

# **INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE**

*January 24, 2007*



## ***Sudan: The Challenges Of Peace***

While the conflict in Sudan's western region of Darfur continues to rage, there are more hopeful signs for peace in the South and East of the country after the signing of two landmark peace agreements.

The first of these, the 'Comprehensive Peace Agreement' (CPA), was signed on 9 January 2005 between the Government of Sudan and the southern-based Sudan People's Liberation Movement, formally ending one of Africa's longest and bloodiest conflicts in which more than 2 million people are estimated to have died.

Meanwhile, the 'East Sudan Peace Agreement', signed in October 2006 between the Government of Sudan and the East Sudan Front, marks the end of a low-level insurgency that has simmered since the early 1990s.

Both of these agreements offer some hope that peace, security and long-term development may come to some of Sudan's poorest and most troubled regions. However, plenty of challenges remain before these goals can be achieved. The implementation of the CPA has slipped heavily behind schedule.

Plans for millions to return home to the South are in doubt because many of the areas of return lack even the most basic health and education facilities. With political negotiations and the demobilization of armed groups proceeding fitfully, tensions continue to be felt throughout the country.

A third agreement, the 'Darfur Peace Agreement' (DPA), was signed between the Government of Sudan and one of the rebel factions in May 2006. To date however, the DPA has not led to reduced levels of violence and displacement in Darfur.

### **A Fragile Opening for Peace**

Under the CPA, the Government of Sudan has been replaced by a 'Government of National Unity', which includes the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) as well as a small number of other parties. During a 6-year interim period, the ten states of Southern Sudan are being governed by a 'Government

of South Sudan' as a semi-autonomous region within the State of Sudan. At the end of this period, there will be an internationally-monitored referendum in the South to vote on whether to secede. The CPA also includes separate provisions for the three so-called 'transition areas' of Blue Nile, South Kordofan and Abyei.

A UN mission (UNMIS – UN Mission in Sudan) has been deployed to monitor and support the implementation of the CPA and the ceasefire. So far, implementation has been behind schedule, with limited progress on demarcating the border between the North and the South, integrating the SPLM into the national civil service, disarming militias or agreeing a transparent mechanism for sharing Sudan's rapidly expanding oil revenues. Lack of progress in the transition areas is especially worrying.

Towards the end of 2006, there was a significant flare-up of tensions in the South, with open fighting breaking out in the town of Malakal between the SPLA and forces aligned to Khartoum, causing more than 150 fatalities and over 400 injuries. Information about the agreement has not been disseminated widely and many ordinary Sudanese are still ignorant of the details. Meanwhile, the international community is less engaged on the peace process and is not actively holding the parties to the agreement to account.

The Government of South Sudan is focusing on setting up the institutions and governance mechanisms needed to run a war-torn area larger than France and Germany combined. An embryonic legal system is still being developed, there is no functioning police force and the government struggles to provide even the most basic services in the South.

Very high numbers of qualified staff are needed to fill the many new positions at the central, state and local levels, as well to support the South's participation in the Government of National Unity in Khartoum, including its international aspects. This is an enormous challenge after so many years of conflict and with so many people displaced.

In the East, local groups have been promised greater political representation, along with millions of dollars in development aid. The first hurdle is the integration of former combatants into the Sudanese Armed Forces and the demobilization of those who are not willing to join the regular army.

### **Poor Security**

As demonstrated by the earlier fighting in Malakal, the security situation in the South remains fragile and a cause for concern. Inter- and intra-tribal tension, land and water disputes, cattle looting, abundance of arms, fights between settlers and nomads, widespread youth unemployment, corruption, crime, lack of discipline amongst unpaid soldiers, and the continuing presence of irregular armed groups all contribute to a volatile environment in which civilians are often

targeted. The disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process is advancing in a very piecemeal fashion, with progress in some areas but little movement overall.

Insecurity in the South has also been attributed to Uganda's rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), although recent peace negotiations between the LRA and the Government of Uganda provide some hope (click here for more information: <http://www.theirc.org/news/conflict-in-northern-uganda.html> )

### **Threats to Returnees and Reintegration**

Sudan has one of the largest populations of displaced people in the world, with millions of Sudanese either internally displaced or living as refugees in neighboring countries. With the signing of the CPA, many of these people are now thinking about returning home. For those who choose to return, they encounter threats such as forced relocation, roadside 'taxes', banditry, and landmines along some transit routes.

Once they arrive in their home areas, people face challenges such as lack of basic services, restricted access to land, and ongoing insecurity. Many families are splitting up with children staying behind to go to school while one or both of their parents try to establish a new life in their place of origin. Tensions also arise as returnees place strains on the limited resources of fragile communities. Safe and dignified returns will only happen if the conditions in receiving communities are conducive.

### **The Challenges of Development**

Sudan has some of the worst human development indicators in the world. In the South, the average life expectancy is estimated at 42 years old and infant mortality is 150 deaths per 1,000 births. The combination of war and drought has contributed to high levels of malnutrition in parts of the South, the East, and other marginalized areas.

Local services and infrastructure have been largely destroyed or paralyzed in many parts, especially in the South, and even in the North they are often rundown and poorly functioning. All sectors are hampered by a severe lack of trained staff. Much greater investment is needed throughout the country in order to address these issues.

### **Restriction of Civil Society**

Civil society remains under pressure in Sudan, especially in the North where freedom of movement and association, particularly for national organizations, is increasingly restricted. International organizations also face restrictions and

bureaucratic impediments to their work. Given the enormous needs in Sudan, it is essential that humanitarian space and access are guaranteed.

### **Slow Funding and Inadequate Consultation**

While considerable sums have been pledged by international donors to support post-conflict development in the South, many of these pledges are yet to materialize. In particular, the Multi-Donor Trust Fund mechanism that was established as a way of pooling aid across the country has been desperately slow in getting started. Meanwhile humanitarian funding is being scaled back, potentially leaving a sizeable funding gap just at the point where aid is most needed. There has also been far too little consultation with civil society about the most pressing needs in Sudan.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The International Rescue Committee urges international donors and the international community to:

- Take a Comprehensive Approach to Peace in Sudan. The international Community needs to devote resources to monitoring the progress of all three peace agreements, holding the signatories to account, ensuring that the agreements are widely understood, and staying alert to warning signs of renewed tension or conflict.
- Support Safe Voluntary Return. All returnees to the South must be enabled to return voluntarily, in dignity and safety, with the rights of displaced people and local populations being respected and protected. Planning and coordination must be efficient and transparent, with prospective returnees fully informed of the process and of what to expect in areas of return. Extensive monitoring of the transit process itself, of the conditions to which people return and of the impact of return on communities is also essential.
- Deliver on Funding Pledges and Benchmark Aid. Donor funding and the removal of sanctions for the North must be linked to implementation of the CPA and progress on Darfur. Financial support and technical expertise should be targeted in support of the various commissions set up to implement the CPA. To mitigate potential conflict and ensure equitable allocation of resources, donors should consult with civil society. Aid should be community-based and particularly target livelihoods, provision of basic services, and fostering of conditions conducive to return.
- Defend Civil Society. The Sudanese authorities, both North and South, must be encouraged to ensure that space for civil society is protected, that non-governmental organizations are not subject to undue restrictions and that humanitarian access is guaranteed.

- Help Build Sudanese Capacity. The building the capacity of the Government of South Sudan will be essential for providing basic social services and promoting grassroots participation in local recovery and reconstruction activities.

The International Rescue Committee urges the Government of National Unity to:

- Implement the Peace Agreements in Good Faith. Greater efforts are required to support the Boundary Commission, the Civil Service Commission, the Petroleum Commission, and the demobilization and integration of military forces.
- Promote the Rule of Law. The government in both the North and the South must reform and strengthen legal institutions to create an environment that protects human rights, enables human security, and supports voluntary return and sustainable reintegration.
- Promote Transparency. The peace protocols need to be translated and shared with all communities. Actions and timelines in the protocols need to be widely understood and supported by Sudanese society.
- Support Reconciliation and Justice. Agreement has to be reached on reconciliation at the community and government levels. Grassroots peace processes should be supported throughout Sudan, including a South-South dialogue.
- Guarantee Freedom of Movement and Association for Civil Society. Restrictions on National and International Non-Governmental Organizations must be reduced. Civil society in Sudan needs to be fostered, consulted and supported.

The International Rescue Committee calls on UNMIS to:

- Respond Swiftly to Insecurity and Effectively Protect Civilians. UNMIS needs to increase its patrols and should be deployed more flexibly, for example to conflict hotspots in the South.
- Ensure Returns are Safe, Voluntary and Informed. Particular attention must be paid to the protection needs of vulnerable returnees at all stages of return.
- Consult and Coordinate with NGOs. Service needs should be determined in consultation with civil society to ensure that any 'humanitarian support' by the military arm of the mission does not have negative effects.

To learn more about the work that IRC is doing in providing vital services to affected populations in Sudan, please [click here](http://www.theirc.org/where/the_irc_in_sudan.html)  
[http://www.theirc.org/where/the\\_irc\\_in\\_sudan.html](http://www.theirc.org/where/the_irc_in_sudan.html)