

The Crises Continue. Sudan's Remaining Conflicts

Johan Brosché

Africa Program

No. 41 - OCTOBER 2011

Abstract

The current conflicts in Sudan consist of different conflict-types, here presented in a theoretical framework of conflict complementarities. The framework consist of four parallel and interlinked conflicts types: communal conflicts, local elite conflicts, center-periphery conflicts, and cross-border conflicts. The structure of conflict complementarities is used to describe the continuing crisis in Darfur, and the emerging crisis in South Kordofan.

The complexities of Sudan's conflict have often been overlooked by outsiders leading to incorrect assessments of the root causes, as well as dynamics of these conflicts. Therefore, this paper makes a call for careful conflict analysis in order to understand the conflicts in Sudan. Although taken place in different areas the root causes of Sudan's conflicts are similar. Poverty and severe marginalization of the peripheries, in combination with bad governance at the center, are the main reasons for conflicts all over the country. Also other areas of Sudan, such as Eastern Sudan and the far North, suffer from these problems. Thus, there is a risk that Sudan's crisis will spread to new areas. For conflicts in Sudan to decline the root causes of the problems need to be tackled.

Decentralization that would decrease the huge differences between the center and the marginalized peripheries would be a step in the right direction. Also, the government's propensity for using militias and divide-and-rule strategies has to stop for a brighter future for Sudan. Finally, a stronger commitment from, and co-ordination by, the international community is needed to deal with the continuing crisis in Sudan.

Johan Brosché is PhD candidate, Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University.

(*) The opinions expressed herein are strictly personal and do not necessarily reflect the position of ISPI.

Introduction

Since 9 July 2011 Sudan is split into two countries – Sudan and South Sudan. Most of the academic and policy interest has, during the last years, concentrated on the South-North relation and the much contested Abyei area. In contrast, this article focuses on the conflicts in what remains of Sudan. The purpose of this article is to grasp some of the core characteristics of the dynamics of these conflicts. Such an approach is possible since, however manifold and multifaceted, the conflicts in Sudan have similar nature and their causes stem from similar problems.

The objective of this article will be fulfilled in two different steps. First, a theoretical framework of conflict complementarities is presented in order to describe the conflicts in Sudan. The second step is an empirical analysis which will first highlight some aspects of Sudan society and political system which important for the understanding of the conflict dynamics, and lastly it will examine the conflicts in the areas of Darfur and South Kordofan using the theoretical framework outlined in section one.

1. Theoretical Framework. Conflict Complementarities

One of the main reasons for the conflicts in Sudan being so protracted and complex is that instead of consisting of one conflict it is a blend of different conflict-types. These conflict-types can be structured in a framework of conflict complementarities. This perspective centers on the complementarity of four different conflict-types: (1) communal conflicts, (2) local-elite conflicts, (3) center-periphery conflicts, and (4) cross-border conflicts¹.

Communal conflicts are conflicts between non-state groups that are organized along a shared communal identity. Such identity often derives from ethnicity but it could also originate from, for example, religion or livelihood. In rural Sudan ethnicity is the most important identity but the communal conflicts in Sudan are often fought over different subsistence resources needed for a particular group's main livelihood. Either farmer fights herders, or different herding communities fight against each other, the second one is the most common in Sudan².

Local-elite conflicts are conflicts between persons that struggle over influence within a region or a community. Such conflicts can be between traditional leaders and young emerging leaders, or between leaders of different rebel factions. In the latter case these conflicts often lead to violence between different rebel groups, or between various factions of the same rebel group.

The third conflict type, center-periphery conflicts, within the Sudanese context, refers to a regional imbalance. All the peripheral areas of Sudan: Darfur, South, East, and far North are politically, economically and culturally marginalized in comparison with the

¹ J. Brosché - D. Rothbart, *Violent Conflict and Peacebuilding: The Continuing Crises in Darfur*, Routledge: London and New York (forthcoming 2012).

² *UCDP Database*, Uppsala University, Department of Peace and Conflict Research, 2011.

center, which consist of Khartoum and its surrounding areas. Such regional inequity fosters frustration and creates a hotbed for rebellion³.

Furthermore, neighboring countries are often involved in the Sudanese conflicts; and this dimension is captured in the cross-border conflict-type. Such conflicts can either involve the direct military involvement of a neighboring state or they can occur in the form of a proxy-war. The proxy-war is more common in Sudan where there exist multiple examples of hostile neighboring states that, instead of fighting each other directly, fight via proxies, i.e. they support rebels in the respective country.

To grasp the complexities that these conflict-types describe and to understand some of the core interdependencies between them, it is essential to comprehend the conflict dynamics at hand. The conflict complementarities allow an understanding of the multifaceted character of the conflicts in Sudan without overlooking the similarities. Furthermore, a lack of understanding of these differing but entangled conflict-types constitutes one of the elements that contribute to make a solution to the Sudanese conflicts so elusive.

2. *Empirical Investigation*

This empirical investigation will start with emphasizing some aspects of Sudan that are essential for prolonging the conflicts in the country. Following, the focus will be on Darfur and South Kordofan, the two most severe remaining conflicts in Sudan.⁴ However, it is also important to emphasize that there exists a clear risk that other areas with potential conflicts might turn into the next hotbeds. The most evident is other regions that borders South Sudan but also two other areas, in particular, should be highlighted – Eastern Sudan and the far North. Both of these areas share several characteristics with other areas where conflicts have turned into large-scale violence; for instance, they are both heavily marginalized and ethnically mixed. In addition, Eastern Sudan has previously experienced internal strife while grievances in the far North have been worsened during the last years by forced displacement after the construction of two dams⁵.

2.1 *Sudan. A Complete State*

Sudan is one of the most heterogeneous countries in the world when it comes to ethnicity, language, and religion. However, this diversity is not reflected in the

³ J. BROSCHE, *Darfur. Dimensions and Dilemmas of a Complex Situation*, Uppsala 2008.

⁴ In September fighting also broke out in Blue Nile – a state that neighbors South Kordofan. This conflict also pit SPLM/A-N against the regime in Khartoum and much dynamics are similar between these two cases. However, as this conflict emerged after the deadline for this paper, a detail examination of the Blue Nile fighting falls outside the scope of this paper.

⁵ ICG, *A Strategy for Comprehensive Peace in Sudan Africa*, 130, 2007, July 26, 2007 p. 5; In Nubia, fears of another Darfur as tensions flare over proposed dams, many fear the northern Sudan territory will be the next region to erupt violence, in «Los Angeles Times», August 31, 2007.

leadership of the country as Sudan is characterized by a persistent domination over the marginalized peripheries. The center is located in the capital Khartoum and the political leadership comes from different elites from an area just north of Khartoum. Although this area comprises less than two percent of the Sudanese population, the elites from this region utterly dominate the political and economic life in Sudan⁶.

The disproportionate accumulation of resources and power in the center leaves the other areas utterly marginalized. Rebellion in Sudan has started in the peripheries and altering the imbalance between the center and marginal areas has become a *raison d'être* of rebellions of the Southerners, of the Darfurians, and to a smaller degree of the Easterners⁷. Potentially, decentralisation of Sudan would decrease the differences between the centre and the peripheral areas and thereby subside one of the root causes for conflict. In addition to political decentralisation, a shift in how the economical resources are distributed could work in favour of peace-enhancing initiatives. At the moment resources are collected in the peripheral areas of the vast country and taken to Khartoum but rarely redistributed back to the remote regions⁸.

The elites at the center do not constitute a solidly unified group but are instead struggling against each other over political and economic influence⁹. However, despite the infighting, outside groups are not let in to gain any substantial influence and the central elites have shown an extreme willingness, as well as ability, to hang on to their powerful position.

For more than two decades the center has been dominated by the regime of Omar el-Bashir who took power through a military coup in 1989 supported by Islamists. Despite pursuing an Islamist agenda, remaining in office seems to be the highest aim of the regime. In fact, Khartoum has continuously supported an Ugandan rebel group, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), and used it as a proxy-force during the war in South Sudan. The LRA is founded on a particular form of Christian fundamentalism – a fact that has not stopped the Islamist regime to use them as an ally.

Racism, i.e. the systematic discrimination of “African” groups, is often indicated as a motivating factor of the government strategies. However, the prime reason for supporting certain groups is instrumental rather than ideological. The government has continuously used landless pastoralists with an “Arab” identity as proxies. These groups are among Sudan's poorest and most marginalized and their aspiration for land has been exploited by the government to recruit militias under the promises of land allocation. However, the promises are repeatedly unmet and when these group are not useful for the government anymore they are abandoned and return to their marginalized position.

Yet, the fact that the government's prime objective is to secure its grip on power is not to say that it is not biased towards “Arabs” against “Africans” or towards Islam against

⁶ K. EL-DIN, *Islam and Islamism in Darfur*, in A. DE WAAL (ed.), *War in Darfur and the Search for Peace (Studies in Global Basket)*, Harvard University, Cambridge 2007.

⁷ *UCDP Database*, Uppsala University, Department of Peace and Conflict Research, 2011.

⁸ A. AZZAIN MOHAMED, *The Comprehensive Peace Agreement and Darfur*, in A. DE WAAL (ed.), *War in Darfur and the...*, cit.

⁹ A. DE WAAL, *Sudan: The Turbulent State*, in A. DE WAAL (ed.), *War in Darfur and the...*, cit.

other religions. Nevertheless, it is not their foremost rationale, a fact important to keep in mind when analyzing the regime in Khartoum.

2.2 *The case of Darfur*

Darfur is the westernmost region of Sudan and has an estimated population of six million. The current phase of conflict in Darfur started in 2003 when the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) took up arms against the government. However, communal conflicts had been ongoing in Darfur for a long time prior to these rebellions. In addition, Darfurian discontent with the regime in Khartoum had also existed for a long time. In 2003 the conflicts between different ethnic groups and the dissatisfaction with the government combined into a rebellion.

The stereotypical perception of the conflict in Darfur understands it as a struggle of the marginalised “African” rebels taking up weapons against the government in Khartoum due to marginalisation. The government responded by arming an “Arab” militias, which perpetrated a genocide of the “Africans” in Darfur. Even though this explanation is correct to some extent, the nature of the conflict is much more complex than it first appears. For instance the African/Arab contraposition is a gross simplification: there are numerous ethnic groups on each side of that divide. Also, being an “Arab” or an “African” is more an issue of identity than ethnicity. The lines between who is an “African” and who is an “Arab” are somewhat fluid and these identities can, for instance, be transformed if one changes lifestyle, or marries a person from a different ethnic group. However problematic, the “Arab” and “African” distinction will somewhat be used in this article, since the dichotomy does have some explanatory value and is heavily used by the Darfurians themselves.

As mentioned above, the first conflict-type in the continuing crisis in Darfur is communal conflicts. Conflicts between different ethnic groups have been historically part of Darfurian society. Disputes over grazing land, access to water, local politics, and administrative boundaries are the main causes for such conflicts. In 1970s and 1980s the severity of these conflicts increased as a result of environmental degradation; a problem that was further aggravated by government neglect of the region. Moreover, migration from Chad increased the population, putting further pressure on already scarce land resources¹⁰.

Historically, most communal conflicts pit “Arabs” against “Africans”. However, during the last years, inter-Arab fighting has been more common. The main reason for this is land. Access to land is a constant conflict trigger in Darfur and many communities willingness to take part in the government’s counter-insurgency can be explained by this desire. During the first years after the rebellion extensive areas inhabited by

¹⁰ Abdul-Jalil Musa Adam, Associate Professor, Head of Department of Sociology & Social Anthropology, University of Khartoum, interviewed December 8, 2007.

“Africans” were ethnically cleansed. When the land was abandoned various “Arab” groups often fought each other for control of the area.

The second conflict-type, conflicts between different local elites, has had devastating effects for the Darfuran crisis. The gravest examples of this conflict-type are conflicts between different rebel leaders. Initially there existed two groups during the Darfur uprising but soon SLM/A split in two factions. Later further fragmentation took place leading to the proliferation of dozens of movements. The foremost explanation behind these splits is that many individuals want to be the leader of the resistance movements. As various rebel factions fought each other this conflict-type led to large-scale human sufferings and the large number of rebel groups obstructed fruitful negotiations between the government and resistance movements as much effort was needed to be spent on trying to unite the rebel groups. Now, successful unification processes have somewhat lowered the number of rebel groups again.

The third conflict-type that marks down the Darfur crisis is centre-periphery conflicts. Darfur is severely marginalised in comparison to the centre. The importance of the centre-periphery dimension is clear in the political manifesto of the resistance movements. Core aspect of the JEM political program are the guarantee of the regions right in ruling the country, a balanced economic and human development whilst the SLM/A is fighting for a secular Sudan with a decentralised form of governance¹¹.

The roots of SLM/A are based in a local Darfuran context and the movement originates from self-defence groups primarily formed by the Fur, Zaghawa, and Masalit communities. SLM/A chairman Abdul Wahid is from the Fur community and he strengthened the self-defence forces among the Fur with the stated aim of being able to fend off attacks from “Arab” militias. However, the group also secretly intended to attack the Sudanese government as they saw them as the root of their problem.

Simultaneously the position of the Zaghawa was about to change as they shifted focus from local communal clashes to view the government as their main enemy. Continuously they had clashed with groups like Awlad Zeid “Arab” nomads but during the 1990s it became more and more apparent that the regime in Khartoum was supporting these “Arab” attacks against the Zaghawa in Darfur. This government bias towards their enemies led the Zaghawa to mobilise to fend off “Arab” attacks but progressively (similar to the Fur) they started to see the regime in Khartoum as their main enemy¹². Thus, the fact that the government sided with one part in a communal conflict triggered Zaghawa discontent with the government. This shows a clear link between communal conflicts and centre-periphery conflicts.

At the same time the Masalit, a third major non-Arab ethnic group in Darfur, had also organised self-defence movements against “Arab” attackers. Together these three groups constituted the main parts of the SLM/A. However, there was also some “Arab” involvement in the formation of the movement.

The roots of JEM are very different from those of the SLM/A. The JEM traces its roots to the mid-1990s, when some disillusioned officials within the Sudanese government,

¹¹ UCDP Database, cit.

¹² J. FLINT, *Darfur's armed Movements*, in A. DE WAAL (ed.), *War in Darfur and the...*, cit.

formed a secret group composed of people from different regions of the country. This group collected information about socio-economic inequalities in Sudan and investigated the regional political power imbalances in the country. In 1999, a conflict between Sudan's military ruler Omar el-Bashir and the Islamist Hassan al-Turabi led to a split in the regime in Khartoum. Allegedly, JEM was founded by Turabi and the Darfur conflict has by some been described as a conflict between el-Bashir and Turabi.¹³ In May 2000, a book called the Black Book was distributed in Khartoum. It concluded that all political and economic power since independence had been in the hands of small elites from the centre and in 2001 the group announced its name JEM¹⁴.

The fourth conflict-type is cross-border conflicts. As well as having a very local dimension in terms of communal conflicts, the Darfur crisis also has an important regional dimension and lack of understanding regional linkages is a major reason for the failure of different peace initiatives in Darfur¹⁵. Historically the Chad-Darfur linkages have been close, the border between Darfur and Chad was artificially created, and many communities live on both side of the border.

In 1990 Idriss Déby took power in Chad when he ousted the sitting president Hissène Habré. This was done with the support of the Sudanese government and the relation between the two governments was good throughout the 1990s. At the start of the Darfurian rebellion Chad supported the Sudanese government against the rebels. However, Déby, and a lot of high-level commanders in the Chadian army, are from the Zaghawa ethnic group. The Alliance with the Sudanese government was heavily disapproved by many Chadian officers as they were ethnic-kin of the rebels. As a result, the officer gave Déby an ultimatum, threatening to topple the regime if the connivance with the Sudanese government continued. Perceiving the internal threat as larger than the external (making Khartoum to an enemy) Déby complied with the officers' demands and started to support the rebels instead. This led to a full-fledge proxy-war between Chad and Sudan as Chad supported rebels in Darfur (primarily JEM) and Sudan responded by supporting various Chadian rebel groups.

The two most high-profile events in this proxy-war took place during the spring of 2008. First, Chadian rebels equipped by Sudan attack the Chadian capital N'Djamena and were close to oust Déby before an internal power-struggles ended their advance. Later, in spring, Déby retaliated by arming JEM forces, who carried out an attack on Omdurman (twin city of Khartoum). This attack did not succeed in ousting the sitting president but shocked Sudan as it was the first time after years of intermitting internal conflict that the fighting came close to the capital.

The relation between Khartoum and N'djamena improved in 2010. After several failed attempts to oust Déby, Khartoum preferred to improve relation with him and thereby convince him to ease his support to the Darfurian rebels. Déby responded positively to this in order to get rid of the Sudanese support to Chadian rebels that had almost ousted him two years earlier. Khartoum was under great pressure at the time: National elections were due in 2010 and the referendum on the independence of South Sudan

¹³ Sudanese Academic, interviewed 8 December 2007, Khartoum

¹⁴ J. FLINT, *Darfur's armed Movements*, cit.

¹⁵ A. HAGGAR, *The Origins and Organization of the Janjawiid in Darfur*, in A. DE WAAL (ed.), *War in Darfur and the...*, cit.

was going to be held in January 2011. Therefore, the timing of the accord with Déby was influenced by the need of the Sudanese government to ease the pressure. At the time of writing (August 2011) the relation between the two neighbors remains fairly good. Yet, given their hostile history a shift in policy can come quickly if any of the two actors deems a more aggressive stance as more rewarding.

Another important regional actor for the Darfur crisis is Libya. In the 1970s and 1980s the main focus of the Libyan foreign policy was Arabization, as Colonel Muammar Kaddafi developed a strategy to extend Arab influence to large parts of Africa. Libya supported some Arab groups, such as the Islamic League and Arab Gathering in Darfur¹⁶. In the early 1990s Libya adopted a new profile with less expansionist ambitions. Nevertheless, Libya wanted to position itself as a major player in the region and used the crisis in Darfur and Chad to influence major events in Africa¹⁷. One way in exert its influence was to support the SLM/A and JEM with weapons, training and funding for their military campaign against the Khartoum regime¹⁸. However, rather than seeking to influence the outcome in the conflict, Libya sought to reassert itself as an indispensable broker in the struggle in Sudan¹⁹. This support by Kaddafi's is an important reason for why Sudan has chosen to support the opponents to Kaddafi during the Libyan civil war in 2011.

Also, Egypt and Eritrea have been involved in the Darfur crisis. Egypt has supported the government during the crisis, attracting the hostility of the resistance movements. At the same time, Eritrea supported the rebels between 2003 and 2006 to retaliate against the support given to Eritrean rebels by Khartoum. Thus, Sudan and Eritrea was at that time involved in a cross-border conflict in which the two governments used rebels as proxies in order to decrease the power of their adversary.

The most recent cross-border dimension of the Darfur crisis is the one between Sudan and South Sudan. Sudan has accused South Sudan of supporting Darfurian rebels and, during a battle between JEM and the government in November 2010, elements of JEM fled southwards across the border to South Sudan where they were bombed by the government. At the same time, South Sudan accuses Khartoum of supporting rebels in South Sudan so the two countries are allegedly involved in a proxy-war by providing support to their respective rebels.

2.3 *The special status of South Kordofan*²⁰

Located just north of the South Sudan/Sudan border South Kordofan is in a precarious situation. The region was at the forefront during the South-North war and is now of

¹⁶ A. DE WAAL - J. FLINT, *Darfur - a New History of a Long War*, International African Institute, the Royal African Society & Social Science Research Council, London/New York 2008.

¹⁷ R. MARCHAL, *The Unseen Regional Implications of the Crises in Darfur* in A. DE WAAL (ed.), *War in Darfur and the...*, cit.

¹⁸ *UCDP Database*, cit.

¹⁹ R. MARCHAL, *The Unseen Regional...*, cit.

²⁰ This section will not focus on the Abyei problems as they are dealt with at other places in this series.

highest importance for south-north relation as well as for the development in Sudan. The current conflict in the region causes huge human suffering. If the (warring) parties in South Kordofan fail to reach an agreement and violence escalate the conflict could spill undermining the peace between North and South and re-igniting war.

One of the most contested areas in South Kordofan are the Nuba Mountains and during the war the region was one of the worst affected (up to genocide according to some human rights organizations), especially after the government called for Jihad in the Nuba Mountains in 1992²¹. Within the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) South Kordofan was given a special position with limited autonomy and it was decided that popular consultation should be held at the local level to see how they wanted the state to be governed in the future.

South Kordofan is a diversified region when it comes to ethnicity, religion, language, and main livelihood. The two main ethnic groups are Nubas and “Arabs” but both these groups do not consist of homogeneous entities but are much diversified. The Nuba is “indigenous African” and mostly sedentary. The group comprises different peoples that share a common history of oppression by the regime in Khartoum but are characterized by differences in language, faith or ethnicity. Being culturally indigenous and “African” many Nuba feel culturally closer to the Southerners despite living in the North. Historically the area has also been inhabited by “Arabs” with pastoralism as their main livelihood. The two largest “Arab” tribes are Misseriya and Hawazama; however, there also exist several others²².

As in Darfur, communal conflicts constitute an integral part of the conflict dynamics in South Kordofan. Such communal conflicts pit Nuba against “Arabs” as well as different sub-sections of these two broad categories against each other. Prime causes for these conflicts are land-disputes, water resources, and cattle, but sometimes they are also caused by higher political goals such as elections. The most important issue for communal conflicts in the area is land. The land is important for livelihood but also for identity and the dynamic follows a sons-of-the-soil logic: the Nuba see themselves as the true owners of the land whilst the “Arabs” argue that they have the right to the land as they have lived there for hundreds of years²³.

Likewise, conflicts between local elites are important for understanding the conflict in South Kordofan. During the war many Nuba fought alongside the SPLM/A but now they feel betrayed by the SPLM/A leadership as they think that they are just focusing on independence and neglecting the Nuba. Division between SPLM/A and its northern sector was apparent during CPA negotiations and deepened after the death of John Garang. During the CPA interim period (2005-2011) this division deepened as Juba did

²¹ J. COPNALL, *Sudan: Could Nuba mountains be next conflict?*, in «BBC News (Africa)», May 10, 2011.

²² ICG (2008). Sudan's Southern Kordofan Problem: The Next Darfur?, in «Africa Report», 145, October 21, 2008, <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/africa/horn-of-africa/sudan/145-sudans-southern-kordofan-problem-the-next-darfur.aspx>; in «Ahrām online» (2011), *Elections in South Kordofan may spark revolution in Sudan*, May 9, 2011, <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/2/8/11700/World/Region/Elections-in-South-Kordofan-may-spark-revolution-i.aspx>.

²³ Sons of the soil conflicts are one root cause to many conflicts globally. For more information see J.D. FEARON - D.D. LAITIN, *Sons of the Soil, Migrants, and Civil War*, in «World Development», 39, 2, February 2011, pp. 199-211.

not want to risk their independence by concentrating on issues north of the border. Therefore, the SPLM (North) split with the main SPLM/A as a result of internal disagreements within the SPLM/A between leaders from the South and from the North over political priorities.

In addition, quarrelling local elites are often divided among themselves, further localizing the conflict. For instance, the Nuba are divided between those supporting the SPLM/A and others who started their own movements. Within the Misseriya community there exist severe conflicts between youth leaders and traditional leaders. Among the youth, many deem the traditional leaders illegitimate as they accuse them of having been co-opted by the government and of being out of contact with the grievances of the young and of local communities.

Furthermore, South Kordofan is a much marginalized region and it has witnessed many conflicts where rebels aspired to alleviate this marginalization that follows from this uneven center-periphery relationship. During the war these grievances led the Nuba to fight on the side of the SPLM/A. In 2002 a local ceasefire over the Nuba Mountains was signed between the government and the SPLM/A. Later the ceasefire was formalized in the CPA and the following years were generally characterized by peace despite many small communal clashes, and a few small-scale insurgencies.

In May 2011 tensions increased in South Kordofan due to a contested state election. The election was won by the National Congress Party (NCP) and Ahmed Haroun became governor. Haroun's victory worried the international community as he is accused of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Darfur and he is wanted by the International Criminal Court. The result of the election was not accepted by the main opposition party SPLM-N.

Later tensions between NCP and SPLM-N were aggravated by the two parties having different views on the security arrangements in the state and when the government tried to disarm SPLM/A element of the Joint Integrated Units (JIUs)²⁴ fighting broke out on 5 June 2011. A few days later the SPLM-N proclaimed the political agenda to topple the Bashir government and asked other groups to join them²⁵. Readdressing the center-periphery relation was at heart of this agenda and SPLM-N "seeks to change the policies of the center in Khartoum and to build a new center for the benefit of all Sudanese people regardless of their religion, gender or ethnic background"²⁶. The fighting continued during the summer of 2011 and gross human rights atrocities were reported. Bombing of civilians, indiscriminate shelling, and summary executions against Nuba people are examples of the atrocities committed by the government²⁷.

²⁴ JIU is an institution created by the CPA and these units consist of soldiers from both SPLM/A and the government of Sudan.

²⁵ In «AllAfrica», *South Kordofan's former deputy governor calls for toppling Bashir's regime*, June 9, 2011, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201106100785.html>.

²⁶ In «SudanTribune», *Sudan's SPLM leaders meet in South Kordofan, call for third-party talks*, July 23, 2011, <http://www.sudantribune.com/Sudan-s-SPLM-leaders-meet-in-South,39609>.

²⁷ S. MARTELLI, in «AFP», *Possible war crimes in Sudan's SKordofan: UN report*, July 15, 2011, <http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5gJ0vkt39er4EXX8IEPMY3meFDs7A?docId=CNG.887f499000e6a91584af43f31977bd2a.21>.

In mid-July the crises in South Kordofan and Darfur became more interlinked as JEM said that it had been fighting alongside the SPLM/A-N in South Kordofan and a few weeks later the two movements announced that they should work together to topple the regime of Omar el-Bashir. Thus, the continuing crisis in the remaining Sudan does not just have similar core causes, and follows similar dynamics; they are also starting to be increasingly intertwined.

Located close to the world's newest border South Kordofan also have a clear cross-border dimension. South Sudanese officials have expressed that they see negligence and racial marginalization as root causes for the South Kordofan crisis. Furthermore, they have called the attempt by Khartoum to disarm SPLM-N a break against the CPA and called for international intervention within the crisis. Such position is understandable as SPLM-N is their former brothers in arms and is fighting for similar reasons as they previously fought for.

However, currently there are no confirmed reports of South Sudan supporting SPLM-N with weapons or training. Previously, independence was the main concern for South Sudan and now that this has been achieved they do not seem to want to risk anything in order to become too involved in issues north of the border. The government of South Sudan faces extreme problems and challenges at the moment with for instance internal rebellion, demarcating border, and fixing an oil-deal with Sudan. Thus, South Kordofan is not their main concern at the moment. However, this could quickly change if they deem a more active role in that area necessary for their interest. If so, the conflict in South Kordofan runs the risk of igniting a return to full-fledge war between the two Sudans.

3. *Conclusions*

This article highlights the crisis in Sudan after the secession of South Sudan. The conflicts are currently several and severe. Still, there is risk for even more areas of the country turning into violent conflict. Although they take place in various local contexts, all the conflicts share a similar structure of conflict complementarities. A careful conflict analysis of each of the conflicts area shows that the conflicts consist of a combination of four different conflict-types: communal conflicts, local elite conflicts, center-periphery conflicts, and cross-border conflicts.

To thoroughly understand, these dynamics are necessary for any concerned policy-makers failing to do so can have tragic consequences. An example of this is the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) in which the international community clearly misread the situation and instead of leading to peace, the DPA worsened the crisis. Also, when it comes to core causes of conflict the different areas resemble one another. Poverty and severe marginalization of the peripheries, in combination with bad governance at the center, are the main reasons for conflicts all over the country. The root of the bad governance is the extreme measures that the government is willing to take in order to remain in power. For instance its propensity to divide-and-rule strategy and use of militias has multiplied the suffering for the population of Sudan.

The challenges facing the international community are many and complicated. This far the international community has shown a clear lack of ability to deal with the different regions of Sudan simultaneously. However, for finding a long-lasting solution to Sudan's problem it is a necessity to have a comprehensive approach to Sudan and deal with the various crises in tandem. The earlier lack of a comprehensive approach has led to those problems not having been dealt with appropriately. As the conflicts in Sudan take place at many levels simultaneously, the peace efforts should also try to adopt a multilevel, coordinated, approach. The signing of the CPA is the incident where the international community has played the most constructive role during its peace endeavor in Sudan. This achievement was enabled by a strong combined commitment from regional as well as international actors²⁸. Consequently, a stronger commitment from, and co-ordination by, the international community is needed to deal with the multifaceted challenges of the current situation in Sudan.

Le pubblicazioni online dell'ISPI sono realizzate anche grazie al sostegno della Fondazione Cariplo.

**ISPI
Palazzo Clerici
Via Clerici, 5
I - 20121 Milano
www.ispionline.it**

© ISPI 2011

²⁸ For a deeper analysis of the CPA and lessons learned see J. Brosché, *Sharing Power. Enabling Peace? Evaluating Sudan's Comprehensive Peace Agreement*, New York City & Uppsala 2009.