

STUDIES ON COUNTRY-RELATED CONFLICT ANALYSIS

S U D A N



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by

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for the
German Development Service
and the
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Friedrich Ebert Foundation (Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung – FES)

Founded as the political legacy of Germany's first democratically elected president in 1925, the FES is pledged to social democracy and pursues the following aims:

- to promote the political and social education of people from all walks of life in the spirit of democracy and pluralism;
- to give talented young people access to higher education and research by means of grants;
- to contribute to international understanding and co-operation.

At present it has a staff of 560 people working in pursuit of the international operations, which link the FES to partners in over a hundred countries around the world. The aim of its project activities, which are designed to foster the democratic and social dimensions of globalisation, is to constructively promote the peaceful transformation of conflicts in various phases. The FES is committed both to the principle of sustainability and to the do-no-harm approach, which, in the context of civil conflict resolution, places the emphasis on the strengthening of socially cohesive forces and the local potential for peace. Civil conflict resolution comprises all measures taken before, during and after violent conflicts with a view to systematically influencing the causes of conflict both through the adversaries and their forms of dialogue, on the one hand, and through the systematic strengthening of the potential for peace within the given society/societies, on the other.

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The German Development Service

The German Development Service (Deutscher Entwicklungsdienst – DED) was formed in 1963 as a non-profit-making limited liability company. It is one of the leading European aid agencies to operate worldwide. It is a partnership between the Federal Republic of Germany, as represented by the Federal Ministry of Economic Co-operation and Development, and a registered charity called "Lernen und Helfen in Übersee" e.V. The DED is financed out of the Federal German budget.

Since its foundation it has sent over 13,000 development aid workers to improve the living conditions of people in Africa, Asia and Latin America. At present about 1,000 of them are active in over 40 countries.

In 1998 the German Federal Government decided to promote the Civil Peace Service (Ziviler Friedensdienst – ZFD) as an instrument for preventing crises and furthering the cause of peace through development co-operation. Since 1999 it has given worldwide support to initiatives and organisations engaged in civil conflict resolution and peace promotion. Within the framework of the ZFD the DED dispatches peace specialists who, at the request of local partners, contribute their support to the overcoming of hostility and the setting up of structures conducive to peace.

The ZFD despatches its peace specialists abroad in order to provide systematic support for measures involving a non-violent approach to conflicts and potential conflicts. The ZFD's efforts are concentrated in the following fields:

- strengthening actors who are striving for peaceful coexistence (peace potential)
- promoting confidence-building measures between members of the various parties to a conflict
- setting up information and education structures and programmes in order to spread knowledge of and explain peace activities
- contributing to reconciliation and reconstruction

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Peace Development Group (Gruppe Friedensentwicklung – FriEnt)

FriEnt is made up of eight governmental and non-governmental organisations and networks and acts as a forum for its members to compare notes on their experience in the field of crisis prevention and conflict resolution. This heightens awareness of how development policy can successfully be used to promote peace and offers opportunities for closer co-ordination and communication between the members of the group. FriEnt evaluates information on projects and practice-related research results, develops methodological and conceptual approaches, facilitates dialogue between the member organisations and maintains contacts with other institutions concerned with promoting peace and development.

The group came into existence on 31 August 2001 at the initiative of the Federal German Ministry of Economic Co-operation and Development, the Evangelical Development Service, the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, the German Society for Technical Co-operation (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit), the German Catholic Bishops' Organisation for Development Cooperation (Misereor), the ZFD consortium (including DED), and the Civil Conflict Resolution Platform (Plattform Zivile Konfliktbearbeitung). The Friedrich Naumann Foundation signed up as a member on 1 April 2003.

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The present study was prepared by an independent consultant and does not necessarily reflect the views of the sponsors.

“Ah well, said the caterpillar,
that’s the way things are:
no one can shed their own skin!”
At that moment,
beside it,
a butterfly took wing...

Contents

Introduction/executive summary	4
Purpose of the study/limitations	6
Methodology	7

I. Conflict typology

1. Background and basic data	8
2. Historical legacy, root causes of the present and potential conflicts	9
3. Ineffectual early warning: the case of Darfur	15

II. International relations and donor activities

1. United Nations and IMF	20
2. Regional and national actors and alliances	22
3. Non-governmental actors	27

III. Possible scenarios

1. Greatest potential conflicts/challenges	29
2. Peace potential	35
3. Options	36

IV. Appendix

1. Abbreviations	40
2. Interviewees/key questions	41
3. Charts	42
4. Literature	45

Introduction/executive summary

The situation in Sudan, potentially one of the richest countries in Africa, has been described as a “chronic humanitarian political crisis with multiple conflict dimensions”.

With brief interruptions war has been waged in this country at various levels of intensity since the end of the colonial period in 1956. At present, fighting takes place between shifting alliances of regular troops, liberation armies, militias and gangs; the “North” fights against the “South”, while the groups in the north fight among themselves just as much as the groups in the south: Christians against Christians and Muslims against Muslims.

The vested interests of individuals, groupings, neighbouring countries and members of the wider international community, whether of an economic or military-strategic nature, influence the fighting to a considerable degree.

Not only Christians and members of traditional African religions suffer from the increasing Islamisation, but also Muslims who have little taste for a one-sided, fundamentalist interpretation of their faith.

Fundamental human rights are systematically violated.

Whereas the “main conflict”¹ seems, after years of negotiations, to be nearing its end thanks to the good offices of the regional organisation IGAD (Intergovernmental Authority on Development, led by Kenya and with substantial support from the international community, above all the U.S., Britain and Norway), new conflicts have flared up elsewhere in the shadow of these negotiations, while existing ones have escalated.

They plague the oil fields of Upper Nile, the areas of Shilluk (Cello) around Malakal, the border area with Uganda (Ugandan Lord’s Resistance Army – LRA), the Beja in the east and even more in the west, and the Darfur region bordering Chad, to say nothing of the constant minor armed inter/intra-ethnic clashes over water or grazing rights, cattle rustling, or rapes and kidnappings.

In essence all these conflicts are linked to Sudan’s basic problem – the yawning gap between the centre and the periphery, characterised by an unjust division of power and resources and an incapacity or disinclination to find an adequate political and social response to the country’s ethnic, religious and cultural diversity. International and regional arms traders have helped ensure that even minor conflicts, which traditionally were relatively easy to resolve, quickly escalate into violence. Whole generations have grown up deprived of basic resources and know of no other means but violence to secure access to resources or settle a conflict. Many people are deeply traumatised. In such a situation it is not difficult to pursue a private political agenda by exploiting ethnic or religious resentments.

But now Sudan finds itself in a transitional phase which offers the potential for a profound change, which may turn out to be positive or negative. It will be positive if success is achieved during the six-year transitional period that has been negotiated in using the new oil wealth for development measures, in initiating and stabilising an inclusive, transparent democratisation process, and in introducing what is generally known as “good governance”, if possible with the support of the international community, which will have to give second place to its own interests. It will be negative if there is a failure to involve as quickly as possible those who currently feel themselves to be excluded from or as the losers in the peace process.

The expectations of many southern and northern Sudanese regarding the transitional period differ considerably in a way that bears the seeds of further conflict: the former, having little interest in anything happening in the north, want to use the time to prepare the south in every possible way for its secession from the north, while the latter, having only a rudimentary knowledge of the real situation in the south and a strong interest in democratisation, are anxious to preserve the unity of the country. The deep-rooted mistrust felt by most South Sudanese of anything “Arab”, i.e. anything originating from the north, and the “superiority complex” of the Northerners, sometimes expressed in blatant racism, are often underestimated.

¹ The war between the Sudan People’s Liberation Army/Movement in southern Sudan and the government of Sudan

If the Sudanese are to have the opportunity for a new beginning leading to justice and a lasting peace, they will need every conceivable assistance from outside. Although both the international community (IC) and the international NGOs (INGOs) are already making preparations for the period after the signing of the peace agreement between SPLM and GOS (Government of Sudan), they often underestimate possible derailing processes, work in too uncoordinated a fashion to the point where they end up competing among themselves, and think too little of involving local independent civil society groups and NGOs, or at least do too little to strengthen such groups.

A widespread pessimism, repeatedly expressed during the field phase by both national and international representatives, coupled with very high expectations and a concern with short-term personal interests, could turn the failure of the peace process into a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Possible measures should principally be aimed at

- satisfying basic needs (training, health, regular food supply, clean drinking water);
- strengthening the civilian population at all levels;
- supporting peace-promoting and reconciliation programmes;
- offering leadership training at various levels; and
- helping to guarantee and monitor comprehensive implementation of the peace agreement.

It is urgently recommended that in the short to medium term contact be made with the authorities and civil society groups in the areas not controlled by the government and a networked presence established there.

Purpose of the study/ limitations

The present study is aimed at analysing the potential for conflict and peace in Sudan with a view to deciding on possible areas of activity so as to facilitate conflict-sensitive project planning on the part of the sponsoring organisations and to devise appropriate monitoring mechanisms.

It takes a particular interest in possible projects/partners in the southern areas not controlled by the government, where neither sponsor is currently active. There is no intention at present of initiating co-operation projects involving both sponsors.

Because of the extremely multidimensional, regionally diverse nature of the conflict in Sudan and given that

1. the study was commissioned and carried out at a time when the signing of a peace agreement between SPLA/M and GOS seemed to be on the point of fruition;
2. much remains unclear in the absence of a final peace treaty between government and SPLM, which was expected to radically alter the political and social structures;
3. armed clashes have flared up again and – as in the case of Darfur – are escalating drastically, overshadowing everything else and possibly having a decisive influence on socio-political developments and project work in the short to medium term;
3. it was possible to visit only a small part of the country;
4. any conflict or potential conflict would need to be studied in very precise detail in order to map out appropriate courses of action;

the study was unable to detail all aspects of the potential for conflict and peace. For this reason examples involving actors are presented with a view to indicating possible courses of action. It is therefore recommended that a conflict-sensitive analysis of the circumstances in the relevant area be carried out before a project is undertaken.

Another limiting factor concerning the statements collected during the field survey is that the great majority of persons interviewed belong to the intellectual elite, particularly in Khartoum.

Methodology

The study closely follows the FES guideline entitled “Method Guidelines for Conflict Analysis and for developing action options for socio-political cooperation programmes”.

In the course of the field survey individual parts were modified depending on the context, specifically by the inclusion of informal conversations and situational restrictions. This survey is the first joint project to be carried out by FES and DED in Sudan.

The situation in Sudan made it necessary to conduct two more or less separate field surveys: one in the areas not controlled by the government and one in the government-controlled capital, with the participation of a local expert in each case. Additional field surveys in other conflict-ridden regions would have been desirable but were not feasible in the time available because of the security situation and the considerable logistical and bureaucratic difficulties encountered in Sudan. Thus certain data in this study, especially those pertaining to Darfur, are derived from earlier trips and other contacts made by the author.

The study rests essentially on findings from

- Interviews – both official and informal – conducted with socially relevant groups, authorities, I(N)GOs and individuals at all levels during the three-week field survey (about 100 persons were interviewed between 17 March and 8 April 2004)
- Structured discussions within the 5-member team during the field survey and the comments of the local experts
- Long-standing contacts, talks, trips and analyses by the author (who has been studying Sudan since 1986)
- Material supplied by the sponsoring organisations
- Papers (grey literature) and publications on Sudan, especially in the “Planning for Peace” phase

The proposals made concerning possible courses of action take account of the different mandates of FES and DED, which also became apparent during the field survey.

An evaluation of existing projects proved impossible within the framework of this study, but should be conducted separately.

In order to protect our sources, the quotations used in the study are given without attribution.

I Conflict typology

1. Basic data

Measuring 2,505,813 square kilometres, Sudan is the largest country in Africa in terms of its surface area. Corresponding roughly in size to western Europe, it borders on nine countries: Egypt, Libya, Chad, Central African Republic, Zaire, Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia and Eritrea. Political events in the various countries have mutual repercussions.

The official *lingua franca* is Arabic, although it has still not won acceptance in the south even today. The official religion of the country is Islam.

The population of around 29 (33) million inhabitants is just over a third of that of Germany, the average population density being 8 per square kilometre (Germany: 242 per square kilometre). However, these statistical mean values have little significance in view of the obvious fact that the major cities like Khartoum (the capital), Juba and Malakal are much more densely populated. Moreover, the war has brought about large population shifts. Finally, large parts of the country, especially in the west and north, are arid or semi-arid zones and hence barely inhabitable. The main resources of the country, such as fertile land, water, oil and gold, are to be found in the south.

Sudan is among the world's most indebted countries. Independent experts estimate that about 90% of the people live on or below the poverty line.

The population comprises numerous ethnic groups and nations – some ethnologists distinguish up to 512 (other sources: 19 ethnic groups with 597 sub-groups). Population growth, at about 2.8%, is below the African average.

The country is basically composed of two large blocks, whose division largely corresponds to the fronts in the current civil war: the first block comprises the former five regions of the north (Darfur, Kordofan, Central Region, Eastern Region and Northern Region), which for centuries have tended to be under Arab and Islamic influence, while the second consists of the three regions of the south (Equatoria, Upper Nile and Bahr el Ghazal), whose inhabitants define themselves as black Africans. Muslims constitute the largest religious community, accounting for about two thirds of the population. The rest consists of Christians and adherents of natural religions. The churches have experienced a rapid growth, especially in the war zone. The strongest in numerical terms is the Catholic Church, followed by the Protestants. The Islamist military coup of 1989 brought a dramatic worsening of the situation of the churches in the government-controlled areas. In the course of a “purge” many of their members as well as opposition Muslims were arrested, tortured, killed or forced to flee, while the free expression of opinion was drastically restricted. However the liberation movement also exercised severe censorship and forbade all criticism of itself.

Since the last military coup in 1989 large-scale political restructuring processes have been going on in Sudan with a view to setting up an Islamic republic. The Shari'a has constituted the basis of public and private law since 1983.

Since 1955 the country has been – with one interruption from 1972 to 1983 – in a state of civil war between – to put it in oversimplified terms – the North and the South. The people in the south are fighting for their right to self-determination, including the opportunity of forming their own state. But there is also opposition in the east and west of the country as well as in the border areas of the Nuba Mountains and Southern Blue Nile.

The second civil war (since 1983) has so far claimed around 1.5 million dead and rendered some 4 million homeless – some sources speak of up to 5.3 million internally displaced people, refugees and emigrants. It has been marked by numerous human rights violations, including the bombing of civilians by the central government. The fighting has escalated strongly in the south as a result of the

discovery of oil and oil-production activities, in which European firms are also involved. The main victims of the grave human rights violations and killings in the area in question are women and children.

Since July 2002, for the first time since the beginning of the war, there has been the genuine prospect of a peaceful solution. Under the aegis of what are referred to as the IGAD countries (Kenya, Uganda, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Djibouti) and with the support of Western countries, above all the U.S., Britain and Norway, negotiations are in progress at Naivasha in Kenya. At the same time, however, a long-simmering conflict in Darfur, in the west of the country, has escalated into fairly large-scale military operations which could spread to the neighbouring regions. In the oil-rich Upper Nile region alone about 18 major armed militias are operating within shifting alliances.

For years now the government has regularly extended the country's **state of emergency**, which entails considerable restrictions on civil liberties and permits a large part of the budget to be devoted to military and (secret) police purposes.

2. Historical legacy/root causes of the current and anticipated conflicts

Sudan shares the fate of other countries in Africa in being a state whose present borders were externally imposed for the first time during the colonial period.

As a result of numerous campaigns of conquest the north of Sudan was for centuries exposed to the influence of the Egyptians, Ottoman Turks and Arabs, to whom it largely owes its culture and religion. The first traces of Christian mission work in the territory of the Nubians in northern Sudan can be traced back to the 6th century.

In 1822 the entire northern Sudan became part of Turkey's domain in Egypt.

In 1887 the British General, Charles Gordon, was appointed Governor-General of the Sudan and waged an initially successful struggle against the self-proclaimed *Mahdi* (redeemer), Mohammed Ahmed. This coalition movement gave rise to what was called the *Mahdiyya* (whose political arm was the Umma party), an Islamic religious movement which to this day exercises a powerful influence on the political fortunes of the country. Its rival is the religiously inspired group known as the *Khatmiya*, which also arose towards the close of the 19th century (its political arm being the Democratic Unionist Party or DUP). The Mahdi state itself came to an end in 1898 with the battle of Omdurman. From this moment onwards the country was an Anglo-Egyptian condominium (although Egypt's role must be regarded as marginal), which had a powerful influence on the "bisection" of the country which persists to this day.

However, north and south had pursued a largely independent development even before the days of British colonialism. The north traditionally had close ties with Egypt, whereas the people in the south felt themselves to be more closely linked with groups in the countries that now border Sudan to the south-west. Their pre-colonial experience of the north was stamped by the slave trade, which was greatly intensified during the first phase of colonisation by the then Ottoman-Egyptian occupation. The fact that the south was long regarded by the north as a "slave reservoir" – and that even today there are still credible reports of forms of slavery in today's Sudan – is very much in the minds of many southern Sudanese and is frequently cited as proof of continuing racist attitudes towards them.

The setting up of a territorial state in the existing borders lasted almost 30 years, since sections of the population in the south put up massive resistance to the British takeover. While the drawing of the boundaries in the north broadly enclosed the areas defined by the Ottoman-Egyptian administration, the territory claimed for the Sudan as a whole went far beyond that which had ever been ruled from Khartoum in the past. In the course of what was occasionally a bloody conquest villages were moved, ethnic groups consolidated, new borders drawn, and the tasks of newly appointed local leaders laid down without regard for existing traditions.

The British colonial administration pursued three policies that largely laid the foundations for the present difficulties in Sudan: the policy of **indirect rule** after the First World War; the **policy of separate development** between northern and southern Sudan; and its **economic policy**.

Inherent in this system was an absence of infrastructure across large parts of the country, including the west and north, which were not economically used or developed. The colonial government was much too late and hesitant in deciding to implement individual economic development measures in areas like Darfur (West), South Kordofan and Eastern Sudan. The same goes for the decision to abolish the policy of separate development and give the south of the country a chance to play the role of equal partner in an independent Sudanese state.

Thus in 1955 the south wanted to put off the country's independence from its British colonial masters. It felt that decisions were being taken over its head and found itself underrepresented in the relevant bodies. Finally the fear of postcolonial dominance by the north – i.e. what many South Sudanese saw as the recolonisation of their lands – led to armed resistance. Given the experience of the past, it was not hard to justify such resistance in the eyes of the “simple” people by playing on old fears of the north's racist policy and representing it as an ethnic struggle. Thus the first war between northern and southern Sudan began on the very eve of independence. The aim of this war, which cost countless people their lives and led to mass movements of refugees, was to create an independent state of “South Sudan” (**war of secession**).

The constant changes of government at the centre and numerous attempted coups in the years following independence show that the north was no more successful than the south in developing an acceptably representative system. To this should be added the country's economic plight, which led to a massive debt crisis.

The conflict with the south of the country was initially ended by the Addis Ababa Agreement of 1972, brought about through the mediation of the World Council of Churches. Although under the terms of the treaty the South did not achieve independence, it was granted a regional parliament with certain decision-making powers for the three regions of Bahr el Ghazal, Equatoria and Upper Nile and the right to use its own resources. Even then some of the Sudanese oppositionists warned that the influence of the central government would be too great and the guarantees for respecting the rights of the new regional parliament were too slight.

The formation of a separate state had been staved off for the time being, but given the lack of economic development in the south and the economic measures whose benefits for the region were either not discernible² or which even gave the impression of renewed exploitation (oil policy: oil finds in the south, used by the north), the conflict became aggravated by the absence of infrastructure measures and inadequate provision of food and services. So all that was needed was a few additional – in the overall context even minor – factors for the fighting to flare up openly again in 1983.

In mid-May 1983 Numeiri's policy led to the outbreak of **mutinies** in various garrisons in the south, especially in the region around Bor; finally Colonel John Garang, the present leader of the SPLA/M, deserted with around 2,500 of his soldiers. A week later the president announced the **splitting up of the Southern Region** into three provinces, the decision being implemented on 5 June to the accompaniment of massive public protests. From this point on the governors in the south were appointed directly by the president. The entire proceeding constituted a clear breach of the Addis Ababa Agreement.

The event often cited as the last straw was Numeiri's introduction in September of the same year of the Islamic legal system known as the **Shari'a**. During his term of office Numeiri had metamorphosed from a communist general to a self-proclaimed Muslim imam and had repeatedly attempted to exclude any opposition. It must be assumed that he increasingly encountered difficulties and in 1983 was therefore anxious to integrate and reassure ever more powerful National Islamic Front (NIF) – the Muslim Brotherhood – by introducing the Shari'a as public law in Sudan. At the time this gave rise to considerable resistance even among some of the moderate Muslim groups in the country, and especially among the Christian and animist believers in southern Sudan, who saw their right to practice their religion freely as being substantially curtailed. The Shari'a issue must be seen as harbouring considerable potential for conflict to this day.

² Jonglei Canal: a project to channel water from the south for the benefit of the north and Egypt.

The Addis Ababa Agreement and the general development had, however, brought considerable changes to the south as well. Over the years it had become clear that southern Sudan was far from being a monolithic block. At the same time the migration of labour to the north had increased markedly; far more southern Sudanese than ever before were represented in political bodies or formed part of the educated elite. Altogether contacts between northern and southern Sudan had increased considerably.

Thus the aims of the SPLA/M, the new socialist-oriented “liberation movement” that arose in the south in 1983, were not defined in ethnic and certainly not religious terms. In contrast to the situation in the first civil war its programme did not envisage the creation of a separate southern Sudanese state. The argument it advanced was that a power-hungry elite was to blame for the disastrous economic conditions afflicting a large part of the population all over the country. It thus saw itself, at least in terms of its programme, as a reform movement for the whole of Sudan. Under the leadership of its commander, Dr. John Garang, it called upon all Sudanese to rise up against the hated regime in Khartoum and join in the building of a “**New Sudan**” (**anti-regime war**).

This aim enabled the SPLA/M to embrace ethnic groups in the north as well, who had long felt themselves to be disadvantaged by Khartoum, such as the predominantly Muslim inhabitants of the Nuba Mountains and, later, parts of the equally Muslim Southern Blue Nile and the Beja in the east.

Until Mengistu’s overthrow the SPLA/M was supported by Ethiopia and maintained a kind of “diplomatic mission” there. It succeeded very quickly in bringing large parts of Sudan’s rural south under its control. Until mid-1991 it also controlled most towns in the south. To this day, however, it has not succeeded in becoming the unified movement it would like to be, but has split into different groupings whose clashes have an increasingly **tribal element**.

Since independence in 1956 Sudan has been divided into eight main **regions**: five in the north and three in the south of the country. Power has always been vested in the strong central government based in Khartoum. Regional assemblies, originally designed to form part of a federal system, remained largely without any powers of their own. After the first civil war a special regional parliament was set up in southern Sudan for the three southern regions, whose president also functioned as vice-president of Sudan.

Strong, home-grown organisations, such as trade unions and vocational associations, put up their own candidates in the elections. Yet Sudan has only been ruled by democratically elected parliaments for a total of 11 years: 1956-58, 1964-69, 1986-89. The rest of the time has seen one-party rule in the wake of military coups.

Not only have there been as many as **six changes of government**, but also very frequent government and cabinet reshuffles, another indicator of extreme political instability. This has been accompanied furthermore by a constant power struggle between the traditional religious parties, the Umma (Mahdiya) and the DUP (Khatmiya), which for their part have been unable to present, let alone implement, any convincing democratic vision of a viable government for Sudan.

The **traditional** mode of political participation and reconciliation, which in some areas still functions, is based on an elaborate system of clans, elders and chiefs which, depending on the ethnic group, has its own specific “democratic” structures, in which decisions are arrived at consensually. In the course of the long years of war, however, all civil structures in southern Sudan have largely become defunct. As a result of the massive flows of refugees both within (about 2.5 million people) and outside the country (about 1.5 million) even traditional decision-making mechanisms often function inadequately if at all. In the case of civil disputes the customary compensation payments can often no longer be made on account of the loss of land, property and, above all, cattle as a result of the war.

Among the younger generation in particular the uprooting and **loss of traditional opportunities for participation and acculturation** are clearly discernible in the concomitant symptoms of cultural disorientation.

In the **areas not controlled by the government** the local military rulers have for many years dominated both the political and the private sphere. Often these military leaders come from a different ethnic group than the local population, which in the case of the SPLA/M was supposed to serve the

“build-up of an identity as a national army”. It must be remembered that – in contrast to other “liberation movements” – the SPLA/M began as a military organisation. Also in contrast to other movements it has still **not succeeded in becoming a broad political movement with roots in civil society**. For a long time arbitrary rule and terror were their stock in trade, so that opportunities for participation were largely out of the question.

International (N)GOs have provided not only humanitarian aid, but – like the Sudanese churches – have also increasingly filled the quasi-governmental and civil society vacuum.

It was not until 1994 that the SPLA/M began to show signs of restructuring itself. With the adoption of so-called “**Ground Rules**” at a “National Convention” of the SPLA/M a series of workshops were introduced with international observers. On the basis of the agreements hammered out at these workshops the “liberation movement” is trying to set up civil structures in the areas under its control. With the participation of socially relevant groups, such as the churches, a process is to be set in motion that will create new opportunities for participation, clearly separate military and civil jurisdiction, and draw upon traditional structures to create scope for ethnic and cultural diversity. National and international eyewitnesses confirm that a serious effort is under way to create **new structures** in the areas not controlled by the government, at least in those not directly affected by the fighting. This is not so much due to an initiative of the movement’s ruling elite as to increasing pressure from some dedicated members, the churches and the newly emergent SINGOs.

In northern Sudan and in the areas controlled by the central government the situation is quite different. In 1985 President Numeiri was overthrown by a popular uprising after introducing unpopular measures at the insistence of the International Monetary Fund. Following a transitional period Sadiq el Mahdi was elected prime minister without the participation of large parts of the south. He did not abolish the Shari’a, but declared it to be suspended. Although the war against the South was prosecuted with vigour, the enormous costs involved and international protests led to internal political difficulties. In 1989 the political situation underwent another radical change. On 30 June 1989 a coup led by Omer el Beshir brought a military government to power behind which stood the National Islamic Front, the Muslim Brotherhood led by Hassan al Turabi, which had long been plotting to take control. They invested immense funds, logistical resources and ideological training and thus succeeded in gaining a foothold inside the universities and in winning over parts of the military. The coup successfully prevented the holding of a National Conference planned for September of the same year, which was to have been attended by all groups and forces, including the SPLA/M, with a view to finding a solution to the country’s manifold problems. The NIF had always stressed its opposition to peace negotiations with the South.

After 1989 the new government tried, by means of a revolution of “salvation” or “redemption”, to set up a “theocracy” geared to the commandments of the Koran on the Iranian model. Parties, trade unions, professional associations and all other, non-Islamic political organisations and SINGOs were banned and local and regional parliaments dissolved.

Up to 1983 Sudan had only had a “Provisional Constitution”. The first permanent constitution under Numeiri’s government was replaced in 1985 by a transitional constitution, which itself was suspended again in 1989. Since then a **comprehensive process of constitutional re-organisation** has been taking place. Initially inspired by the Libyan system of administrative popular committees (called “salvation committees” in Sudan) and rejecting all “alien principles that do not comply with Sudanese values”, it was then – at least on paper – geared to the Islamic system of consultation with socially relevant forces (**Shura**).³

The basis of the state structure was originally to be a federal system without parties, originally with nine federal states, 66 to 85 provinces and 281 local districts. In February 1994 the number of federal states was fixed at 26 by constitutional decree. The **president of the republic** is directly elected, while the **governors** of the federal states are appointed, as are the 300 members of the president’s advisory

³ The basic principle is the election of the Caliph (in this case the president) and consultation with the Islamic community. The latter is to be achieved by means of a **conference system** at all levels (basic, council, province, state, national), in which groups, on the delegation principle, play an advisory role in socio-political changes (Economic, Socio-Cultural, Youth and Students, Women, Diplomatic, Legal, Administrative and Security and Defence Conference).

and legislative organ, the **State Assembly**. At the same time the president heads the cabinet in his capacity as prime minister.

The basis of both private and public law is the Islamic legal system, the **Shari'a**, originally a religious code of ethics, which has never been clearly incorporated in a legal code. A new constitution was adopted in 1997 in response to pressure from the Western international community, which had been increasingly isolating Sudan both economically and politically for its numerous human rights violations, its attempts to support or build up Islamist organisations in neighbouring states and its support for terror organisations. But this constitution also clearly defines Sudan as an Islamic state. The old problem of Sudan with its vast expanse of territory – a strong central government and administrative bodies at all other levels endowed only with weak powers – which is one of the causes of the war in the country, has not been solved by the new constitution. In the north, however, albeit under the watchful scrutiny of the ubiquitous secret services and subject to the conditions of the continuing state of emergency, civil society organisations and SINGOs (Sudanese Indigenous Non-Governmental Organisations) are again emerging which have not been installed by the NIF (National Islamic Front).

Key positions within the new political and economic structures are currently held by members of the NIF, which however split in the year 2000 as a result of a power struggle and ideological differences. The NIF's former "chief ideologist", Dr. Hassan Al Turabi, formed a new party called the Popular National Congress, which was banned shortly afterwards, however. Numerous members were arrested together with their leader, although no formal charges were brought. After being left for a brief period at liberty, the top party leaders and many of their followers were arrested again in early 2004 on charges of supporting the uprising in Darfur. Turabi continues to have a large following, especially in the universities.

Government funds are apparently being transferred abroad in large amounts, while high-ranking members of the government receive direct payments out of tax revenues. Corruption is rampant throughout the country.

All parts of the country are still far removed from what is generally known as "**good governance**". On the contrary, it is now common knowledge that the situation in Sudan is a "chronic humanitarian and political crisis with multiple conflict dimensions".

With brief interruptions war has been waged in this country at various levels of intensity since the end of the colonial period in 1956. At present fighting is taking place between shifting alliances of regular troops, liberation armies, militias and gangs; the "North" fights against the "South", while the groups in the north fight among themselves just as much as the groups in the south: Christians against Christians and Muslims against Muslims. It may be assumed that the government has an army of about 150,000 men, not counting the 50,000 or so members of the Popular Defence Forces and the militias allied with the government in the north, west and south of the country. They are confronted by the 100,000-odd soldiers of the SPLA under the command of Dr. John Garang. To these must be added the two armed movements SLA and JEM in Darfur, about whose troop strength no reliable estimates are available. But they do have considerable manpower and probably a lot of financial support. Neither movement is free from attempted splits. Reliable figures on the number of men under arms with the Beja (Congress and Red Lions), the Sudan Alliance Forces (SAF) and other groups and parties linked to the opposition National Democratic Alliance (NDA) are not available either.

Current estimates put the strength of the 32 or so militias of various sizes operating in the country (important leaders in the south are Peter Gadet and Paulino Matip) at about 40,000.

Since oil production got under way the government has had increasing access to modern military equipment. The uncontrolled possession of small arms is widespread throughout the country, being also produced locally.

The "vested interests" of individuals, groupings, neighbouring countries and members of the larger international community influence the fighting to a considerable degree.⁴

⁴ For more details see chapter II.

Fundamental human rights are systematically violated, the human rights situation is characterised by military abuse of civilians, refusal to grant humanitarian access, sexual assault used as a weapon of war, arbitrary arrests, and forcible conversions to Islam.⁵

For three generations people have been living with the clash of arms and have come to view the escalation of violence as the “normal” way of resolving conflicts. In the south the entire infrastructure has almost completely collapsed over long periods, while whole generations have grown up without schooling or sufficient medical care. Mass expulsion, flight, plundering, pillage, rape, forced recruitment, arbitrary rule and not least the constant threat of being injured or killed by mines or fragmentation bombs dropped by their own government, have profoundly traumatised people of both sexes and all ages. This already disastrous situation is further aggravated by periodically recurring droughts and famine.

As the warlords on all sides profit from this situation they show little interest in making peace. Natural resources such as water and oil, abundantly available in a country which has now become one of the poorest in the world, have turned out to be a curse for the civilian population: water, because control over its use is used by neighbouring states as a political football in pursuit of their own interests; oil, because its abundant availability in the war-torn south has aroused the greed of the government and international firms who are prepared to pump it whatever the cost, even if it means accepting the systematic expulsion of civilians and the escalation of violence.

Oil revenues have so far tended to be used more for personal enrichment and armaments than for urgently needed development measures for the suffering population.

⁵ For this reason the United Nations’ Human Rights Commission had a Special Rapporteur in Sudan up until 2003. His mandate could not be extended as a draft resolution to this effect was blocked by the united opposition of the African countries.

3. Ineffectual early warning: The case of Darfur

As indicated at the beginning, the particular situation in each conflict-ridden part of the country really calls for a separate investigation. The present study, however, will examine the political situation in the west – in the Darfur region – by way of example, firstly because it illustrates the confrontation lines that have a powerful influence on the overall situation, secondly because it is also very important for the peace talks between the GOS and the SPLM, and finally because it is currently one of the world's worst humanitarian disasters.

The lives of 2.5 million people are threatened by the present escalation of the fighting in the Darfur region in the west of Sudan. Systematic and massive human rights violations are taking place, not all of which are directly connected with the hostilities between the Sudanese government and a number of armed movements:⁶

- hundreds of villages have been burned and their fields destroyed;
- civilians are ruthlessly killed and expelled (more than 800,000 people are internally displaced, while over 140,000 have found refuge across the border in Chad; some estimates now speak of up to 100,000 dead as a result of the war);
- settlements and civilian targets are indiscriminately bombed by high-flying Antonov aircraft and attacked by helicopter gunships;
- people are arbitrarily arrested without being informed of the possible reasons, a practice that has been condemned by civil society groups in Sudan for over three years now;
- there are repeated cases of torture; sexual assault is used as a weapon of war, and
- the government for a long time refused to grant humanitarian aid organisations free access to the victims.

There is a danger that the unresolved political problems behind the current escalation of violence in Darfur could plunge the country into a new civil war, which would once again dash people's prospects of improvement for decades.

Darfur means the "Land of the Fur". It is home to about 5 million people of various ethnic origins, most of them of African descent. Other groups besides the Fur – to name but a few – are the Rizeigat, Baggara, Maalia and Beni-Hussein, who are Arabs or Arabised groups; the Massaleit, Zaghawa, Berti, Tama and Dajo, on the other hand, are Africans. Until 1916, when it was integrated into the colonial state of Sudan, Darfur was an independent sultanate. It remained formally a federal state of Sudan until 1989, when it was divided up into **three states**. Al-Fasher is the capital of North Darfur, Nyala that of South Darfur, and Al-Jeneina (Geneina) that of West Darfur. Each of these states has its own regional assembly and is ruled by a governor (Wali), who is appointed by the central government. The majority of the population profess to be followers of Islam (Sunnites).

Nomads, semi-nomadic groups and small farmers have for centuries lived together in circumstances of mutual social and economic dependence. Conflicts over the very **scarce pasture land or water** were generally resolved by violence. But there were also instances of these clashes being ended by the use of traditional methods of conflict resolution to find constructive solutions. But the periods of drought, which have repeatedly plagued this region since the 1980s, have forced hundreds of thousands of

⁶ Details are to be found in the regular reports of Amnesty International, above all in its report dated 27 January 2004 "Darfur, too many people killed for no reason". SOAT, HRW, UNHCR and other organisations, such as the Sudanese churches' Sudan Focal Points, also report regularly. All documents may be obtained from the office of Sudan Focal Points Europe.

people to leave their settlements. In search of water and pasture land they have wandered southwards or sought other an alternative livelihood in the capital Khartoum and the Gezira development programme. Next to the current political situation and the ethnic factor the ecological destruction and its effects on the population represent one of the fundamental causes of the current conflict.

Darfur has long been the power base of the Umma party. This was where it mobilised most of its supporters and voters. It was Sadiq el Mahdi who began arming the Arabised groups in Darfur. The latter were mainly nomads, who became known under the name of “Murahleen” and were made up of ethnic Baggara and Rizeigat. Sadiq el Mahdi equipped them with modern arms with a view to using them as paramilitary forces in the fight against the South. More arms flowed into Darfur in the late 1980s as a by-product of the war in Chad. The problem was further aggravated by an illegal, but profitable **trade in arms** from the Central African Republic, Libya and southern Sudan. For its part the government under President al Bashir, which putsched its way to power in 1989, also equipped Arabised groups in Darfur with arms not only for use in the war against the people of southern Sudan, but also to destroy the power base of the Umma party. During the 1990s there were recurrent reports of **militias** known under the name of “Janjaweed” – men on horseback – attacking the villages of African ethnic groups in Darfur. This alone forced tens of thousands of people to flee to Chad.

Political marginalisation and chronic underdevelopment have left their stamp on the situation in Darfur, as they have done in the other parts of Sudan with the exception of Khartoum and the rich El-Gezira region. The region is characterised by a lack of infrastructure, a lack of investment (also in education and training), the absence of basic social services, hardly any prospect of earning a living, and the spread of small arms. The constant attacks and plundering by the militias have spawned criminal gangs. Acts of armed robbery and a widespread, general sense of insecurity are the result.

In 2001 the central government issued a decree setting up special courts to prosecute those guilty of arms trafficking, illegal possession of arms, murder and armed robbery. However the security organs use these powers to arrest people arbitrarily for unlimited periods of time. Anyone suspected of criticising the government can be held for months without charge, as has often happened.

The **conflict between President el Bashir and Hassan al Turabi**, which led to a split in the ruling party, brought into play another dimension of the conflict in Darfur. About three years ago the so-called “**Black Book, Part I**”⁷ was illegally printed and distributed in Sudan. The authors, who are officially anonymous, were immediately put on the wanted list. The very possession of a copy of this book was forbidden. The authors published numerous statistics and facts designed to prove that ever since independence the state had been dominated by a “small central elite of North Sudanese”. They confirmed that the vast majority of Sudanese had been systematically disadvantaged and marginalized. Today it is an open secret that the authors are linked to Hassan el Turabi.

In the years 2001 and 2003 this “Black Book” provided the ideological foundation for the formation of two new military-political movements in Darfur: the “**Sudan Liberation Movement/Army**” (SLM/A) and the “**Justice and Equality Movement**” (JEM).⁸ These movements appear to act independently of each other. The SLM/A has many Fur among its members, while the JEM mainly recruits its members from among the Zaghawa. However this apparent independence could be a tactical manoeuvre. In private, leading SLM/A and JEM officials acknowledge that they pursue the same political aims and share the same values. The leaders of the SLM/A tend to be military, while JEM is trying to develop into a political party. JEM is also behind the founding of the “Sudan Union of the Marginalised Majority” (SUMM).⁹ None of these groups is striving for self-determination, as they are all unionists. Nor do they claim to be party to an agreement on the distribution of resources or

⁷ There is now a second part of the “Black Book”, which was written in the Diaspora.

⁸ A third movement, the “Sudan Federal Alliance” (SFA) was founded in the late 1990s by the former governor of Darfur, Ahmed Dereige (Diraige). Ahmed Dereige was governor of Darfur till 1984 and now lives in exile. Although this group joined the “National Democratic Alliance” (NDA), the latter never gave it much support.

⁹ The leaders of the JEM live in exile in Europe.

power. Instead they proclaim a “New Sudan”, which is very close to the SPLM/A’s concept of the “New Sudan”, and they have doubtless received support from that quarter.

When the SLA/M joined the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), consisting of opposition groups and parties based in Asmara, the government of Sudan called off further talks with the NDA, with which it had concluded an agreement in December 2003 opening the way to further negotiations.

The official **aim of the movements** in Darfur is a completely new political system in Sudan on the basis of a federal state with a rotating presidency to be held by each ethnic group in turn. The latter is intended to banish the danger of a minority dictatorship in Sudan once and for all. Observers fear they could try to form an alliance stretching from Darfur through Kordofan, and possibly to Upper Nile, southern Blue Nile and the east of Sudan. There is already a written agreement with the Beja in the far east of Sudan. According to unofficial reports, two battalions of government troops have refused to serve in Darfur. The leader of the JEM, Dr. Khalil Ibrahim, a former member of the PNC, vehemently denies any links with Hassan el Turabi.

There is overwhelming evidence that the government is now using the same methods of waging war in the west that it used against the SPLM/A and the people of the south. The Arabised Janjaweed militias form the vanguard in the war against the people of Darfur. The government troops move in after them. The above-mentioned report by Amnesty International provides plenty of evidence. The report proves beyond doubt that the Sudanese government is responsible for the escalation of the war in Darfur.¹⁰

The new movements in Darfur should not be underestimated. The history of their leaders, their contacts and the fact that the Zaghawa, in particular, are very well organised and have economic clout make them a political factor to be reckoned with. And the people of Darfur have arguments that are not even disputed by the government. They certainly won’t just lay down their arms and say nothing as long as they feel excluded from political power. The grimmest scenario and, indeed, the greatest obstacle to any peace agreement in Sudan would be an alliance between the above-mentioned regions, supported or even led by Hassan el Turabi and his party.

There is another factor that should also be taken very seriously: the “Africanisation” of these conflicts. In private, like the Nuba before them and the Beja and the peoples of the Blue Nile, the leaders of the movements in Darfur use the “African argument”, referring to their African roots. In this respect they also fit in very well with the other unionists in the south.

The JEM, SLM/A and SFA constantly stress their willingness to engage in peace talks and guarantee free access to humanitarian aid. But they demand negotiations under international auspices and are not prepared to accept the mediation of Chad, which organised the “Abeche negotiations”. In their eyes Chad is prejudiced and supports the government position, although the Chadian president is a Zaghawa himself.¹¹ They also demand international monitoring of an armistice. Meanwhile the AU is the official negotiator for the peace talks and is also providing the observers for the armistice agreement.

It has to be realised that the Darfur conflict has a considerable **regional potential for conflict** outside of Sudan. The rebels are probably receiving some support from Eritrea, a considerable amount from certain Arab states or via the international Muslim Brotherhood, from elements of the Chadian and Libyan military, as well as from groups in the Chadian border area.

For many years now large parts of the **international community** have paid little heed to the conflicts in Sudan and even less to the situation in Darfur. When the peace negotiations between the government and the SPLM/A, conducted under the aegis of IGAD, seemed to be getting somewhere,

¹⁰ There are now other reports of this kind, e.g. from Human Rights Watch and a commission of the United Nations.

¹¹ In private conversation JEM officials accused the Chadian president of bribing leaders of the SLM/A and obtaining their consent to the armistice agreement of November 2003. This agreement lasted only a few days.

the international community flatly refused to include other conflicts in the negotiations. It often even prevented the matter from being discussed. The international community ignored reports of the looming humanitarian disaster in Darfur. Not until October 2003, when the suffering of the people in Darfur had assumed a scale that could simply no longer be ignored, did things begin to change. Meanwhile UNHCR has set up a commission of inquiry to establish the scale of the expulsions. At the same time it was very forthright in demanding unimpeded access for humanitarian aid. The present UN High Commissioner for Human Rights made a public comment, as did the EU. The UN's former Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in Sudan, the German politician Gerhard Baum, called upon the UN Security Council to concern itself with Darfur. The U.S. administration also made a statement about the situation in Darfur.

Since Ireland, which currently holds the EU presidency, has no embassy of its own in Khartoum, the Netherlands is representing the EU in Sudan until the end of June 2004, before it assumes the presidency of the Council itself. Unfortunately its recommendations to date have not been of the kind one would expect to achieve anything. Among other things the Netherlands has proposed inviting the leaders of the movements to Khartoum for negotiations, a recommendation that was eagerly seized upon by the Sudanese government. Not surprisingly the movements rejected this proposal.¹²

Various EU members are engaged in several initiatives "behind the scenes". Some EU governments favoured a conference on humanitarian access in Geneva's "Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue" as a launching platform for political talks.¹³ Several governments promised funds for humanitarian aid and the International Committee of the Red Cross got involved, while a number of international aid organisations began channelling in assistance, mainly via Chad. The media are also taking an interest in the crisis in Darfur and its background.

Nevertheless the Netherlands, Britain, the U.S. and other governments for a long time refused to take the initiative and offer a forum for peace talks. They justified their attitude by saying they did not want to jeopardise the ongoing IGAD negotiations. This conflict had to be resolved first, while other issues could be addressed later. They were unable to reach agreement on whether the atrocities in Darfur were to be called "ethnic cleansing" or genocide and could not agree either on whether to impose tough sanctions, a comprehensive arms embargo or a robust UN mandate. Instead it was decided to hold the GOS to its promises.

The disastrous escalation of violence in Darfur could have been prevented. For years independent observers of the causes of the armed clashes in Sudan have pointed out in their analyses that there is not only a "North-South" divide or a "Christian-Muslim" conflict; these clashes are also the **expression of a systemic crisis of the entire country**. For the situation is characterised by poor governance, gross injustice, refusal to ensure the basic safety of citizens, the systematic and massive violation of human rights, political, social and economic discrimination, and the exclusion of large parts of the population from a say in what happens.

Although the Sudanese churches and their ecumenical partners in the Sudan Ecumenical Forum (SEF), as well as numerous other courageous figures in Sudanese civil society, have been pressing for years for inclusive negotiations and a comprehensive peace process in Sudan, the IGAD negotiations were not expanded to cover other political concerns and actors directly. Instead they were continued in the form of exclusive talks between the government and the SPLM/A, which means that while an agreement between the two belligerents could be reached, it could never be implemented. During the

¹² On 9 February 2004 President el Bashir promulgated a decree in which he announced the end of all military operations, promised an amnesty for all those who handed in their arms within a month, gave assurances of free access for humanitarian aid, and called upon the movements to come to Khartoum to discuss their concerns. According to confirmed reports the fighting did not stop and the leaders of the movements refused to take part in the conference because the decree did not provide for international observers.

¹³ Both sides initially welcomed this proposal, although the government withdrew its consent on 9 February 2004.

last three years the churches in Sudan and numerous international organisations as well as the UN's Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in Sudan have presented well-founded and substantive information about developments in Darfur. Public discussions and conferences have been organised, warnings uttered and repeated appeals made to take the conflicts in the other parts of Sudan seriously and not to play them down as mere acts of armed robbery or "tribal conflicts over water and land", as the government has been doing with evident success.

The present situation is a classic case of **ineffectual early warning**. It is further proof that all the debates on early warning are useless as long as there are no plans – and above all no political will – to "take early action". This fact must be faced by all those who bear political responsibility at whatever level (national governments, European Union, African Union, United Nations).

II. International relations and donor activities

Introduction

The **oil deposits** have utterly transformed the nature of the conflicts in Sudan. They have shifted the balance of military power in favour of the government, which concentrates its military operations – including forced expulsions – on the oil fields and adjacent areas. Oil has also become the key factor in Sudan's foreign relations, both with governments and with companies. At the same time, however, the strength of the government's internal position remains uncertain and the majority of the Sudanese population continues to live in poverty.

Sudan has been an oil producer since 1998, starting with 200,000 barrels a day and revenues of around US\$ 500 million a year, with anticipated annual rates of increase of up to 100%. This, together with total reserves currently estimated at about one billion barrels, will make Sudan a new middle-range oil exporter. The beginning of oil production has aggravated the strategic imbalance between government and opposition, although a large proportion of the as yet untapped oil reserves is located in the areas not controlled by the government. In 2000/2001 alone the GOS doubled its military spending. Yet although the strategic position of the GOS has improved and will probably continue to do so, it still cannot win a definitive or comprehensive military victory in the conflict. The groups in the south and other parts of the country will again resort to guerrilla tactics if signed agreements again fail to be honoured.

In anticipation of the peace agreement between GOS and SPLM the international community has already held two donor conferences and appointed a joint planning commission. Numerous studies on individual aspects of the development measures have been carried out both by international donors and (IN)GOs. On paper the preparations are relatively far advanced and the prospect of considerable funding has been raised. Norway will host the actual donor conference as soon as the final peace agreement is signed. Some of the available funds have already been released in order to finance capacity-building measures, especially in the south. (S)INGOs are being encouraged to form consortia that can apply for funding. For individual aspects lead agencies have been appointed: CRS in West Equatoria to provide regular supplies of food, UNICEF to provide training and education and PAKT for local peacekeeping measures in the areas not controlled by the government. All this is mainly financed by USAID funds.

1. The United Nations and the IMF

The United Nations

For quite some time now many Sudanese – mainly from the south – have expressed their disappointment with the policy of the United Nations towards Sudan. Many are particularly dissatisfied with the manner in which the **OLS (Operation Lifeline Sudan)**, the UN's umbrella organisation for humanitarian aid in (southern) Sudan, has been handling the situation. Although the OLS has launched one of the largest-scale relief operations of all time and brought about the conclusion of the first ever Tripartite Agreement – UN/GOS/SPLA – in order to help those who have been hardest hit by the war, many people felt excluded. This is largely due to the fact that all emergency and humanitarian measures taken under OLS had to be cleared with the government, which also has to approve every aid flight. But many INGOs have also voiced concerns about this procedure. In all these years the GOS has repeatedly refused aid organisations access to certain regions for military and political reasons. Some areas are still not covered by OLS operations. For years aid organisations under OLS were almost completely denied access to the oil fields, which were most seriously affected by the fighting, expulsions and other serious human rights violations.¹⁴

¹⁴ The same tactic – denial of free access to aid organisations/food on military grounds – has been applied by the government in the case of Darfur. Yet protests by the (UN) organisations have remained ineffectual for many months, while a UN resolution has still not been passed despite the ethnic cleansing noted by many observers.

When OCHA (UN Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs) took charge of the southern sector of the UNICEF-organised OLS, many feared a further deterioration of the situation. OCHA tried to intimidate the INGOs that did not operate under the auspices of OLS. These attempts were largely unsuccessful, however, partly because they were resisted by the OLS INGOs as well. The latter realised how important it was to have some INGOs outside the relatively constrictive OLS structures, so as to be able to get at least some aid to those who could not be reached by OLS.

The disputes in the year 2000 over the Memorandum of Understanding, which the INGOs operating in the SPLA/M-controlled areas were to sign with the “liberation” movement, caused additional confusion and attempts to split the INGOs.

But the issue of humanitarian access is not the only reason why many South Sudanese and some INGO staff members have such a poor opinion of the UN. Some are unable to get used to what they describe as the “arrogant behaviour of UN personnel who completely ignore our capacities and efforts”. Many are unable to understand why the UN takes strong measures in countries like Somalia or the former Yugoslavia, but not in Sudan, which has far more war victims. They are dissatisfied with the paucity and weakness of sanctions against Sudan and the way in which they are applied or rather fail to be applied. Southern Sudanese and people from Darfur have called time and again for the situation in their part of the country to be brought before the UN Security Council and for military intervention by the UN. The latter request is admittedly not entirely uncontroversial in view of the results of previous UN military interventions.

Not that the UN has been completely inactive politically. In the 1990s, for example, the former German Interior Minister, Gerhard Baum, was appointed Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in Sudan and submitted regular reports up to 2003, in which he drew repeated attention to the grave human rights violations in the oil-producing regions and the escalating situation in Darfur. However they drew no reaction from the UN, and neither in 2003 nor in 2004 did the Human Rights Commission pass a resolution on Sudan, as a result of which the special rapporteur’s mandate expired. Meanwhile the UN Secretary-General has appointed a personal “special envoy”.

In addition to Khartoum, Juba, Nairobi and Lokichokiyo, UN organisations are now also represented in non-government-controlled Rumbek.

The IMF

Sudan belongs to the group of highly indebted countries. Since it was unable to repay its debts, the IMF temporarily excluded it from membership, which it only managed to regain with the aid of France and Malaysia.

Its high level of indebtedness and low gross domestic product would make Sudan a candidate for debt relief. And indeed there are attempts to include it in the list of countries qualifying for such treatment. Germany has been charged with seeking possible ways of doing this.

The conditions qualifying a country for debt relief are rather weak and relatively vague. Sudan ought not to qualify for such relief, however, so long as armed conflicts continue, civil society groups are not allowed to work freely in the country, and there is no budget transparency.

2. Regional and national actors

Sudan is a member of both the **AU** and the **Arab League**. For some years relations between the two organisations were rather strained. Many Arab countries were not in agreement either with Sudan’s domestic or foreign policies.

Sudan isolated itself especially by taking the side of Iraq in the first Gulf War and supporting the invasion of Kuwait; by attempting to export its militant Islamic ideology to neighbouring countries; and by supporting specific groups in these countries.

But here too relations have changed in recent years, partly because of the government's "charm offensive", but also as a result of the American bombing of Khartoum in 1998. Co-operation between the GOS and **Saudi Arabia, Qatar** and, especially, **Egypt** and **Libya** as well as with the Arab League in general, has improved radically. A while ago Libya and Egypt launched their own peace initiative – albeit with little success – and are helping to bring about a rapprochement between the GOS and the (North Sudanese) opposition. Both countries explicitly oppose a process of self-determination in Sudan, which could ultimately lead to parts of the country splitting off. As the last Nile riparian state Egypt has a very special interest in the water issue. The above-mentioned countries as well as the Arab League have released or promised considerable funds for "development aid" and projects in Sudan, especially in the south of the country.

Sudan was joined by Uganda, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti and Kenya in founding the regional organisation **IGAD** (Intergovernmental Association for Development, [originally Drought and Development – IGADD]). Led by **Kenya**, whose General Lazarus Sumbeiuo is the chief intermediary, IGAD has been involved in the peace process in Sudan since the early 1990s. Kenya has always tried to maintain good relations with the GOS, while at the same time allowing the SPLM/A – and subsequently various southern Sudanese civil society groups – to open offices on its territory after the fall of Mengistu in Ethiopia. The country profits considerably from the foreign currency provided by I(N)GOs, which are active in southern Sudan. A railway line between southern Sudan and Kenya is being planned, and the SPLM¹⁵ in particular is interested in the construction of an oil pipeline to Mombasa. Many Kenyans – and Ugandans – are employed by the I(N)GOs operating in the southern areas of Sudan not controlled by the government.

The seizure of power brought a sharp deterioration in relations between the GOS and the three IGAD member states Ethiopia, later joined by Eritrea and Uganda. **Uganda** is accused of directly supporting the SPLA/M, while the GOS supports the Ugandan Lord's Resistance Army, which destabilises the north of Uganda, commits the gravest of human rights violations and has its base area in the (government-controlled) border area of southern Sudan.

Eritrea and Ethiopia also broke off diplomatic relations with Sudan for many years. Eritrea allowed the opposition Sudanese network NDA (National Democratic Alliance) and individual member groups to open offices in Asmara, where they still meet regularly to this day. It is also accused of giving military assistance to various opposition groups, including the SPLA and the Darfur movements. Ethiopia was also accused of supporting the Sudanese opposition. But here too things have changed in recent years. The GOS is engaged in a permanent discussion process with the Ugandan government which, like Ethiopia and Eritrea, has resumed diplomatic relations. The war between Ethiopia and Eritrea in particular gave the relations new impetus. Co-operation between the GOS and Ethiopia is now functioning admirably in economic terms as well. Roads and railway lines are planned to improve communications between the two countries. Because of its problems with Eritrea, Ethiopia needs Port Sudan to give it access to the sea. It also seems that certain oil fields extend all the way to Ethiopia. What the long-term effects of the clearly discernible hegemonic ambitions of both countries at the Horn of Africa will be remains to be seen. For the above reasons, relations between the GOS and Eritrea have now become relatively poor again.

Relations between the government of **Chad** and the GOS are still good at present. The president of Chad is a Zaghawa himself, as are many of the rebel leaders in Darfur, albeit from a different clan. He supports the GOS in its struggle against the rebels. Chad harbours a large proportion of the refugees from Darfur.

The **AU and its member states** were largely responsible for ensuring that Sudan was not condemned over the past two years by the UN Human Rights Commission and that its seat on the Commission was renewed. The organisation is currently engaged, with the support of the broader international community, in promoting the negotiations between the GOS and JEM/SLA-M. It is not, however, seen by the latter, or by many other Sudanese groupings, as a strongly influential mediator, especially as the negotiated conditions for the armistice have not as yet been implemented. The international

¹⁵ U.S. probably is, too, along with other Western countries possibly.

community, and the EU in particular, regard the AU's handling of the peace talks and subsequent follow-up measures as a kind of "test case" for the organisation.

The European Union

It is no secret that many of the European countries changed their Sudan policy – in so far as they had one – some time ago. Although the decision taken in the early 1990s to halt official development aid and impose an arms embargo until the GOS and SPLM sign a final peace treaty officially still stands, relations between the EU and the GOS have changed radically in advance of the treaty, even if the EU has again adopted, at least verbally, a somewhat "harder line" in connection with the current Darfur crisis.

In 1999 the EU launched a "programme of dialogue" with the government of Sudan aimed at normalising relations and achieving decisive progress in the country on five points: democracy and the rule of law; the IGAD peace process; respect for human rights; relations with neighbouring countries; and the fight against terrorism.

This dialogue is conducted by a group of ambassadors from European member states, led by the presidency of the Council – or a representative, if the country in question has no embassy in Khartoum – which meets regularly with GOS representatives. As early as December 2000 an EU evaluation team noted positive progress, despite the continuing war – which had even intensified since the beginning of oil production – and the grave human rights violations it entailed, and despite the ongoing bombing of civilian targets by the GOS. Thereafter the dialogue programme was extended every year with a special focus on the progress of the peace talks and the human rights situation. Furthermore, in 2002 the EU decided to release 15 million euros for a "Humanitarian Plus Programme" (rehabilitation projects). The EU/Dialogue Group also conducts various "fact-finding missions" in the country, and in 2002 for the first time individual members visited areas not controlled by the government. Most reports on the dialogue programme and individual fact-finding missions are not open to public scrutiny.

Official development aid from the EU and individual member states was stopped in 1990. Since then ECHO and the various national ministries have only financed emergency and humanitarian aid programmes. In the year 2000, when the SPLA/M insisted that INGOs operating in areas under its control had to sign a new Memorandum of Understanding, the EU did not approve the measure and cut off funds to organisations that signed such memoranda.

Over the past 14 years the EU has passed a number of resolutions on Sudan, including the above-mentioned arms embargo. But most observers agree that these resolutions did not produce the desired results and in some cases were only half-heartedly complied with by the EU member states. In recent years there has been a general debate within the EU on the effectiveness of sanctions. A joint EU-ACP working party was set up which devoted one of its sessions to the situation in Sudan, including the escalating situation in the oil fields. In general, however, the working party concluded that in most cases sanctions did not produce the desired results and that more weight should be attached to "constructive dialogue".

Many southern Sudanese had the feeling (and some still do) that, by adopting the dialogue programme, the EU was favouring the GOS and the "northern Sudanese" in general, ignoring the southerners' sufferings and disregarding their point of view. They specifically identified Britain, France and Italy as countries pursuing a very one-sided policy.¹⁶ They accuse them of primarily pursuing their own interests, helping the GOS to regain the recognition of the international community, and closing their eyes to the ongoing conflicts, the grave violations of human rights and the lack of democracy in the country. They also see a direct connection between this policy and – given Sudan's new oil wealth – economic and military-strategic interests. Indeed it is often these three countries, two of which are permanent members of the UN Security Council, that to this day have tended to water down EU draft resolutions and undermine any kind of concrete action.

There is also a frequently observable tendency for the foreign and development aid ministries of various member states to abdicate responsibility for a Sudan policy of their own and "to hide" behind

¹⁶ The same accusation is levelled at the countries in question by the movements in Darfur. France has very specific interests of its own because of its involvement in Chad, while Britain as the former colonial power has a special position anyway.

EU decisions. It should, of course, be noted that the EU, given the divergent interests of its individual member states, is not a “monolithic bloc” and that many decisions continue to be taken at national level. The EU parliament seems to grant human rights a higher priority than the commission was in the habit of doing. Even if the parliament still does not have the necessary clout, it should be made to pay more heed to and assume more responsibility for its Sudan policy.

Be this as it may, the EU has repeatedly attempted to introduce Sudan resolutions at the sessions of the UN Human Rights Commission.

The EU has resolved to resume development aid and release the accumulated Lomé/Cotonou funds as soon as a final peace agreement is signed. A Sudan country strategy paper setting out priorities has already been drafted and approved. It is too early to tell how this will be affected by the ongoing Darfur conflict. The EU is currently helping to finance the AU process to solve the Darfur problem and has made funds available for humanitarian aid, as have some national governments.

Sudan is also a “test case” for the dialogue programme as part of the Cotonou process, appropriate groups having been set up for the involvement of civil society.

Germany

For many years Sudan has been one of the main recipients of German development aid. Like other European countries, Germany discontinued development aid in the early 1990s because of the grave human rights violations, but promised to resume it as soon as a final peace agreement was signed between the GOS and the SPLM. But the promised 80 million euros first have to be used to cover outstanding loans, so that in the final analysis only 20 million will be available. In November 2003 the Federal Ministry for Economic Co-operation and Development held a preliminary “country conference” and announced it would concentrate on promoting water projects.

For the first time since 2004 the German Society for Technical Co-operation (GTZ) is now once again involved in a road-building project in southern Sudan; despite the cessation of development aid the DED has never closed its office in the capital.

In the past years both the BMZ and the Foreign Office have financed humanitarian work and emergency relief measures, but now, working through German NGOs, they are increasingly funding development-oriented programmes and activities designed to bring about peace and reconciliation. A summary of the activities of German NGOs in Sudan in the past years may be obtained from EED.

At present, in addition to humanitarian aid, Germany is also very active politically in trying to help resolve the disaster in Darfur, whereas in the IGAD peace process – apart from financial contributions – it has shown pronounced restraint.

Financed by EU funds, the Max Planck Institute in Heidelberg has produced a draft constitution for Sudan, is planning to follow this up by devising model state constitutions, and is engaged in training (constitutional) judges and administrative specialists, partly in co-operation with the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, which does not maintain an office in Sudan.

Switzerland

Switzerland has been stepping up its efforts in Sudan for well over three years now. Like France, Britain, Norway and the U.S. it has appointed a kind of “special rapporteur” for Sudan. It has also made a major contribution to the conclusion of an armistice agreement for the Nuba Mountains, thus paving the way to comprehensive development aid for that territory. Switzerland is also financing the “Gurtong” project, an information network for southern Sudanese living in exile, and is a strong advocate of developing the idea of a “House of Nationalities”, designed to form the basis for appropriate participation by the various ethnic groups in southern Sudan through the involvement of their traditional leaders, although this has yet to receive the support of the SPLM leadership.

Norway

The Norwegian government and Norwegian NGOs have a long tradition of involvement in Sudan. Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) is the only NGO that has always been openly present in both the

government-controlled and non-government-controlled areas. The Norwegians are a member of the troika that has done so much to push the IGAD peace process forward. They are already involved in training various specialists for southern Sudan and will host the planned donor conference.

North America

For years the U.S. policy of isolating the GOS was in a certain sense unique. Some people wondered whether the U.S.'s policy had isolated the GOS or whether it had really isolated itself within the international community. The U.S. put the GOS on its list of terror-supporting countries, imposed sanctions, passed a number of resolutions and even resorted to military means by bombing the El-Shifa plant in Khartoum in the wake of the terrorist attacks on American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. In the U.S. a powerful movement has emerged to oppose slavery in Sudan, while evangelical and fundamentalist groups form a powerful pressure group that wages an ideological struggle against the GOS and are making a massive commitment in the areas not controlled by the government in southern Sudan. The U.S. was accused of supporting the SPLA/M and its embassy in Khartoum was closed.

But U.S. policy has always been contradictory, a clear change being seen after the election of the Bush Administration, which was relatively quick to announce its interest in an improvement of relations. Even the prospect of suspending sanctions was raised.¹⁷

Then, in the period following the attacks of 11 September, the policy of the U.S. towards Sudan changed radically. The reasons for this were partly economic (oil), but mainly of a military and strategic nature. In the immediate aftermath of 9/11 the GOS did all it could to avoid becoming the target of potential reprisals and offered comprehensive co-operation in the struggle against international terrorism. Yet although it has no doubt kept many of its promises in this respect, all its attempts to be struck from the list of terror-supporting countries have failed. The U.S. government has nevertheless become the main "driving force" behind the IGAD negotiations, especially as, in the wake of the Iraq debacle, it urgently needs a foreign policy success in the Muslim world. The "Sudan Peace Act" passed in 2003, which threatens tough sanctions in the event of a collapse of the peace talks, gives it a powerful lever. In the event of the talks coming to a successful conclusion the Americans have promised to introduce a resolution in the UN Security Council which will guarantee the deployment of UN peace-keeping forces for international monitoring.

¹⁷ U.S. sanctions suspending bilateral development and military assistance automatically came into force following the June 1989 overthrow of the democratically elected government of Sadiq Al Mahdi by the Sudanese military, led by General Bashir. In August 1993, the Clinton Administration added Sudan to the list of states supporting terrorism, in reaction to credible evidence of international terrorist activity emanating from Sudanese territory. In April 1996, Washington supported the imposition of UN Security Council sanctions (UNSC Res. 1054) after Khartoum failed to co-operate in the extradition of suspects connected to the June 1995 assassination attempt on Egyptian President Mubarak (as laid out in UNSC Res. 1044). A subsequent UN ban on international flights by Sudan Airways passed the Security Council but was never implemented. Frustrated by Khartoum's apparent intransigence, Washington imposed comprehensive trade sanctions on Sudan December 1997. In late 2000, Congress and the Clinton Administration agreed upon exemptions to permit the sale of American medicine and agricultural products to Sudan.

The web of sanctions put in place by the Clinton administration did contribute to the increased isolation of Khartoum. Washington worked successfully to deny Sudan a seat on the UN Security Council in late 2000, blocked access to U.S. corporate investment and technology in the development of Sudan's energy sector, and impeded Sudan's full resumption of ties with international financial institutions (IFIs) and its ambition to have its macroeconomic situation reviewed before the Paris Club.

Ultimately, however, U.S. policy did not significantly weaken Khartoum, strengthen southern and northern opposition, moderate the conduct of Sudan's war, enhance humanitarian access or deliveries, or promote a process of genuine peace negotiations. Instead, in the late 1990s, as neighbouring states and European Union member states steadily normalised relations with Khartoum, the U.S. found itself in conspicuous self-isolation with effectively no partners.

Paradoxically, Washington's rhetorical excesses, meetings with the leadership of the SPLM/A, and high-level visits to southern Sudan, not backed by sufficient political will and material resources) meaningfully strengthen the south's hand in its war against the north, ultimately played to Khartoum's advantage. For every heavily advertised dollar of non-lethal assistance the U.S. provided Sudanese in rebel-controlled territory, Khartoum was reportedly able to leverage several dollars for its lethal campaigns against those same imperilled civilians. The August 1998 U.S. bombing of the El Shifa pharmaceutical factory worsened Khartoum's paranoia and sense of grievance and enhanced the motivation of Middle Eastern states to underwrite Khartoum." (source may be supplied on request)

As a result of the pressure of the above-mentioned groups it is currently also involved in the Darfur crisis, having refused for months to take a public stand, and is introducing a draft resolution on Sudan in the UN Security Council for the first time.

At present, USAID is financing major programmes, mainly through INGOs operating in southern Sudan. These include consortia like the one for peace work led by PAKT [together with the New Sudan Council of Churches (NSCC) and Christian Aid], para-legal and legal training, agricultural projects [Catholic Relief Service (CRS)] and many others. The dominance of USAID in the south is already overwhelming and many INGOs/SINGOs will probably have difficulties with their intended projects.

Canada, too, has a somewhat contradictory Sudan policy. The country drew a lot of attention to itself when a Canadian oil company, which was one of the main players in the Sudan business, lobbied massively against its government's commitment. In the year 2000 Canada had the presidency of the UN Security Council and found itself pressured into sending a fact-finding mission to the Sudanese oil fields. Although the Harker Report confirmed the allegations of massive human rights violations, there no action was taken.

Asia

Economically Asian countries are playing an increasingly important role on the African continent. Sudan maintains excellent relations with China, Malaysia and India, some of which – in addition to Russia – also serve as arms suppliers. The countries provide loans and take part in construction projects and hotel ventures in Sudan. Most particularly, however, they are involved in oil production and oil exports. In contrast to this growing influence there is little knowledge or analysis of Asian interests in Africa, a situation that calls for urgent improvement.¹⁸

Networks with NGOs in Malaysia and China, both countries with large stakes in Sudan's oil production, should be set up. This should prove easier with Malaysia than with China, in view of the serious human rights situation and the problems of civil society groups in the latter country.

IGAD Partners' Forum (IPF)

The IPF was called into being by the international community to support the IGAD peace process. Apart from many Western European countries, its members include the U.S., Canada, Japan and Russia. Italy has the presidency. In addition to providing financial support for the process, the IPF has also taken an active role. Since by the year 2000 the talks had made no progress worth mentioning, IPF threatened to cut off financing and initiated what were known as technical committees to draft proposals for resolving the points at issue between the parties to the conflict, as a result of which the peace talks became much more constructive, even if nothing was actually signed.¹⁹

In addition to the technical committees the IPF introduced working parties, such as Planning for Peace, which was set up in December 1999 with a very ambitious programme and had offices in Nairobi and Khartoum for a limited period. The extensive documentation that this working party produced was never officially published, although it did provide a basis for preparing plans for the period after the signing of the peace agreement.

The significance of the IPF dwindled markedly after the end of 2001, when the U.S., Norway and Britain formed a troika to speed up the IGAD process and, by all accounts, no longer fully consulted the other IPF members or informed them of their activities.

¹⁸ This would be a suitable task for the FES, for example.

¹⁹ The Forum unfortunately suffered from the fact that its members seldom reached agreement or spoke with one voice, as many countries pursued their own interests and took different views of disputed points, so that many outsiders doubt that it would really have made good its threat to cut off support for the IGAD process.

3. Non-governmental actors

Companies

A growing number of foreign companies have a stake in Sudan, especially those connected with oil. The degree of commitment varies, however. Whereas the GNPOC consortium, consisting of Petronas, China National Petroleum Company, Talisman (now India) and the GOS, began production in 1999, another one, led by Lundin Oil and launched at a markedly lower level in summer 2000, decided to expand its activities in 2001 only to suspend them under growing pressure from international lobbyists. As a result of this pressure OMV sold its shares in early 2004. Other companies have so far only acquired concessions but have not yet started drilling, mainly because their concession area is not at present under the control of the GOS. The latter has been making enormous efforts to bring the oil fields into its sphere of influence. It has stepped up its military operations there, making use of local militias.

Apart from the big oil companies, a growing number of smaller companies from all over the world, including Germany, are involved in oil-related activities in Sudan (private security in the oil-drilling areas, pumps, electricity, telecommunications, refineries, marketing, etc). Sudan is making every effort to attract investors to the country. In 2001, for example, a 32-page, colour supplement appeared in the British newspaper *The Independent* entitled "Sudan – Living off the Land – Investment to make the economy bloom". On the German side the Hamburg-based Afrika-Verein has been successfully engaged for some years now in getting German firms interested in Sudan. At present, however, no export credit guarantees are being granted because of the cessation of development aid.

The economic activities to be observed in Sudan today might be described as an oil-based microcosm of globalisation with all the familiar winners and losers and all the negative side effects.

International NGOs

For years the work of INGOs in Sudan was very much restricted to humanitarian and emergency relief measures. Most of them operated under the umbrella of the OLS. Only a few – such as the aforementioned NCA, Save the Children UK, Oxfam GB, and, more recently, the Swiss Medair – were able to work with the belligerents on both sides. Some INGOs work on both sides without maintaining offices of their own by financing local partners [for instance, the German Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst (EED), missio, Misereor, ICCO, Caritas and Tearfund]. Others – such as Christian Aid, CAFOD and Dan Church AID/DCA [so far only involved in mine-clearing in the Nuba Mountains] or, in the south, the Deutscher Entwicklungsdienst (DED) [in Juba, which is still government-controlled] – are now either opening offices in Khartoum in addition to their offices in Nairobi [which are used for operating in the areas not controlled by the government] or, like the Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FES), are sounding out the possibilities of doing so.

Important protagonists in the government-controlled areas, in addition to those mentioned above, are the German Welthungerhilfe and Care and, in the south, World Vision, CRS, AAH, NPA, MSF, etc. In February 2004 the OLS listed 76 (S)INGOs. A considerable increase in the number of INGOs is to be expected in the period after the signing of the peace agreement between GOS and SPLM. At present many are coming to the country because of the Darfur crisis.

A Sudanese who was interviewed described the situation as follows: "There is one assessment after another. People come and interview us, then they go away and we never hear from them again!" Another said: "Many INGOs do not respect our point of view. They do not really co-operate with us nor do they co-ordinate their activities among themselves. But we ourselves know best what we really need!" The Sudanese one speaks to complain that foreigners, mainly from Uganda and Kenya, are often employed by the INGOs instead of Sudanese. Their fear is that "the INGOs will simply override us – once the peace is signed, they will simply do what they like!"

At the moment many INGOs are preparing for the period after the signing of the peace treaty and have drafted strategy papers accordingly. Since "peace and reconciliation" have become a kind of "new fashion in projects" (following ecology and gender in earlier years), which are financed by donors,

many INGOs have adopted a corresponding component in their programmes without necessarily having the relevant know-how, experience or capacity for such projects. Efforts are, however, being made, both in Nairobi and in Khartoum, to co-ordinate planning better in the period ahead.

III. Possible scenarios

1. Greatest potential for conflict/challenges

The preceding chapters dealt with the present state of conflict in Sudan and its historical roots. Developments hitherto were described as constituting a “chronic humanitarian and permanent political crisis with multiple conflict dimensions”. The interviews conducted in March/April 2004 with around 100 individual Sudanese representing various socio-political strata, loyalties, religions and ethnic groups as well as with representatives of various international organisations, taken together with the team’s own observations/analyses, have enabled us to identify a rich potential for conflict in the course of future developments. The **example of IDPs/refugees** serves to illustrate the multiplicity of possible future scenarios. But it is not only in connection with the IDPs and refugees that possible areas of conflict are to be discerned. The biggest problems derive not only from the currently **prevailing system**, but also from the **system envisaged by the peace treaty**.

If there is one thing the field survey has shown it is this: no one dares predict what will happen in the next few months or years and, given the sheer weight of the problems ahead, no one really seems able to set clear priorities.

The following statements cropped up in interviews:

“Anything might happen.”

“Our problems are too many – I do not know where to start.”

“I do not believe in this peace – we were betrayed too often.”

“We will need years before there is a substantial change in this country.”

“Just give us some peace and freedom – we will make it.”

“Southern and northern Sudanese will never live together in peace – we need to separate.”

“This agreement is a marriage between two dictators. But there is no place where dictators turned into democrats. It would be a miracle if it were to happen in Sudan.”

“In Sudan, you never know. Things are possible which are impossible in other countries – whether for better or for worse.”

People vacillate between calculated optimism and black pessimism – interestingly enough, pessimism is most marked among the staff of INGOs and northern Sudanese intellectuals.

Especially striking during the field survey was the fact that we found ourselves basically touring two completely different “countries”. In the areas controlled by the SPLA/M the infrastructure has almost completely collapsed, communication between the various leaders and all INGOs takes place via radio or satellite phones (more recently by e-mail and television as well), to which normal people have as little access as they have to means of transport (apart from the bicycles distributed mainly by the INGOs). Small markets are gradually emerging – a faint indication of the return to “normality” are the “beach sandals” they offer, the main type of footwear in the south. People are recovering only very, very slowly from their war experiences now that the guns have been silent for a while. And the war is also the only thing that seems to link them to the north – they do not speak spontaneously of “reconciliation” with the north, but only of their fear of being betrayed again by the “Arabs”. They are definitely interested in rebuilding the country, but only their “own”. They say they need two things for this: reconciliation in the south – even if some take the view that all problems within the various southern Sudanese groups would disappear of their own accord were the North to leave them in peace – and the support of the “internationals”. They mention the provision of basic services (schools, health, clean drinking water, food aid for a transitional period): “We can’t manage ourselves” as well as international peacekeeping troops: “They are a must! Without the international forces we will be lost!”

At present civil structures exist only on paper or in rudimentary form. The scene is still dominated by the military and by military thinking. Armed soldiers and civilians, who in any case are often indistinguishable, are ubiquitous. But for many – apart from a few women’s groups – disarmament is not a matter for discussion: “We need our arms to defend ourselves against the enemy – he might come again at any time.”

To be sure the offices and titles of a civil administration are to be found everywhere. The staff, however, is poorly trained and equipped. During a conversation with the present governor of

Equatoria, for example – the prime minister, as it were, of a huge region – he repeatedly had to chase the hens away from his briefcase, the sole sign of his lofty position, before they finally resumed pecking busily away on the sandy floor. The luxuriant vegetation in the region, however, indicates its enormous potential.

We then flew – making a necessary detour via neighbouring Kenya, since there is no official direct connection between government- and non-government-controlled areas in Sudan – to the capital in the north, arrived at the international airport in the air-conditioned arrivals hall and set off next morning through the dusty traffic chaos to the next interview, also in air-conditioned rooms, past countless new high-rise buildings, expensive car showrooms, new shops and mosques. Although here too the mass of the people is busy struggling to survive, i.e. to scrape together enough money to feed their families, their fears and hopes for the future are quite different. Some of those we spoke to hoped that the entry of the SPLM would primarily help to introduce a democratisation process for the entire country, which would, with the support of the international community, ultimately guarantee its unity. Others took the view that of course it was a good thing that peace was on the way and that without democracy and justice there would be no future. These would not be achievable under the new government. When asked how they could be achieved, they gave a vague but almost unanimous response: “The international community must help us!” **There is little sign of any confidence in local forces.**

When asked about reconciliation, respondents – outside of government circles – emphasised reconciliation with the south – “We understand they have reasons to complain. We made mistakes in the way we treated them and their case” – although with the clear aim of continued co-existence in a unified state. The question of international peacekeeping troops is answered in a much more differentiated way: “It depends very much on their mandate and composition. They may also cause a lot of trouble – look at other countries.”

Whereas no one in the south talks about the conflict in Darfur, in the north it is a burning topic to be mentioned under one’s breath, and one which is fraught with hopes and fears.

Once again we were made aware how little the different ethnic groups in Sudan, despite all the long-standing contacts that have existed over the years, really know about one another. Even in the capital **northern and southern Sudanese intellectual circles still circulate and act largely independently of each other.** Most of the northern Sudanese interviewed only know the south, and even remote areas of the north, from the media, travellers’ tales, or at best from visits of a few days’ duration. In the south, in turn, **prejudices** against other, even southern Sudanese, ethnic groups are deeply rooted. What both parts of the country have in common, however, is that both in the north and in the south SINGOs are emerging that resist the infiltration tactics of GNGOs²⁰ and are clearly trying to help rebuild the country and achieve lasting peace.

A particular source of conflict, however, is the fact that the peace agreements were ultimately negotiated by only two groups, the GOS and the SPLM/A, and many social groups and oppositionists continue to feel **excluded** from the projected arrangements negotiated for the sharing of wealth and power. This applies both to the traditional parties (Umma, DUP, the Communists, Beja Congress, etc), which in any case are increasingly losing influence and in some cases undergoing internal splits, and to whole regions, which also regard themselves as being marginalized by the yawning gap between the centre and the periphery. What this can lead to has already been shown in the case of Darfur and is reflected again in the possible options. Lack of transparency and insufficient information have so far made it impossible to create a broad **“sense of ownership”** for the Agreement. This also opens the door to attempts to undermine the implementation of the Agreement.

²⁰ **GNGO**: Government-related NGO: Numerous newly formed **SINGOs** – indigenous Sudanese NGOs – are very close to the government or, in the south, to the SPLM and are frequently headed by members of the ruling party or the SPLM.

Let us first take a look at what has **so far been agreed in the peace negotiations**, which one respondent saw as harbouring the greatest potential for conflict. At present, in addition to “security arrangements”, there are agreements on wealth-sharing and power-sharing and on the three “marginalised areas” of Abyei, Nuba Mountains and Southern Blue Nile. There is still nothing in writing on the “comprehensive cease-fire” or on the details of the treaty’s implementation. What has been negotiated is, of course, a compromise between political and religious-cultural ideas that are often diametrically opposed. As is usually the case with compromises, not everyone will find that every allowance has been made for their point of view. In other words, anyone who is looking for something to disagree with will find it. This is made particularly easy by the fact that the documents leave a great deal of scope for interpretation and that the English text does not always say quite the same as the Arabic. One source who was involved for a long time in the negotiations said: “The text is often lacking legal language. The way it has been written is a reflection not only of the visions of the parties but is also biased with fears, ambitions and aspirations. I sometimes seriously doubt whether it will be implementable at all.” To this must be added the fact that the compromises were not always reached voluntarily or out of conviction, but often in response to strong external pressure. Here are just a few of the potential sources of conflict:

- The relations between **religion and state**: In the north the Shari’a is to continue to apply, while the south is to be Shari’a-free. Everyone is to have a guaranteed right to the free practice of religion. It is not clear how this is to function in practice in the capital, for example, where the government sits side by side with the SPLM, after all. Opposition Muslims are also indignant that the treaty more or less institutionalises the Shari’a in the north, although they are in no sense in agreement with its application in Sudan.
- The **right to self-determination** (RSD): Apart from the fact that many outside southern Sudan will work hard to prevent a referendum leading to the secession of the south, it is unclear who will have the right to vote on the issue.
- **Security arrangements**: There will continue to be two armies as well as a joint group composed of SPLA and GOS troops as a confidence-building measure. Whereas the SPLA must withdraw from Southern Blue Nile, the Nuba Mountains and Eastern Sudan within a year of the start of the pre-interim period, the government troops have two-and-a-half years to withdraw from the south, and it is not clear where exactly the remaining troops are to be stationed. The **militias/other armed forces** are not involved in the negotiations. The agreements lay down that they should either be disbanded or integrated into the government or SPLA troops. How that can happen on any other than a voluntary basis has not been made clear. The same applies to the various internal and external security services that are regarded by many as the real power in the state. They too are to be officially disbanded or transferred to a single organisation.
- **Wealth sharing**: The crucial issue of landownership (at local or government level) has not been settled but turned over to a commission. The agreement on the percentages of potential income contains a risk of opaqueness and neglects groups outside the GOS/SPLM. The Beja, for example, feel robbed of their rights concerning the trade in gold from their region, the revenues from which are to go exclusively to the GOS with the participation of a French company.
- **Power sharing**: Power-sharing should normally be so designed as to offer everyone the full possibility of participation. This is said in reference to a “partnership” between GOS and SPLM, which is hard for outsiders to understand and appears to offer no scope for full participation by all. It is completely unclear to most people how the government and legal system are supposed to function. There will be a national government, one in southern Sudan and, in addition, “state parliaments” in the regions, probably each with their own constitution. What is to be done with the office-holders from the previous bodies (e.g. Southern Coordinating Council) has yet to be clarified.

Many respondents described the entire Agreement simply as a “**marriage between two dictators**” and hence have little faith that it could serve as an opening for democracy. In particular, they doubt whether people who have always been used **to thinking and acting** within **military command structures** can suddenly turn into democrats. And the examples in the immediate neighbourhood –

Eritrea, Ethiopia and Uganda – offer little cause for optimism. Another factor is that both the GOS and the SPLM are relatively **weak structures** that have to contend with opposition not only from outside, but also from within. They are also characterised by a **lack of separation between military and civilian structures**, basing their power on a purely **authoritarian style of leadership**.

Furthermore the SPLM is not even a party but still a “movement” and it may be assumed that the separatist state it is going to build up in southern Sudan will also be in the style of a “movement” and offer little scope for the development of other political forces. As in all social spheres, there is a **lack** of sufficient trained **specialists** to occupy the positions in the new structures and commissions that are envisaged. Despite the SPLM’s repeated assurances that it will make every returnee welcome, it is questionable how much scope it will in fact offer non-members, which is also a potential source of conflict. The same applies incidentally to the GOS – here too it is more than questionable whether scope for non-party or government-linked members will be offered. The almost total lack of civil institutions is painfully obvious.

A widespread **racism** and pronounced **tribalism** in all social strata and ethnic groups, coupled with deep-rooted habits of thinking and acting within **systems of patronage**, strengthen the pessimism regarding an early democratic reconstruction of society. For many Sudanese their own ethnic group, clan and leaders still count much more than ties to a larger system. There is a great danger that groupings will continue to try to get access to resources or political power by force of arms and exploit existing ethnic resentments to do so. This danger will be especially aggravated if there is no speedy success in offering demobilised soldiers alternatives. During the field survey this became more than clear in the Lakes region, where intra-ethnic clashes are in the process of escalating.

Ecological problems with progressive desertification through overgrazing and mechanised agriculture in the north and deforesting and oil drilling in the south; the lack of **basic services** and infrastructure in large parts of the country (health, regular food supply, education and training, roads, communication, transport, electricity); **market structures** that suffer from the side effects of globalisation, high taxes, lack of training, concentration [of wealth] in the hands of a few, unjust or non-existent pay structures; widespread **corruption** at all levels, murky transfers of capital by the government or individuals to foreign bank accounts and, finally, **external interests** and a frequently **uncoordinated approach** on the part of foreign donors and NGOs, even in their hiring and pay policies, offer more scope for potential conflicts, even after the conclusion of a peace agreement.

Finally, one should not forget that so far awareness of the need to observe **human rights** is not very developed among the elites in large parts of the country and that some of the people who are going to have to rebuild this society have been profoundly **traumatised**.

It can be assumed that there are around five million people in Sudan who have been driven from their homes as a result of war or famine (there is also a huge army of emigrant workers, mainly in the Arab countries).²¹ The majority of them are IDPs in the country itself, mostly in the south but also in considerable numbers in the north. Quite a few have also left the country to live in Egypt, Chad, the Central African Republic, Congo, Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia, Eritrea or another African country, while a not inconsiderable number have gone overseas and are scattered over the remaining continents.

Now plans are to be made for a possible return of all these different groups.

But no one can predict how they will behave.

- Will there be, as in 1972, a surprisingly swift, unprepared and relatively unplanned return of hundreds of thousands of people in the midst of the rainy season?
- Or will people adopt a wait-and-see attitude and at best send “scouts” on ahead to sound out the situation?
- Will they wait their turn according to the (N)GOS’ schedule?

²¹ Despite various attempts there is still no detailed, reliable database containing figures for refugees/IDPs or information on their whereabouts. The UN is preparing its return programmes on the basis of the following figures: 570,000 registered refugees and 3.5 million IDPs caused by the North-South conflict. To these must be added approx. 150,000 refugees and at least 700,000 IDPs as a result of the Darfur conflict. Breakdowns of Sudanese overseas are not available.

- Will the government in the north want to get rid of them as quickly as possible? Or will it hold them back as living proof that life really is better in the north; will it use them as cheap labour to deny their votes to the secessionists in the event of a referendum in the south?
- Will they perhaps be forced by the neighbouring countries to return home as quickly as possible?
- Will people in Equatoria, such as the unpopular Dinka-Bor, be sent back home together with their cattle by force if necessary?
- Will the refugees who return also remain if they find there are not enough schools for their children or employment opportunities for themselves, if their former homes and fields have either been destroyed or occupied by others?
- How will the recipient communities react to the masses of returnees after the initial euphoria of “reunification”; to those who did not fight, who speak another language, who may have forgotten or never known their native culture, who are not familiar with the system in the SPLM areas, or who may be better trained and take away the new jobs?
- What will be the reaction to attempts to interfere in politics?
- What should be done with those who no longer have a homeland, like the people of Upper Nile, whose living space has now been taken over by oil companies and changed forever?
- How can the ethnic cleansing in Darfur be reversed?

It is just as impossible to find answers to all these questions as it is to prepare for all eventualities. Some (S)INGOs are tackling the problem of the southern Sudanese returnees by first giving the IDPs information about their home region. Others, like churches, are trying to prepare both the host and the recipient communities mentally for the problems that may arise by organising “mine awareness” programmes and setting up interim camps.

In the questions concerning the possible behaviour of the IDPs/refugees and recipient communities there are clear challenges and various potential areas of conflict.

In the first place **no one** is **really prepared for a mass return** at present. This became clear during the field survey in the area around Rumbek, to which people are returning “off their own bat”. Even now there is not enough shelter, food nor, above all, clean drinking water available, which can of course lead to conflicts with the recipient communities. The situation in Equatoria, on the other hand, is that the resident population wants to **get rid of** the immigrant Dinka as soon as possible, as the latter are nomads and their cattle regularly devastate the fields. A female respondent put it this way: “You are saying peace is coming. Will the Dinka leave? If not, there will be no peace!”

Many of the potential returnees have been away from home for almost 20 years, while many have been born away from their family’s native region. **Traditional ties and modes of behaviour have been lost in exile** or were never acquired in the first place. If customary laws are officially recognised for judicial purposes, they must if necessary be learned anew and above all accepted.

In some cases the potential returnees speak better Arabic, Swahili, German or French than the languages of the Dinka, Zande or Nuer. What **languages** are to have official status and what languages are to be the language of instruction in schools? Recent examples from other countries, such as Ethiopia, show how conflict-laden these decisions are, since they explicitly reflect the recognition of or discrimination against minorities or attempts at majorisation and acculturation.

Even if most respondents in the south told us that all returnees were welcome and would be needed, they were reticent when it came to dealing with other **political ideas** that might crop up. Many of the returnees are familiar with the systems they found in the places they fled to. Many have no idea how the areas not controlled by the government are now “ruled” and what ground rules apply there. This too bears the seeds of future conflict, especially if we remember the aggravating factor that those who went into exile generally come back with at least some kind of **school qualification**, which those who stayed at home tend not to have. So how does one pick the right man for the job: the former fighter and activist or the candidate with at least rudimentary training?

2. Potential for peace

In view of the long list of potential conflicts it would be all too easy to lapse into resignation and, as already explained at the outset, pessimism is particularly widespread among the foreign employees of (I)NGOs. But political analysts are often not quite free of it either. Wouldn't it be better just to call it a day and leave people to their own devices? Those whose pessimism is so deep as to have turned into cynicism or whose eye for positive developments is clouded, as is the case with some of those interviewed, should always consider directing their efforts elsewhere. Otherwise they should work together with those in the country who continue to believe – and are working to make their belief come true – that the future of the Sudan will be a better one, even if it is going to take some time. And in this sense a potential for peace is certainly discernible in Sudan.

As mentioned already, the main guarantors of peace in Sudan are neither I(N)GOs nor foreign governments, nor even UN peacekeeping troops, but the Sudanese themselves, even if it occasionally means boosting their confidence in their own strength, a confidence undermined by the long war and the political situation. The **mass of the Sudanese population**, especially in the south, has been war-weary for a long time now and has increasingly been giving voice to this feeling in recent years. This has been backed by local groups' attempts at reconciliation and the setting up of civil society organisations. It should not be forgotten that, despite all the international pressure exerted on the parties to the conflict through the IGAD process, it was not least the voices of Sudanese civil society – chiefs, women's and youth groups, (leading) churchmen and Muslims, independent intellectuals, and even individual military officers – which, by bringing internal pressure to bear and contributing their ideas, have helped to ensure that, in contrast to earlier times, at least a certain opening to the governing elites and political circles has been created. Thus we find ourselves today on the eve of the signing of a peace agreement between GOS and SPLM, which despite all the difficulties offers an opportunity for the comprehensive reconstruction of society in the direction of a lasting peace, justice and democracy. This opportunity must be seized, especially as no real alternative is in sight. The possibilities inherent in it are described below under "Best case scenario".

As in many countries, the desire for peace in Sudan is particularly strong among **women and young people**. Years ago there came a point when women, supported by Dutch project funding, began to talk to one another across religious, political and ethnic boundaries and to form networks – initially separate ones for the government- and non-government-controlled areas, but increasingly across this "boundary" as well. In addition to their reconciliation and peace work, they have increasingly made themselves heard in political debates.

Teenagers and young adults have formed music and theatre groups in which they express their desire for peace and their dissatisfaction with the existing political situation. During the field survey interviews were conducted in areas not controlled by the government with youth groups which have set up meeting places for young people or help teach in schools. The last elections at the universities in April 2004 clearly revealed the degree of political organisation among students and their desire for a change in the existing situation: the NDA²² groups emerged from the elections as the clear victors. Both women's' and youth groups must be regarded as having a clear commitment to peace. As in the case of all other groups, the aim should be to strengthen their capacity and provide them with more training facilities. Although civil society in Sudan is relatively underdeveloped because of the political situation, an increasing number of SINGOs are being formed.²³ Their potential for change – which may be considerable – has, however, been recognised by both the GOS and the SPLM, which are both anxious to establish (G)NGOs with ties to themselves or to infiltrate independent ones.

Religious groups and "faith-based communities" always harbour both a potential for peace and for conflict, especially in a country like Sudan in which religion – or rather the exploitation of religion to achieve political objectives – plays such a key role. In addition to the "fundamentalist" groups on both the Muslim and the Christian sides, which often show little constructive readiness for peaceful dialogue, there are church groups, organisations and leaders and members of the Anzar, Khatmiya, the

²² NDA: National Democratic Alliance, a grouping of opposition parties and movements

²³ Civil society groups have in fact a long and politically important tradition in Sudan, although they were crushed in large parts of the country after 1989.

Sufi order and the Republican Brotherhood on the Muslim side, which represent a great potential for peace and reconciliation. The churches and parish councils have been active for years, both at the local and the IGAD level, and have enabled other civil society groups to meet under their auspices – in the so-called Entebbe conferences, for example – and, more recently, to work through the newly founded Reconcile Institute on developing their ideas for a democratic Sudan.

In interviews with the leaders of the Anzar and Khatmiya, for example, the latter were insistent in their pleas for facilities to train their members in peace work so that they may continue their efforts for a peaceful future.

An example of how inter-religious co-operation can succeed is provided by a project in Juba, in which Muslims and Christians are working together on an AIDS/HIV awareness programme.

As most people in Sudan, regardless of their ethnic allegiance, are deeply religious, and religious leaders are traditionally recognised as having authority, the latter's peace-promoting potential should be harnessed and strengthened under all circumstances.

As pointed out at the beginning, the **traditional mechanisms and structures** of the various ethnic groups in the field of peace and reconciliation have been weakened or even destroyed in some areas as a result of the war or deliberate political action. In many places traditional leaders have been replaced by cadres friendly to the GOS or the SPLM. Nevertheless there is still sufficient traditional knowledge and experience in this field that could be revitalised and made further use of.²⁴ When we consider the serious lack of other civil “institutions”, traditional decision-making mechanisms and leadership structures, if properly encouraged and integrated, could play a vital role in the cause of peaceful development.

Even **medium-level SPLM cadres**, if appropriately trained and assisted, are a potential peace factor. Conversations with people in positions of authority during the field survey revealed that, in contrast to former times, there was a stronger awareness of personal responsibility as well as of the limitations and risks involved.

Another potential peace factor is to be seen in the so-called “**committed personalities**” on both sides, who may be intellectuals, traditional chiefs or religious leaders. There are also a few high-ranking military officers who ought to be borne in mind, and even individual members of the SPLM and GOS leaderships should be viewed in a more differentiated manner.

Finally we should mention **business people** as possible guarantors of peace and reconciliation. A businessman interviewed in the south had the following to say: “Business is business, and we are not like bad politicians. Only if we mix business with politics do we have a problem. Let everybody come and work or invest here – regardless of whether they are from the north, south, east or west of Sudan.”

As indicated at the outset, however, many Sudanese still put their faith – despite all the reservations they may have – in the “**international community**” as the guarantor of peace in Sudan. This means in the first instance UN peacekeeping troops, who would be welcomed by most people, although it is still a moot point whether they should receive a mandate under Chapter 6 or 7 (which permits direct intervention). The possible composition of such a force is also mentioned by some as a problem: most southern Sudanese, for example, would not want to have any Egyptian or Arab representatives of the UN on their territory.

INGOs can obviously make a contribution to peace and reconciliation in Sudan provided they work in close co-operation with Sudanese civil society groups and SINGOs. Finally, the international community must not – as it has in other cases – pack up and go after a peace deal is reached and turn its attention to the next conflict. Instead it must strive to set aside its own interests, face its obligations, and accompany Sudan on its way to a lasting peace and reconciliation.

²⁴ An unpublished study of this topic may be consulted through SFP-E, which can be used as a basis for further studies.

3. Options

At present, despite intensive analysis and observation, it is not easy to decide which of the conceivable scenarios presented below is the likeliest. The many imponderables connected with the continuing armed conflicts and their possible implications make this as unfavourable a starting point as one could imagine for planning future projects.

The ongoing armed clashes, and especially the disaster in Darfur, dampen any optimism. In examining possible future options, the essential points should be recalled once again. Despite the general tendency to talk of the “Darfur crisis”, this term is misleading. What is happening here is not just a crisis in a remote region. It is – like the war between the “North” and the “South”, like the armed clashes over the oil fields, in the east of the country, in the Nuba Mountains, in Southern Blue Nile and around Malakal – a symptom of Sudan’s old “disease”. No government in Sudan has ever tried to overcome the gap between the centre and the periphery, no serious attempt has ever been made to bring about a just distribution of political power and resources in this multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-cultural country. On the contrary, a comparatively small elite has succeeded – through a system of shifting alliances, various degrees of religious impetus and no regard for human rights – in dominating the country and its inhabitants.

All the signs are that the international community will try once again to save at least some of the victims without systematically addressing the reasons for this new outbreak of mass suffering. Thus the stage is set for the next “crisis” in Sudan, just as the present one was long on the cards. Suddenly everyone is incensed by the monstrous scale of the disaster and the methods used to wage the war in Darfur. Yet native militias have been hunting down their fellow citizens there for years. Ethnic tensions are being exploited to form armed movements at a time when potential leaders see themselves as the losers in the peace process. Villages are torched, their inhabitants are driven out and sexual assault is used as a weapon of war, as is the denial of access to those offering humanitarian relief. After the militias have done the bulk of the work, the government troops move in, allegedly in pursuit of the rebels. The government denies all responsibility and refers to “intra/inter-ethnic tensions” and “bandits”. When international pressure grows, promises to remedy the situation are made, but in the end not much happens. All this is neither new nor unique to Sudan, but an old and familiar technique that has already been practised in the other parts of the country for years.

The international community has made things easy in this respect. Using the argument that nothing must be done to jeopardise the negotiations between North and South, it has blocked every warning and every effort made by the various organisations to facilitate peace talks and get to the roots of the country’s basic problems. It is true, of course, that in the wake of the Iraq debacle the U.S. and Britain urgently need a foreign policy success in the Muslim world. This means, however, that further armed clashes are a foregone conclusion and that hopes for a lasting, comprehensive peace are without substance.

Political developments in Sudan essentially hinge now on how the “Darfur crisis” is handled from now on, both at the national and the international level. At present it all looks as though a peace deal between GOS and SPLA/M, that was actually announced for August this year at the latest, is going to be further postponed by the parties to the conflict in view of the uncertain outcome of the situation in Darfur.²⁵

Assuming – as seemed likely at the time of the field investigation – that a peace accord between SPLA/M and GOS is reached in the immediate future within the framework envisaged, what “best case” and what “worst case” scenarios can be anticipated?

Best case

In the best case the peace accord is signed as soon as possible after the Framework Agreement. The approximately 6-month interim phase is used to form the new governments at the national and southern Sudanese levels and to lay the groundwork for a democratisation process. The peace accord

²⁵ The impending elections in the U.S., which could produce a change of government, also play a role for the parties to the conflict.

is implemented in full after being recognised by all Sudanese, who thus develop a “sense of ownership” and actively work for its implementation. A road map for drafting a constitution is drawn up with the participation of all socially relevant groups. This makes it possible to resolve the Darfur crisis, which in turn means that other ethnic groups do not take up arms. In the medium term a new, inclusive, transparent, democratic government emerges.

Demobilisation, disarming and reintegration proceed without difficulty, the government dispenses with the support of the militias, which for their part lay down their arms. The programmes are such as to ensure that no one ever again feels it necessary to seize resources by force of arms.

The return of the IDPs/refugees proceeds in a smooth and orderly fashion, the recipient communities being sufficiently prepared. Clean drinking water, food, shelter, schools and jobs become available in sufficient quantities and the recipients profit from the measures taken.

Agriculture recovers, the south is able to feed itself in the medium term, and the fields and villages are cleared of mines. Everyone is able to live at least on a subsistence level.

The reconciliation in the south succeeds with the setting up of an inclusive government there. There are enough human and financial resources to build up the administration, economy and civil society.

The international community keeps all its promises concerning development aid, I(N)GOs and SINGOs work closely together in a co-ordinated manner, the former strengthening and supporting the latter. They all help each other to resolve or avert possible conflicts, thus guaranteeing compliance with the accord. All parties largely subordinate their own interests to the general good. Although there is an international peacekeeping force enjoying universal recognition, it does not have to intervene.

Oil revenues are transparent and used for the country’s development. The economy is placed on a broader footing. Funds that have found their way to foreign bank accounts are returned. Furthermore Sudan qualifies for debt relief, the relevant measures being taken with due regard for social groups. Oil companies and other foreign investors act in a socially responsible manner in every respect.

The referendum goes off smoothly and the outcome is recognised by everyone. This leads in the long term to the emergence of a Sudanese nation and identity based on completely equal recognition of multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious realities and good-neighbourly relations with other countries. Sudan loses its status as a potentially destabilising factor for the entire region.

Worst Case:

At the moment it is hard to establish what the worst case might be, since it is defined differently by the various actors, whether national or international. For the great mass of the civilian population the worst case would undoubtedly be if they were to continue to be exposed to ceaseless fighting with all its disastrous humanitarian consequences, as would happen in the event of a collapse of the peace processes (IGAD for the south, AU for Darfur) or if further armed clashes were to flare up or escalate (in the south or east, in Kordofan, etc). But the possibility of continuing violence by existing militias and old and young soldiers/officers demobilised after the conclusion of a peace deal, who in the absence of alternative means of obtaining resources might resort to their familiar pattern of direct violent appropriation, terrorising the population in the process, also falls into this category.

If disputes over resources, coupled with the struggle for political supremacy, are not resolved in a more or less democratic way, it might be the case that Sudan as a whole becomes “ungovernable” and disintegrates into many “small states” under the control of individual ethnic leaders. However, continuing armed conflicts would also lead to a further destabilisation of the entire region, as the current example of Darfur/Chad shows.

A worst case scenario for the population would also be one in which, even assuming the cessation of all armed clashes, the structure of the economy would continue to mean that 90% of them would be living on or below the poverty line; if blanket state control and arbitrary persecution of political dissenters were to continue; and if extreme religious-political forces were to regain their strength.

However, another worst-case option in the eyes of some of the neighbouring states (e.g. Ethiopia and Egypt) and large parts of the international community as well as of many Sudanese in the northern part

of the country is one that could be regarded by many southern Sudanese as the best case: the planned referendum results in the secession of the South and the founding of a new state on the African continent regarded by other African groups as a model solution for their own conflicts.

Many members of the international community would doubtless see it as a worst case if they did not succeed in gaining permanent access to the country's oil wells and/or if the country were to have a government that did not allow itself be integrated into the military and strategic interests of the West.

Of course there are plenty of **conceivable scenarios between best and worst case** – no one believes that the best case will occur without problems and many will work to prevent the worst case from happening.

- One possibility of stabilisation, envisaged in the peace agreement and given priority by the international community, is to enable the people to profit from “peace dividends” as soon as possible, which would forestall any attempts by various political groupings to destabilise the peace in the interests of achieving their own political or other aims. This presupposes, however, that both partners to the treaty work for the full implementation of the peace agreement and that safeguarding mechanisms take effect. The trouble is that there are insufficient signs of that at present. It must also be remembered that civil society is still relatively weak in Sudan. It may happen that foreign financial assistance is either diverted into murky channels in government circles or the SINGOs prove unable to cope with the new bonanza, which would mean that the I(N)GOs end up doing all the development work and establish their own little “empires”. This must be prevented at all costs, for the best guarantors of a long-term peace in justice are the Sudanese themselves. All measures that enable them to realise this aim in full must be encouraged.
- It may be that both the current leaderships (GOS/SPLM) do not survive politically in the medium term, as their base is too weak, they are torn apart by factional in-fighting or they fail to win democratic elections. This need not lead, as some fear, to chaos and anarchy or a resurgence of Islamic fundamentalism, but could open the way to democratisation. This will require a considerable effort, however, since there are hardly any new, genuinely democratic players, while the traditional parties are threatened by splits and are extremely weak politically.
- The best organised and financed still seems to be the Popular Congress Party of Hassan al Turabi, whose members, like its leader, are under considerable pressure in connection with the events in Darfur (arrests, torture charges). This pressure is clearly aimed at weakening the party and seems to have partially succeeded, although it has probably made up for this by forming new alliances. It is unlikely that the government will succeed in the medium term in excluding Turabi and his supporters from attempts to influence the political situation.
- It is also conceivable that the “Africanisation” adumbrated in the case of Darfur will succeed and lead in the long term to the stabilisation of the country. This would mean, by analogy with the South African model, that the black African majority would form the government. In contrast to South Africa, however, there is no sign that the present government would be prepared to clear the way for such a profound change without putting up strong resistance. Furthermore the opposition is not united, but consists of very many different factions, making a peaceful reconstruction of society in this direction appear very unlikely.
- If a radical change of government were to come about in Sudan, we should still remember that members of the present government and the governing party largely control the economy, which would make it difficult for any new government to make a fresh economic and political start.

These hazy and often sombre scenarios need not, however, lead to an inability to act. What is essential to future co-operation is a clear setting of priorities and a co-ordinated approach involving broad co-operation with and the strengthening of SINGOs. A Sudanese we spoke to formulated his vision of the future thus: “We will need another 100 years to enjoy justice, peace and stability. So only our great-grandchildren will benefit. But it will definitely come, as it came to Europe – and we will lay the foundation with everything we do today.” It is against this background that the following recommendations should be seen: project measures may not always bring about an instant all-embracing change for the better, but they can help lay the foundations for one.

IV. APPENDIX

1. Abbreviations

AA	Auswärtiges Amt (= Foreign Office – FO)
AAH	Aktion Afrikahilfe
BEG	Bahr el Ghazal
BfdW	Brot für die Welt (Bread for the World)
BLC	Boma Liberation Council (village level)
BMZ	Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (Ministry for Economic Co-operation and Development)
BYDA	Bahr el Ghazal Youth Association
CA	Christian Aid
CC	Catholic Church
CBO	Civil-Based Organisation
CEAS	Church Ecumenical Action Sudan
CPMT	Civilian Protection Monitoring Team
CRS	Catholic Relief Service
CS	Civil Society
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DCA	Dan Church AID
DUP	Democratic Unionist Party
ECS	Episcopal Church of Sudan
EDF	Equatoria Defence Force
EE	Eastern Equatoria
EED	Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst (Protestant Development Service)
ERADA	Ecumenical Relief and Development Association
EU	European Union
FRRA	Fashoda Relief and Rehabilitation Association (Cello=Shilluk)
GAA/DWH	German Agro Action/Deutsche Welthungerhilfe
GNGOs	Government-related “NGOs”
GOS	Government of Sudan
GOSS	Government of South Sudan
GTZ	Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (Society for Technical Co-operation)
HAC	Humanitarian Aid Commissioner
HR	Human Rights
IC	International Community
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
IPCS	Institute for the Promotion of Civil Society
JAM	Joint Assessment Mission
JEM	Justice and Equality Movement (Darfur)
JMC	Joint Military Command (Nuba Mountains)
JPC	Joint Planning Committee
KAS	Konrad Adenauer Foundation
LCP	Local Capacities for Peace (Do No Harm)
LPI	Life and Peace Institute
LRA	Lord’s Resistance Army
(M)CDP	(Maridi) Community Development Programme
NCA	Norwegian Church Aid
NDA	National Democratic Alliance
NESI	Network of Sudanese Indigenous NGOs
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NIF	National Islamic Front
NLC	National Liberation Council

NM	Nuba Mountains
NS	New Sudan
N-S	North-South
NSCC	New Sudan Council of Churches
NSWF	New Sudan Women's Federation
NSYA	New Sudan Youth Association
PCP	Popular Congress Party
PLC	Payam Liberation Council ("district" level)
OLS	Operation Lifeline Sudan
PP	Popular Party
PPP	People-to-People Peace Process
RASS	Relief Association of South Sudan
RECONCILE	Resource Centre for Civil Leadership
RSD	Right of Self-Determination
SAC	Save the Children
SBN	Southern Blue Nile (Ingessena)
SCC	Sudan Council of Churches
SEF	Sudan Ecumenical Forum
SFA	Sudan Federal Alliance (Darfur)
SFP	Sudan Focal Point
SINGO	Sudanese Indigenous Non-Governmental Organisation
SLA/M	Sudan Liberation Army/Movement (Darfur)
SOAT	Sudanese Association Against Torture
SPLA/M	Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement
SRRA	Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Association
SRRC	Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (composed of SRRA and RASS)
UDSF	United Democratic Southern Forces
UN	Upper Nile, United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAP	Union of Sudan African Parties
VMT	Verification Monitoring Team
WE	Western Ekuatoria
WUN	Western Upper Nile

2. Main topics and interviewees

1. Personal details
2. Organisation and work
3. Peace prospects (IGAD negotiations/RSD)
4. Challenges/ problems/opportunities
5. Potential for conflict
6. Peace potential
7. Role of civil society
8. Role of traditional leaders/conflict resolution mechanisms
9. Role of the international community
10. Safeguards for peace (peacekeeping forces/ DDR/ reconciliation)
11. DED/FES

3. Charts

The conflict system in Sudan

Multi-level (armed) clashes

North-South

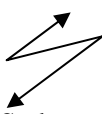
Government troops (GOS), security services and allied militias/groupings



Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement (SPLA/M)

South-South

SPLA/M



Other South Sudanese armed movements/militias,



Various armed groups against each other

North-North

GoS/Janjaweed and other militias



Darfur, (Beja, Southern Blue Nile, Abyei, Nuba Mountains, Kordofan),
armed groups against each other

External interests

Egypt

Libya

Ethiopia

Eritrea

Kenya

Uganda

Chad

Iran

Arab countries

U.S.

EU/member states

China

Canada

Malaysia

Russia

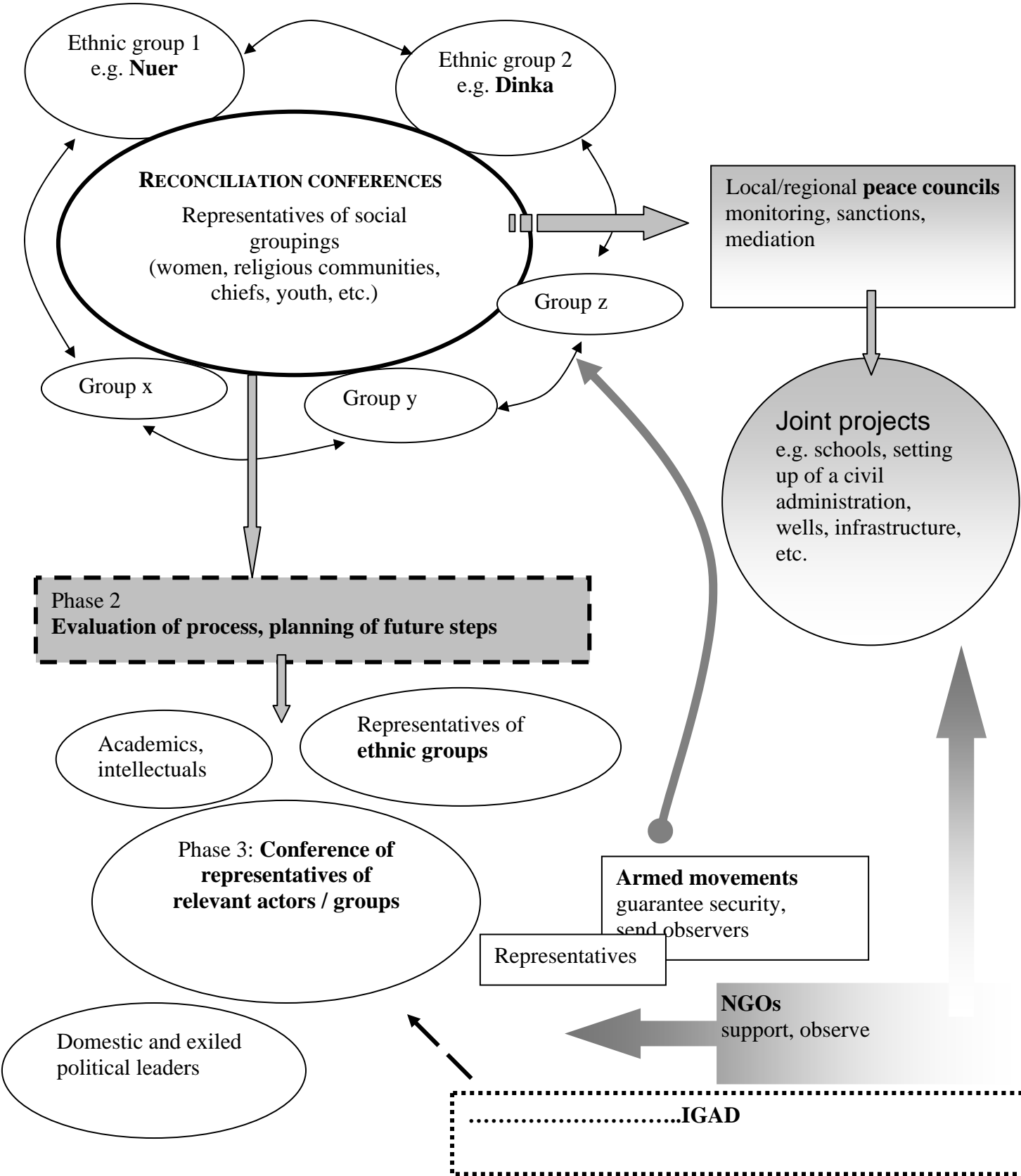
India...



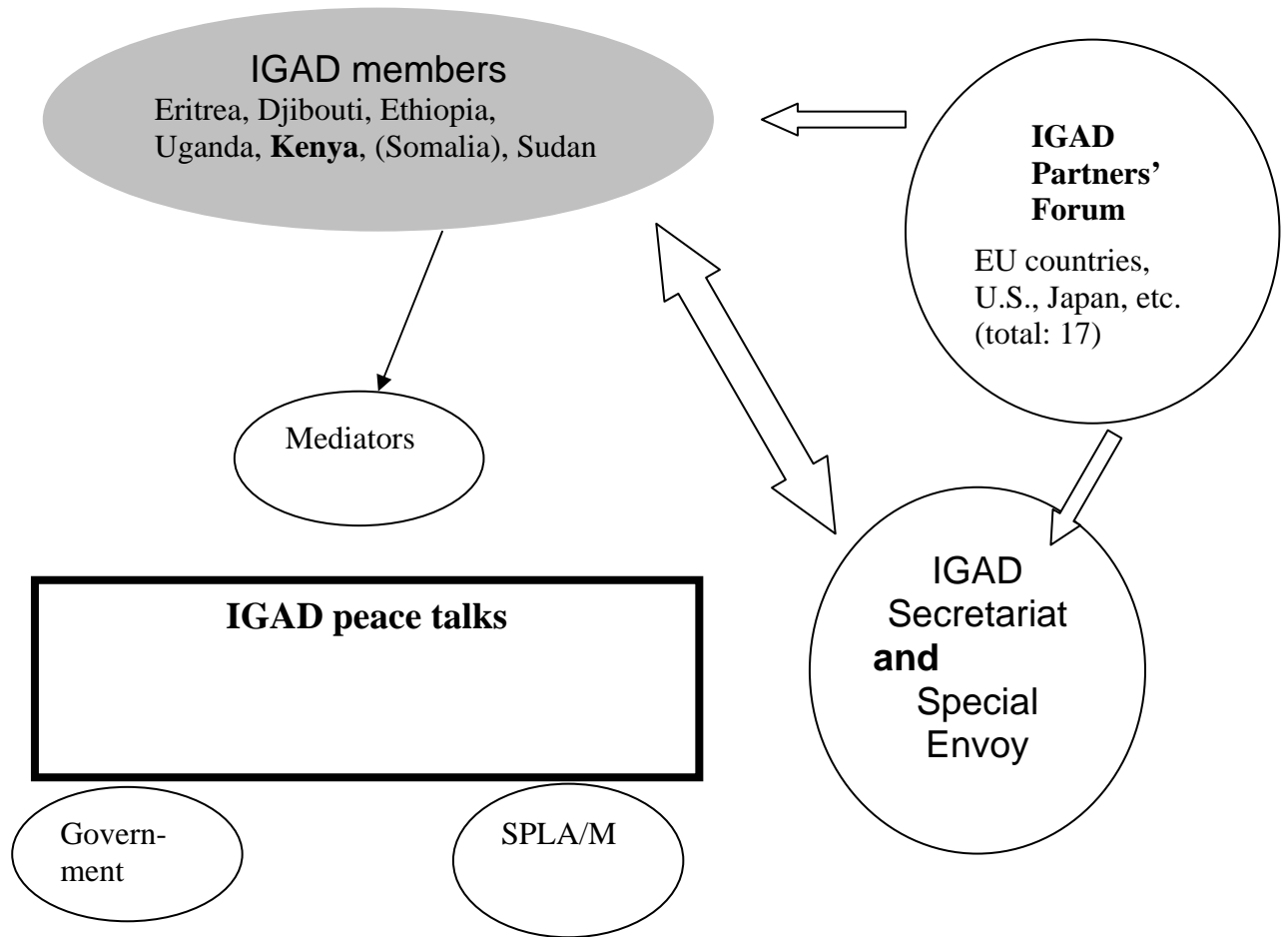
Pressure groups

The “People-to-People Peace Process”/ Entebbe Conferences
Peace and reconciliation process of Sudanese churches

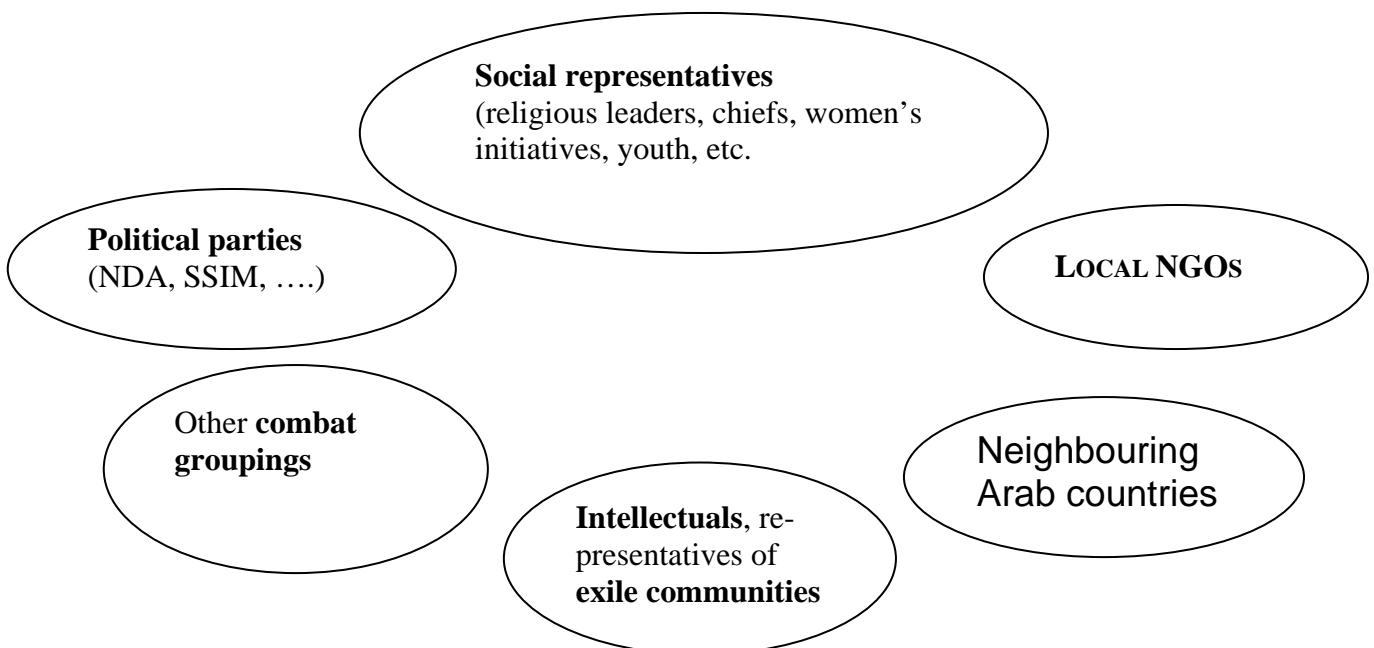
Phase 1: Reconciliation at local level



Peace efforts of the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD)



Groupings not directly involved in the negotiations



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