled. Despite intermittent peace talks and the presence of a 7,000-strong, but largely ineffectual, African Union protection force that was deployed in August 2004, violence and broken ceasefires continued throughout 2004 and 2005.

Divisions between and within the JEM and SLA rebel groups have exacerbated the conflict and hindered negotiations. However, it is clear that the scorched-earth strategies adopted by the Sudanese government and its militia proxies are largely responsible for the hundreds of thousands who have died in Darfur, and the roughly 2.5 million people who have been driven from their homes and now rely on humanitarian assistance for their survival. In March 2005, the UN Security Council referred the situation in Darfur to the Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court for investigation, though the Sudanese government continues to oppose ICC involvement.

Peace talks mediated by the African Union culminated in the Darfur Peace Agreement on May 5, 2006. However, only one of the main rebel factions—the SLA faction led by Commander Minni Arkou Minnawi—signed the deal with the government, and the non-signatory rebel groups vowed to fight on.

Since the signing of this agreement, the security, human rights, and humanitarian situation in Darfur has continued to deteriorate. Khartoum continues its policy of support for Janjaweed militias and their attacks on civilians. Humanitarian access remains extremely poor, as relief workers are targeted by government-supported militias, rebel groups, and bandits. The partial deployment of UNAMID—the AU/UN "hybrid" peacekeeping force—in 2008 has been unable to meaningfully protect civilians in Darfur. The July 14, 2008 request by the Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Luis Moreno-Ocampo, for an arrest warrant against Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir is a welcome step towards accountability for genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity in Darfur. The United States and its partners must support this investigation. In November 2008, the Chief Prosecutor also called for charges to be brought against members of a rebel splinter faction for their attacks on peacekeepers in September 2007.

Although the UN General Assembly and UN Security Council have endorsed the doctrine of the "responsibility to protect" civilians when their own governments are unable or unwilling to do so, the world has yet to act to protect Darfur's civilians, ensure a lasting peace, or hold the perpetrators accountable.

Enough is a project of the Center for American Progress to end genocide and crimes against humanity. Founded in 2007, Enough focuses on the crises in Sudan, Chad, eastern Congo, northern Uganda, Somalia, and Zimbabwe. Enough's strategy papers and briefings provide sharp field analysis and targeted policy recommendations based on a "3P" crisis response strategy: promoting durable peace, providing civilian protection, and punishing perpetrators of atrocities. Enough works with concerned citizens, advocates, and policy makers to prevent, mitigate, and resolve these crises. To learn more about Enough and what you can do to help, go to www.enoughproject.org.

