

**DIVISIONS IN SUDAN'S RULING PARTY AND THE THREAT  
TO THE COUNTRY'S FUTURE STABILITY**

Africa Report N°174 – 4 May 2011

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## **DIVISIONS IN SUDAN'S RULING PARTY AND THE THREAT TO THE COUNTRY'S FUTURE STABILITY**

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

When the South officially secedes, on 9 July 2011, the North's problems will change little. The National Congress Party (NCP) has not addressed the root causes of Sudan's chronic conflicts and has exacerbated ethnic and regional divisions. Facing multiple security, political, social and economic challenges, it is deeply divided over the way forward. Its security hardliners see these as minor issues, not imminent threats to their survival, and remain committed to a military solution to chronic instability. Others call for internal party reform – a “second republic” – to address the NCP's problems but are giving little thought to resolving those of the country. The party has mobilised its security apparatus to suppress any revolts, has decided to end the debate about Sudan's diversity and identity, remains committed to an Arab-Islamic identity for all Sudanese and keeping Sharia and is ready to subdivide key states to accommodate political barons. These are ad-hoc decisions that set the stage for continued violence that may not be containable and could lead to further fragmentation of the country.

Power is now increasingly centralised in a small clique around President Bashir. However, this centralisation is not reflected in the armed forces. Concerned about a possible coup, he and close associates have fragmented the security services and have come to rely increasingly on personal loyalty and tribal allegiances to remain in power. Meanwhile, their party has been allowed to flounder, having long ago lost its strategic vision and policy coherence. Deeply divided and more concerned with staying in power, the leadership more often reacts to events rather than implements a well-thought-out national program. This is best illustrated by the protracted, very public dispute between Nafie Ali Nafie (NCP deputy chairman for organisational affairs and presidential adviser) and Ali Osman Taha (second vice president of Sudan) and the wildly diverging statements made by party leaders in the run-up to the South's self-determination referendum. The recent dismissal from his posts of the formerly powerful Salah Gosh reflects divisions within the NCP that have the potential to lead to the party's collapse or a coup.

Bashir, Nafie and the security hardliners have concluded that the opposition parties are very weak and reject their call for a more inclusive constitutional conference to draft a permanent constitution after the South secedes in July. They think they have the situation in Darfur under control and discount the possibility of conflict in the transitional areas of Southern Kordofan and the Blue Nile, believing that those regions are divided, and their military forces are not an imminent threat to Khartoum now that the South is focused on other issues. They continue to pursue divide and rule tactics to prevent the emergence of a unified counterweight to NCP dominance of the centre. Taha and more pragmatic allies are willing to negotiate with other political forces but are undermined by the security hardliners. They also seemingly remain committed to the party's goal of imposing an Arab-Islamic identity on all of what remains of Sudan – an extremely divisive issue in a country that still includes hundreds of ethnic and linguistic groups.

In the absence of accountability, the leadership enjoys absolute freedom and has institutionalised corruption to its benefit, in the process rewarding political barons who can deliver their constituencies by giving them lucrative government positions to maintain their loyalty. The governors of each state run their own patronage network within their respective regions.

Despite the seemingly successful conclusion of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), the accord has failed to resolve the issues that drive chronic conflict in Sudan. It was intended to lead to the “democratic transformation” of the country. However, during its six year interim period (to end formally in July), the NCP resisted meaningful implementation of many provisions, because they would seriously threaten its grip on power. The opportunity to maintain Sudan's unity and to establish a stable, democratic state was lost. Not surprisingly, Southerners chose separation when they voted in January 2011.

The remainder of the country thus remains saddled with the “Sudan Problem”, where power, resources and development continue to be overly concentrated in the centre,

at the expense of and to the exasperation of the peripheries. A “new south” is emerging in the hitherto transitional areas of Abyei, Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile that – along with Darfur, the East and other marginal areas – continues to chafe under the domination of the NCP. Unless their grievances are addressed by a more inclusive government, Sudan risks more violence and disintegration.

The call by the opposition parties for a wider constitutional review conference suggests a way forward. Such a conference should be seen as a more extensive national consultative process, to accommodate the popular consultations in the transitional areas and the Darfur people-to-people dialogue. Those latter two processes, if run separately, will not lead to political stability and lasting peace in the whole country. The cardinal issue of governance must be addressed nationally. To encourage this, a united international community, particularly the African Union (AU), Arab League and the UN, should put pressure on the NCP to accept a free and unhindered national dialogue to create a national stabilisation program that includes defined principles for establishing an inclusive constitutional arrangement accepted by all.

**Khartoum/Nairobi/Brussels, 4 May 2011**

## DIVISIONS IN SUDAN'S RULING PARTY AND THE THREAT TO THE COUNTRY'S FUTURE STABILITY

### I. INTRODUCTION

The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), designed to give Sudanese unity one more chance, failed in that important aspect when Southerners overwhelmingly chose independence in their January 2011 referendum. Sudanese are just starting to comprehend the consequences of the separation; their search for lasting peace and stability continues. This report is about some of the key challenges to what remains of Sudan.

In Sudan the cardinal problem has always been governance. For the past two decades, that has meant the rule of the National Islamic Front (NIF) and its successor, the National Congress Party (NCP). The NIF overthrew the democratically-elected government in 1989 after it had agreed with the Southern rebellion led by the Sudan Peoples Liberation Army/Movement (SPLA/M) to negotiate a new constitutional arrangement that would genuinely respect the rights of all citizens and accept the country's diversity of cultures and regions. The Islamists<sup>1</sup> could not accept this, because it would mean abolishing recently implemented Sharia (Islamic law) and thwart their attempts to create an Islamic state.

They saw no benefit in multiparty democracy or a diverse, even if united, Sudan. Instead, they planned to create an Islamic state with an Arab-Islamic identity. After the Islamists seized power, the "Salvation Regime" quickly cleansed all government institutions of opponents and took full control of society. The regime imposed conservative Islamic morals and announced a jihad on its enemies in the South, Southern Kordofan (Nuba Mountains) and Blue Nile. The "federal" and "popular congress" system it established was actually heavily centralised. All this aggravated

historic grievances that escalated the war in those areas and the East, as well, eventually, as the Darfur crisis.

Bitterly divided over power and their movement's direction, the Islamists split ten years later into two parties: the NCP, which retained control, and the Popular Congress Party (PCP), which is now one of its leading opponents. The NCP, burdened by international sanctions, gradually compromised its ideology and evolved into a party that uses control of the state to capture the economy and accumulate wealth. To retain power, it expanded a patronage system, camouflaged by ethnic Arabic supremacy and loyalty to Islam. It also centralised decision-making and tried to control all major aspects of society – social, economic and political – using a mixed state and party security apparatus. The extensive use of security forces further aggravated local disputes.

The NCP probably already knew in 2005 that the CPA could lead to the South's separation and hence implemented its provisions selectively so as at least not to lose power. In addition, the need to execute the agreement's provisions gave the regime some leverage and international immunity. But selective implementation cost Sudan yet another opportunity to create a durable peace and a last chance to maintain unity. The South will now go its own way, but the remainder of Sudan is still burdened by serious conflicts. The prerequisite for political settlement of the conflicts in Darfur, as well as in Southern Kordofan, the Blue Nile and the East, is government reform. This could be achieved in a constitutional arrangement replacing the current interim national constitution and guaranteeing the rights of these culturally and ethnically diverse regions.

So far, however, the NCP is relying on dubious legal legitimacy (acquired by heavily-manipulated elections in April 2010), maintaining its political-Islam rhetoric (including insistence on imposing Sharia), and reaffirming the country's Arab-Islamic identity (thus refusing to respect the diverse identities that will remain in Sudan and creating the conditions for another possible confrontation between the centre and the peripheries). Given its history and interests, it appears unlikely that the regime is willing to make the genuine reforms necessary for peace and stability.

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<sup>1</sup> Sudanese Islamists were loosely organised under the NIF at this time. Many of its supporters were not formal members. The NCP was not founded until 1998. An Islamist (or Islamic activist) is a follower of Islam with a broader religious, political, social or – in a small minority of cases – violent jihadi agenda. See Crisis Group Middle East/North Africa Report N°37, *Understanding Islamism*, 2 March 2005.

This report sketches a general history of the Islamic movement, analyses how it seized power and has ruled, the split in 2000 and its consequences, and the NCP's current internal divisions and lack of strategic coherence. By providing a snapshot of the ruling party, it seeks to increase awareness of the challenges it and the new, smaller Sudan face. It does not address specifically and comprehensively pending post-referendum issues, the Darfur peace process, the popular consultations and the challenges facing independent South Sudan.<sup>2</sup> These will be subjects of subsequent reporting.

## II. THE ISLAMIC MOVEMENT: A FRONT SEEKING AN ISLAMIC STATE

Since before independence, the Sudanese Islamic Movement (SIM) offered an alternative system for development and governance. Founded in the mid-1940s, it was among the first contemporary Islamic movements that explicitly sought to achieve its objectives by obtaining power rather than engaging in missionary work. It contributed to the international debate among Arab and Islamic movements over ideas influenced by Sayed Qutb and Hassan al-Banna<sup>3</sup> and embraced the latter's Islamic Brotherhood paradigm, based on centralised leadership, which it believed could assimilate and accommodate what it described as non-Muslim and non-Arab minority regions such as the South. In 1964, it joined other political forces and spearheaded the Islamic Convention Front, demanding an Islamic constitution after the October Revolution that overthrew President Ibrahim Abbud's military dictatorship.<sup>4</sup> That failed, but over time the SIM was transformed and expanded into a front that aimed to take over the government and impose an ethnic Arab-Islamic identity on all Sudanese.

### A. CREATING A SUDANESE IDENTITY

Sudanese elites have long disagreed about the country's identity. To some, it should be Arab and Muslim; to others, it should respect and accommodate all the cultures, religions and minorities within its territory.<sup>5</sup> The Northern, Riverine tribes<sup>6</sup> have always maintained that the re-

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<sup>3</sup> Mahaboub Abdel Salam, *Haraka al-Islamiya al-Sudaniya (Dairat al-Dow – Khyout al-Zalam)* [The Sudanese Islamic Movement (circle of light – the threads of darkness)] (Cairo, 2010). See also, Alex de Waal and A.H. Abdel Salam, "Islamism, State Power and Jihad in Sudan", in Alex de Waal (ed.), *Islamism and Its Enemies in the Horn of Africa* (Addis Ababa, 2004), pp. 71-113. For a more general analysis, see Crisis Group Report, *Understanding Islamism*, op. cit.

<sup>4</sup> Al-Banna argued the Islamic movement should seek power by all means, including working in a joint venture with outsiders who might not be committed to its Islamic ideas. However, once the immediate objective is achieved, it should take full control and begin to create an Islamic state. Crisis Group Report, *Understanding Islamism*, op. cit., p. 7.

<sup>5</sup> Ann Mosel Lesch, *The Sudan – Contested National Identities* (Bloomington, 1998).

<sup>6</sup> These are the Arabised tribes that live on the Nile north of Khartoum and past Dongola. Most NCP leaders, including President Bashir, are from this region. During the colonial period, they were the first persons exposed to modern education and dominated the civil service, and they have ruled Sudan since independence. The major tribes of this area are the Jaaliyya, Shaigiyya and Danagla.

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<sup>2</sup> For recent analysis of the latter, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°172, *Politics and Transition in the New South Sudan*, 4 April 2011.

ligion (Islam) and language (Arabic) of the majority should define the national identity, and this has been stated in most of Sudan's constitutions. When the movement seized power in 1989, it tried to implement a "Civilisation Project", premised on Arabisation and Islamisation, and to force the peoples of the South, Darfur, Nuba Mountains, Blue Nile and the East (Beja) to adopt this common identity.<sup>7</sup> It considered that all Sudanese are part of the *umma* (Islamic community) and made the spread of Islam a principal objective.<sup>8</sup> It pressed for the increase of Islamic missionaries in places under its military control and called for jihad to subjugate what it described as the infidels and non-believers.<sup>9</sup>

However, according to Mahaboub Abdel Salam, a prominent Islamist,<sup>10</sup> the movement's thinking about identity was neither well debated nor articulated and failed to take into account the South and other minority communities.<sup>11</sup> On the contrary, the ruling elites co-opted non-politicised Muslims to wage a jihad against Southerners and Arab camel herders to do the same against non-Arabs in Darfur,

thus polarising and militarising these tribes and deepening ethnic divisions.<sup>12</sup>

## B. EXPANSION TO AN ISLAMIC FRONT

From the beginning, political Islam has drawn mainly from educated Islamists.<sup>13</sup> They became politically active during the dictatorship of General Ibrahim Abbud (1958-1964) and gradually developed into a counterweight to the traditional political parties, the Umma Party and Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), as well as the Sudan Communist Party (SCP). The Umma Party and the DUP drew their support from followers of Sufi sects of Sunni origins. The Ansar, followers of the Mahdi, supported the Umma Party in mass.<sup>14</sup> Followers of the Khatmiya religious order supported the DUP. Other constituencies also supported one or the other, including businessmen, traders and modern elites. The nascent Islamist movement saw in members of the two parties a natural reservoir for its religiously driven agendas, but neither the Ansar nor Khatmiya were persuaded to ally with the new religious party.

When Jaafar Nimeri's government (1969-1985)<sup>15</sup> signed the "national reconciliation" agreement in 1977, parties gained a semblance of freedom, and political space widened.<sup>16</sup> After Islamic movement leaders were released from jail, they joined a government of national reconciliation and used alliance with Nimeri's military regime to rebuild

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<sup>7</sup> General Ibrahim Abbud (1958-1964) ordered the use of Arabic for administration and in education throughout Sudan and expelled all foreign Christian missionaries. Robert O. Collins, *A History of Modern Sudan* (Cambridge, 2008), p. 78. Darfur tribes such as the Fur, Dago, Massaliet and Zaghawa are majority Muslim but have distinct cultures from the Riverine and have resisted attempts by the centre to assimilate them. Ann Mosel Lesch, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-24.

<sup>8</sup> Alex de Waal and A.H. Abdel Salam, *op. cit.*, pp. 89-100.

<sup>9</sup> Their thinking is based on a historic practice of converting people in conquered territories to Islam. The Islamists emphasise the role of Omer Ibn Khatab, the second Caliph, who conquered vast areas and consolidated Muslim power and influence there. Crisis Group interview, Islamist and member of the Popular Congress Party (PCP), Khartoum, September 2010. On the debate and tensions on Sudanese identity, see Dr. Baqir al-Afif Mukhtar, "The Crisis of Identity in Northern Sudan: A Dilemma of a Black People with a White Culture", in C. Fluehr-Lobban and K. Rhodes (eds.), *Race and identity in the Nile Valley: Ancient and Modern Perspectives* (Trenton, 2005); "Address to the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva by Dr John Garang on March 24, 1999", 27 March 1999; Francis M. Deng, *War of Visions: Conflict of Identities in the Sudan* (Washington DC, 1995).

<sup>10</sup> He is close to Hassan al-Turabi, the founder of the SIM and wrote the volume referenced above that describes the first ten years of the Salvation Regime. Many non-Islamists criticise it as an attempt to justify the Islamist rule and whitewash its actions, but it makes public for the first time much accurate information. Although the government restricts its import, it is widely read in Sudan.

<sup>11</sup> A series of symposia at Al-Khatim Adlan Center for Enlightenment and Human Development, Khartoum in 2008.

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<sup>12</sup> For more, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°76, *Darfur Rising: Sudan's New Crisis*, 25 March 2004; Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°68, *Sudan: Preventing Implosion*, 17 December 2009.

<sup>13</sup> Mahaboub Abdel Salam, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

<sup>14</sup> In 1881, Muhammed Ahmad ibn Abdallah experienced several visions in which the Prophet appointed him the Expected Mahdi (guided one). He led a revolt against the Turco-Egyptian regime that then controlled Sudan. His forces, the Ansar, captured Khartoum, in January 1885. The Mahdi died soon thereafter, in July. His successor, Khalifa Abdullahi, tried to impose his predecessor's puritanical brand of Islam on the rest of the country but was fiercely resisted by the peripheries. Weakened by years of constant warfare, Khalifa Abdullahi was unable to withstand British military advances from Egypt that imposed the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium, lasting from 1899 to 1936. However, the collapse of the Mahdist state did not end Mahdism; the Mahdi's family continues to play a prominent role in Sudan, principally through the Umma Party, now the National Umma Party.

<sup>15</sup> Nimeri seized power in a coup, in 1969, and was subsequently elected president of a one-party government in 1971. He was forced to step down after massive popular protests in 1985. Starting as a leftist, he gradually moved to the right. In 1983, he imposed Sharia, which was one of the reasons the South revolted again. He died in 2009.

<sup>16</sup> This was signed with Al-Sadig al-Mahdi, then the leader of a coalition of the National Alliance Front parties. At the time, the 1972 Addis Ababa peace agreement with the Anya Nya, the earlier Southern rebellion, was also still in effect.

their party following more than a decade of military defeats in their attempts to topple him by force.

While in the opposition, the Islamists had sought to expand their movement from an elite-based organisation to include all regions and sectors of society.<sup>17</sup> They worked closely with the traditional parties, gaining valuable experience in the public and private sectors and sent students for graduate study to the U.S. and Europe. More importantly, after 1977 they consciously penetrated and – with tough political tactics and selective violence – gradually took control of most of the major trade and sectoral unions, such as businessmen, labourers, women, youth, doctors and engineers unions, and established secretariats, within the movement, to cater to these constituencies. Many key participants in that struggle are now in the NCP leadership.

### **1. Infiltration of the security apparatus**

The movement believed it needed a military and security wing to protect its gains. To acquire the necessary experience, it infiltrated the army and other state security services. This became easier after Nimeri distanced himself from the communists, following their failed 1971 coup. In the swift backlash, Nimeri decapitated what was then Africa's and the Middle East's largest and best-organised communist party. The crackdown marked a gradual shift from the Eastern bloc toward the West and acceptance of Islamists.<sup>18</sup> Modelling its internal structures and social and political outreach on the SCP, the movement also encouraged many younger members to enter the military academy. In addition, many Islamists who received militia training with the National Front in Libya<sup>19</sup> were incorporated into the army when they returned. As the composition of the armed forces changed, senior officers began to reveal their Islamic beliefs. At a later stage, they were sent to specialised centres for Islamic studies.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> In 1976, Turabi produced a document that laid out the movement's political and missionary strategy. This, together with an earlier document regarding the role of women, moved it from a limited organisation to one seeking to encompass all sectors of society. It attracted university students, labourers, businessmen and people from the military and security services. Mahaboub Abdel Salam, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

<sup>18</sup> In 1971, communist members of Nimeri's May Revolution attempted a coup. It failed, and Nimeri executed all the officers who were caught, as well as the senior leaders of the communist party. Later some communists joined the Islamists, including Dr. Amin Hassan Omer, the current chief NCP negotiator at the Darfur peace talks in Doha.

<sup>19</sup> During the early stages of opposition to Nimeri's regime, the SIM sent many of its members to join the military opposition formed in Libya to overthrow Nimeri by force.

<sup>20</sup> Encouraged by the Islamists in his regime, Nimeri established the African Islamic Centre, which adopted the Islamic move-

This training and experience impacted the movement. The leadership organised secret internal security and military intelligence cells to protect it from both external and internal threats. These cells were not known to the wider membership and worked autonomously. They conducted counter-intelligence and compiled files on both their enemies and important members and did not shy from using brutal force and other means to remove threats.

### **2. Organisation and consolidation during Nimeri's regime**

As the movement expanded in the 1980s, it created an administration that was seemingly decentralised but actually supervised and directed by its leadership in Khartoum. Each region, including the South, had a secretariat with a regional secretary general, a Shura (consultative) council and an executive bureau, responsible for organisation at the level of village and neighbourhood (quarter) in towns and cities.<sup>21</sup> It secretly convened Shuras every few months and a general convention every four years. Many regional Shuras were ineffective, because they were not privy to decisions in Khartoum, and the security and intelligence elements, as today, dealt only with the central leadership.

However, the movement's success in establishing a broad organisation, including extensive consultation (through the Shuras), and its expansion and penetration into all sectors of society, have given it wider acceptance than the traditional parties, which still operate along the old lines and are dominated by historical families (al-Mahdi and al-Merghani), and the highly centralised communist party. This enabled the movement to later quickly establish the National Islamic Front (NIF). According to Mahaboub Abdel Salam, it also managed to gain respect among the international Islamic movement.<sup>22</sup> It formed a foreign secretariat to enhance cooperation with other Islamic movements, and its diaspora membership (mostly postgraduate students) took leading positions in those of different countries.<sup>23</sup>

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ment's interpretations, doctrine and discourse. It seeks to extend Islamic education to students from all over Africa, free of charge. Many military officers were sent there for training and indoctrination by the Islamic movement. Mahaboub Abdel Salam, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

<sup>21</sup> They formed a special secretariat to deal with Southern affairs under the high executive bureau.

<sup>22</sup> Mahaboub Abdel Salam, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

<sup>23</sup> For example, Dr Tigani Abu-Gideri went to the U.S. for graduate study in the 1970s. He helped establish many organisations and societies related to the international Islamic movement, as well as official Islamic and Arab organisations. He also helped many American Muslims. He returned to Sudan in 1990 and became first secretary of the NIF's foreign secretariat, due to his foreign connections. *Ibid.*, p. 48.

In the early 1980s, facing growing opposition (internally and externally), a likely resumption of war in the South and the increasing strength of their movement in most trade unions, Nimeri decided to bring the Islamists into his government. Hassan al-Turabi, the SIM leader, soon became very influential as the justice minister.<sup>24</sup> Benefiting from the renewed civil war in the South and bolstered by donations from abroad, he was able to convince Nimeri to impose Sharia in September 1983 (the "September laws").<sup>25</sup> This generated considerable opposition, but Nimeri responded by dropping from government many of his party's members who opposed the reforms and replacing them with SIM members.<sup>26</sup> He also appointed Turabi his assistant for political and external affairs.<sup>27</sup> This gave movement members invaluable government experience, but the increased visibility and power came at a cost. The opposition gathered strength, and foreign powers, concerned about the rise of another Islamist regime, pushed Nimeri to make changes.<sup>28</sup>

He made his choice, on 9 March 1985, ordering detention of the top leadership of the Islamic movement.<sup>29</sup> However, it was not enough to stifle growing opposition. One month later an *intifada* (uprising) organised by opposition parties, unions and civil society, under the banner of the National Front forced Nimeri to step down. The military moved in, and Lt. General Sowar al-Dahab, the defence minister, took over and formed a Transitional Military Council (TMC). The junta tasked the trade unions and opposition parties to form a civilian cabinet of union rep-

resentatives and technocrats, while the political parties agreed to wait until elections, promised in a year.

Nimeri's last minute quarrel with the Islamists proved fortunate. Turabi, released from prison together with detained union and student leaders, claimed to be equally responsible for the popular revolt. Capitalising on the new political freedoms, the Islamic movement renamed itself the National Islamic Front (NIF) and began extensive preparations for promised elections. Liberal democrats and leftists formed the National Alliance for Salvation and opened direct dialogue with the SPLM to find a solution to incessant civil war.

### **3. Lost opportunity: The Koka-Dam Declaration**

During the first stage of the uprising, when its leaders were released from detention, the Islamic movement officially formed the NIF.<sup>30</sup> The political forces that overthrew Nimeri tried unsuccessfully to isolate the Islamists and label them collaborators with his oppressive regime. But the TMC and the civilian cabinet contained a number of Islamists, including General al-Dahab.<sup>31</sup> In recognition of the central role of the Sudan Doctors Union in the *intifada*, the prime minister post went to its head, Dr Al-Guzuli Dafallah, whose Islamist sympathies were not known at the time. The NIF's covert influence in the TMC and cabinet polarised the country, with the Umma Party, DUP and Communists wanting to isolate the Islamists, while the transitional government sympathised with them and the September laws. The SPLM/A rejected the invitation to join the transitional government and continued to wage war against it.<sup>32</sup>

The new situation did provide another chance for peace. Following multiple trips to Ethiopia, then the political base of the SPLM, by union leaders acting as mediators, the SPLM/A invited the National Alliance to a meeting at Koka-Dam in that country in March 1986 to discuss the core reasons for Sudan's chronic conflict.<sup>33</sup> The large

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<sup>24</sup> After the 1978 reconciliation, Nimeri formed a committee to review the laws and bring them into conformity with Sharia. He appointed his former enemy, Turabi, to lead it and soon after promoted him to justice minister. The committee introduced changes in the laws but anticipated that Nimeri might not accept all. Nimeri introduced them gradually and formally declared Sharia after five years.

<sup>25</sup> The Addis Ababa agreement collapsed when Nimeri unilaterally decided to sub-divide the South into three regions. In May 1983, Southerners resumed their insurgency under the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A).

<sup>26</sup> Ali Osman Taha (the current vice president of both the government of national unity and the NCP), coordinator of the People's Council (national parliament), and Ahmed Abdel Raham, internal affairs minister, were among senior SIM figures appointed to important positions.

<sup>27</sup> He also arrested several opposition leaders who opposed Sharia, among them Sadig al-Mahdi.

<sup>28</sup> One year after the declaration of Sharia, the Islamic movement staged a rally with hundreds of thousands of supporters and sympathisers to celebrate. Already unsettled by events in Iran, where an Islamist regime was established in 1979, the West forced Nimeri to make a choice between retaining their support and his alliance with the Islamic Front.

<sup>29</sup> Most, though not Taha, were arrested. Nimeri was apparently prepared to execute them. Mahaboub Abdel Salam, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

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<sup>30</sup> Based on the new freedoms, the SIM held its first public meeting, in central Khartoum and chaired by a Southerner. Several papers were presented, including one that called for a federal system with decentralised governance for all regions. *Ibid.*, p. 56.

<sup>31</sup> When the NIF took power, Sowar al-Dahab became president of the Islamic Daawa Organisation, a major international missionary body founded by the movement. The SPLM considered the military council an extension of Nimeri's regime. Mahaboub Abdel Salam, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

<sup>32</sup> The SPLM considered the military council to be an extension of Nimeri's regime.

<sup>33</sup> Some 50 delegates from political parties, trade unions and associations attended, but – because the September Laws were a major point of contention – not the NIF. The DUP, unable to agree about the laws, also did not participate. The conference was to discuss identity, religion, basic human rights, govern-

assembly of intifada forces, union, opposition and civil society groups and SPLM delegates agreed a secular and democratic state was the fundamental requirement for sustained peace. They called for a new interim government of national unity, including all political forces, the TMC, the SPLM/A and the Sudan Armed Forces, and agreed on a process for an all-party national constitutional conference aimed at establishing a new Sudan. However, the NIF made sure this would not happen and pushed the TMC both to reject the call for a new interim government of national unity and to hold the elections on schedule.

#### **4. The NIF frustrated: The third democratic period, 1986-1989**

The TMC delivered on its promise, holding Sudan's third multiparty democratic elections a year after it came to power. The NIF fared badly. It won the university graduates proportional representation vote (15 per cent), but lost badly in the directly elected districts to the traditional parties, especially in Darfur.<sup>34</sup> Turabi and Ali al-Haj (his deputy) even lost their district elections in Khartoum and Darfur respectively.<sup>35</sup> During the formation of the new government, the Umma and the DUP vehemently opposed including the NIF, which thus remained in opposition. A rising NIF member, Ali Osman Taha, won a seat and became leader of the opposition in parliament. The coalition government continued to curb the NIF's influence, including by investigating the Islamic banking system and cancelling a major conference of the Islamic Daawa (religious mission) Organisation. However, it was unable to rescind the controversial September laws.<sup>36</sup>

Prime Minister Sadig al-Mahdi's coalition government faced many problems, including civil strife and military losses in the South. Nevertheless, he refused to implement

the Koka-Dam Declaration, arguing that he could not do so, because his major partner, the DUP, was not a signatory. In November 1988, the frustrated DUP met with the SPLM/A in Addis Ababa and signed a bilateral accord calling for freezing rather than abrogating the September laws. The DUP presented the accord to parliament, but the Umma party used its majority to vote it down, on 21 December 1988. The DUP then joined the opposition, leading to the collapse of the first coalition government.<sup>37</sup> In three years of democratic rule, the Umma Party formed five governments and on three occasions was forced to bring in the NIF.

In response to turmoil in Khartoum, the SPLA intensified the war, capturing many towns, such as Bor and Torit, and putting the al-Mahdi government under great military, financial and political pressure. With continued political crises in Khartoum and a deteriorating military situation in southern Sudan, now including the Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan, the NIF joined the government and called for a national front to stop the SPLA's successes and avoid a complete loss of the region.<sup>38</sup> It proposed forming what is known today as the Popular Defence Forces (PDF) and arming and training allied tribes along the North-South border.<sup>39</sup>

The NIF's prescriptions did not go down well with the armed forces. On 20 February 1989, the army command issued a 21-point memorandum to Sadig al-Mahdi demanding immediate support for the military and a change in its policies, particularly in the South, that had led to withdrawal of international economic and military aid and intensified regional pressure. The document was critical of Turabi, then foreign minister and deputy prime minister, and deplored the reluctance of the Umma Party and the NIF to reach a peace agreement. The generals gave an ultimatum to respond within seven days to the prime min-

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ance (including regional), development, natural resources, security, cultural diversity, education, mass media and foreign policy. The declaration defined prerequisites for convening the meeting, including that all political forces and the TMC would commit to discuss the root causes of continued conflict, and insisted that the TMC provide the necessary security arrangements. Koka-Dam Declaration, at [www.fou.uib.no/fd/1996/f/712001/annex1.htm](http://www.fou.uib.no/fd/1996/f/712001/annex1.htm).

<sup>34</sup>With the elections imminent, the transitional government adopted the old voting system, which reserved a block of seats for university graduates in the different regions. Given their work in the universities, the Islamists had a greater chance to win those votes. Ultimately, they placed third, with 51 seats; the Umma party won the most seats, 61. The 100 seats allocated to the South were either not contested because of insecurity or filled by nominating members of several small parties.

<sup>35</sup>Ali al-Haj now lives in Germany and remains the deputy chairman of the Popular Congress Party (PCP).

<sup>36</sup>Because al-Mahdi and al-Merghani are both also leaders of Muslim sects, they could not unilaterally revoke the laws.

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<sup>37</sup> Crisis Group interview, senior DUP member of the National Assembly, September 2010.

<sup>38</sup> In 1991 the SPLM/A nearly captured Juba, the capital of the South, which would have transformed the political landscape.

<sup>39</sup> When the NIF took power, these tribes (known as Baggara, cattle breeders), particularly those in Southern Kordofan, Southern Darfur, Blue Nile and White Nile, received further training and heavier weapons. The PDF today draws from all sectors and regions except the South. This militarisation is a major reason why the Misseriya can block implementation of the Abyei protocol, and the government is unable to persuade them to accept the Permanent Court of Arbitration decisions. They have threatened to fight the Government of South Sudan to defend their perceived rights in Abyei. The NCP is cautious with the Misseriya, because the major oil pipeline crosses their land and about 50 to 60 per cent of the troops in the Sudanese armed forces are from Baggara tribes.

ister,<sup>40</sup> who apparently was also informed of the possibility of a coup.<sup>41</sup>

The Umma Party caved in. In April 1989, the prime minister accepted the DUP/SPLM/A peace accord. Unhappy about the possible freezing of the September laws, the NIF withdrew from government. According to a senior NCP figure, Western and regional powers pressured the government to expel the Islamists.<sup>42</sup> The prime minister formed a new government, with Sid Ahmed Hussein (DUP) as deputy prime minister and head of a delegation that went to Addis Ababa in May to prepare with the SPLM/A for a national constitutional conference. They agreed the government would endorse the modified peace accord, on 30 June 1989, and set 18 September as the date for the constitutional conference.

## 5. The decision to take power

After the NIF's exit from government, its central Shura<sup>43</sup> reviewed the political situation and the risks facing the movement. It concluded that these were: the possible return of the communist/leftists or a coalition of unions to power; the likelihood the DUP agreement with the SPLM/A would lead to the immediate freezing of Sharia; or an army coup.<sup>44</sup> The Shura concluded that the situation was desperate, and the NIF should seize power. It judged that the party had the governance experience and the military cells to act<sup>45</sup> and authorised Turabi, as NIF secretary general, to implement the strategy. On 30 June 1989, the day the executive cabinet was to endorse the DUP/SPLM/A accord and the process for the national constitutional conference, the Islamic movement launched its Salvation Revolution under the leadership of Brigadier Omar Hassan al-Bashir. Under the pretext of saving the country, military officers staged the coup in the name of the Sudanese Armed Forces and formed a revolutionary council.<sup>46</sup>

To camouflage the NIF role, its leaders were detained along with other political leaders.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>“Civil War – The SPLM/A Evolution and Struggle for the New Sudan”, 10 January 2007, [www.splmtoday.com](http://www.splmtoday.com).

<sup>41</sup> Crisis Group interview, a leading Umma party member, Khartoum, September 2010.

<sup>42</sup> Crisis Group interview, senior NCP member, Gedarif state, September 2010.

<sup>43</sup> According to the NIF constitution, the main Shura council is a centralised body whose members must be from Khartoum. The NCP still uses it to pass down decisions and manipulate or reject decisions of the regional Shura councils.

<sup>44</sup> Mahaboub Abdel Salam, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

<sup>45</sup> Others disagreed, fearing the consequences of overthrowing a democratically-elected government and quit the party.

<sup>46</sup> Turabi selected six others – Ali Osman Taha, Ali al-Haj, Yasin Omer al-Imam (NCP), Awad al-Jaz (now industry minister), Abdallah Hassan Ahmed (NCP) and Ibrahim Mohamed al-Sanousi (now PCP) – and made them swear to uphold the NIF's principles, keep the strategy secret and do only the minimum necessary to achieve the desired political transformation: cap-

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ture the military command headquarters, take control of the military units in the capital and regional centres and arrest only limited numbers of top political and military leaders. Security hardliners argued for removing all opposition and military threats once and for all. Mahaboub Abdel Salam, *op. cit.*, p. 99. The Salvation Regime was the name given to the new Islamist government. Many still use it for the NCP-dominated government.

<sup>47</sup> Turabi was detained, together with Ibrahim al-Sanousi. Ali al-Haj remained outside the country in an undisclosed location; Taha and Awad al-Jaz communicated secretly with the coup's military leader; Yasin Omer al-Imam and Abdallah Hassan Ahmed remained in country for consultation and as reserves. A critical point was when Sadig al-Mahdi and Merghani, detained in prison, reached agreement with al-Sanousi on the way forward once NIF civilians replaced the military. *Ibid.*, p. 102.

### III. THE SALVATION REGIME 1989-2000

Security officials dominated the initial actions of the Salvation regime. They adopted two approaches to consolidate their power: control of the economy and brutal force, including torture, to break the will of opponents;<sup>48</sup> and advanced religious justifications to soften their broader constituencies' disapproval of such measures.<sup>49</sup> The strategy was for the military to rule for three years before the government would reveal its NIF colours.

#### A. PARALLEL SYSTEMS OF GOVERNANCE – THE NIF AND THE STATE

Leadership and authority were soon put in the hands of the National Salvation Revolutionary Command Council, under Bashir, who consolidated control of the military, security and intelligence structures by using parallel party organs that quickly took formal control. From its inception, the leadership of the NIF had mastered the skill of running informal organisations parallel to the state's formal institutions. All work of the NIF and the state was guided by the centre, in the person of the deputy secretary general, Ali Osman Taha.<sup>50</sup> Initially this approach was meant only for the period of regime consolidation, but it continues today. The centre managed senior appointments, including of ministers, top army staff and director generals of all government institutions, through a special "High Committee for Appointments and Accountability".<sup>51</sup>

Within a few months, it was apparent an Islamic movement had seized power – the first after the Iranian revolution. It embarked on cleansing the civil service, including the judiciary, of elements deemed suspicious, because of their known affiliations or considered unlikely to join the Islamist cause in view of their social conduct as monitored by party members in schools, workplaces and neighbourhoods. Under the pretext of reducing expenditures, hundreds of thousands were fired without compensation. Since by then the Islamists controlled most unions, there was

nowhere to file grievances. Although there are no official figures, a Sudanese scholar believes NIF members now occupy almost all senior positions in government institutions, as well as parastatal organisations and companies.<sup>52</sup>

The intelligence and security organs are the key institutions of the Islamic regime. Their members took control of all aspects of regime consolidation. They purged the top ranks of the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) of all those perceived as non-Islamists, changed the fighting doctrine to an Islamic one and created a parallel military structure, the Popular Defence Forces (PDF), to defend their organisation and the regime from all threats, including the army. They put their people in senior positions, transforming the security forces from national bodies to ones concerned more with the safety of the Islamist elites.

The top ranks of the SAF were purged and replaced by more junior officers. Bashir was promoted from brigadier to lieutenant general and chief of the army,<sup>53</sup> which came under the full control of Islamist civilian elites. The changes, including those introduced earlier by the NIF, were resisted by many officers.<sup>54</sup> Late in the 1990s, a rift opened between the military leadership and its party masters, when the former rejected civilian control. Led by Turabi, the party leadership demanded the military return to the barracks and hand over power to it, as initially agreed and sworn to by the coup leaders. The military rulers balked, and many civilian cadres supported them in rejecting Turabi's move. The rift was aggravated by factors related to the establishment of a federal governance system and eventually led to the split within the Islamist movement.

The government concentrated on specific military branches, such as the air force, military intelligence and communications, as well as keeping the generals happy with economic incentives, including higher salaries, rather than developing the infantry and other elements.<sup>55</sup> It also increased and strengthened the militias, under the pretext of jihad, and armed selected tribes. A retired general said, "this significant change made the army an institution geared

<sup>48</sup> This period is known as *Al-tamkeen* (regime consolidation stage).

<sup>49</sup> Crisis Group interview, retired SAF general and NIF member, Khartoum, July 2010.

<sup>50</sup> He passed orders through secure channels to the head of the revolutionary military council and received daily feedback on consolidation of the coup, including reports on government work, reports and decisions.

<sup>51</sup> Twenty years later, after the 2010 elections, President Bashir and his close aides, Nafie Ali Nafie and Ali Osman Taha, appointed NCP members to the government of national unity (GNU) in the same manner. The accountability committee still formally manages appointments to high-level positions but has little authority.

<sup>52</sup> This prompted a debate around the 2010 elections: how could Yasir Arman, SPLM presidential candidate, be effective if Islamists controlled every institution in the North, including the army and intelligence services? Crisis Group interview, associate professor, University of Khartoum, September 2010.

<sup>53</sup> He later promoted himself to field marshal.

<sup>54</sup> They opposed adopting an Islamic doctrine of jihad, in order to retain the military's neutral and national identity, and also resisted civilian control. Some senior officers resigned or retired; others fled Sudan and joined the opposition in Asmara and elsewhere.

<sup>55</sup> Most regular army troops were recruited from marginalised areas.

to defend the Islamist regime and its new state under reconstruction".<sup>56</sup>

In accordance with Islamisation of all aspects of life, the concept of jihad was extended beyond the traditional notion linking it to defence to include unifying the sectors of society: women, youth, old people, rich and poor, workers and business people. The NIF issued a temporary presidential decree for formation of the PDF, as a key step for indoctrinating the people to protect their revolution from the SPLM/A and the political opposition, which sought a secular country, as well as from regional and other international opponents.<sup>57</sup> Judges were trained, including some who fought in the South.<sup>58</sup> School clothing for girls and boys became military camouflage uniforms as part of the process, and military training was made compulsory for school and university graduates. Students who refused were denied diplomas or job opportunities. Many resisted and tried to escape.<sup>59</sup>

A SAF unit was established to oversee training of Islamists, including those who joined the movement in mass.<sup>60</sup> Training prioritised Islamist ideology over military skills. Subsequently such training was extended to all regions, including Kordofan and Darfur, where it focused on the Arabised tribes. The resulting PDF militias were used in the South, Southern Kordofan, Blue Nile and Darfur.

After the CPA was signed in 2005, the government kept up only a minority of the PDF units, principally those attached to the SAF and militias in conflict zones managed by either military intelligence (Darfur) or the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) special operations unit (Southern Kordofan near Abyei and the oil fields). Most were neglected, and many protested non-payment of salaries. In Darfur several Arab militias mutinied and

joined the rebels.<sup>61</sup> In Southern Kordofan, Misseriya PDF militias used in Darfur and to protect Khartoum protested they were not integrated into the army as promised by their tribal leaders in the NCP.<sup>62</sup> According to an Arab tribal chief from Darfur and another from Kordofan, neglect of the PDF over the last two years has caused many youths to distance themselves from the NCP's political agenda. They say that in Darfur and Kordofan, militia leaders and commanders are now more prone to resist co-opted tribal leaders. One asserted: "There is no more reason to fight on behalf of the Islamists; jihad is no more a justification. Our interest lies with our people and neighbours".<sup>63</sup>

Parallel militarised intelligence services were also created, and over time, what was to become the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) developed into one of the most powerful security institutions. During the early years after the coup, the service, then known as "Internal Security" (*al-amn al-dakhili*), was led by a colleague of Bashir in the revolutionary council, Colonel (later Maj. General) Bakri Hasan Salih.<sup>64</sup> Later, an NIF civilian member of the secret security organ, Mohammed al-Sanousi, took over.<sup>65</sup>

The intelligence service also functions as a parallel police force. The NISS has highly trained operational combat units well armed with advanced weapons, including at

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<sup>56</sup> Crisis Group interview, retired Islamist general and ex-NCP member, Khartoum, July 2010.

<sup>57</sup> Mahaboub Abdel Salam, op. cit. After the Islamists took power, many expelled political party leaders and dismissed army generals went to Eritrea and established a military opposition under the National Democratic Alliance (NDA). Their objective was to unseat the Islamists by all means, including force. The SPLM/A stationed troops in Eritrea to support their military operations in eastern Sudan and joined in the "Asmara Declaration" that supported self-determination for the South. Some leaders proposed to open another front in Darfur, to supplement those in the South, Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile, and the East.

<sup>58</sup> Some are now members of the Higher Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court.

<sup>59</sup> Several escaping students were shot dead, in the mid-1990s, when Kamal Hassan Ali, the current state minister in the foreign ministry was responsible for the compulsory training program. Crisis Group interview, Khartoum, September 2010.

<sup>60</sup> The first centre was in Al-Geteina, south of Khartoum (30km south of Jebel Awliya).

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<sup>61</sup> Three field commanders from pro-government militias claimed to have split from government control and have joined rebel groups. They took cars, arms and ammunition; two of these groups are now located in eastern Jebel Marra and one in western Darfur. Crisis Group interview, field commanders from Border Guards units (ex-Border Intelligence), Nyala, December 2010.

<sup>62</sup> The Peace and Reconstruction Brigade, which is managed by the NISS special operations unit, threatened a mutiny on 7 December 2010, claiming neglect since 2005 and failure to keep promises to merge it into the regular forces. It also complained of constant redeployments between Al Miram in Southern Kordofan and Khartoum, since March 2008 and that salaries were not regularly paid. "Misseriya militia in Kordofan complains to Bashir", Radio Dabanga, 7 December 2010, www.radiodabanga.org.

<sup>63</sup> Crisis Group interviews, Misseriya and Beni Halba tribal leaders, ex-National Assembly members, Khartoum, September 2010.

<sup>64</sup> Prior to the coup, the intelligence services were under the interior minister. In December 1989 the Sudan Security Bureau (SSB) was entrusted to Salih, who created a new intelligence apparatus, institutionalised by the 1990 National Security Act. Originally known as the Security of the Revolution-Revolutionary Intelligence Agency, it was shortened to "Internal Security". There was also "External Security" and "Sudan Security", mostly focused on military intelligence. Robert O. Collins, op. cit., p. 188.

<sup>65</sup> Sanousi's deputy, Nafie Ali Nafie, later became head of intelligence. Both are engineers but received military ranks after the coup.

tack helicopters.<sup>66</sup> Some are responsible for protecting the central government, as well as the oil fields in the South and the pipeline. Their troops come mostly from the Riverine tribes.<sup>67</sup> The NISS also manages security of ministers and government offices. Many office managers for senior officials have intelligence ties; they give information to the central command and monitor all that happens in high state organs.

During the early years of the Salvation Regime, "Internal Security" brutally suppressed the opposition. Its campaign started with the torture, and subsequent deaths, of some doctors who advocated a general strike to overthrow the new regime and continued with the killing of three civilians who kept hard currency at home instead of in the bank<sup>68</sup> and the execution of 28 military officers accused of planning a coup.<sup>69</sup> It set up "ghost houses" where it tortured detainees and buried victims secretly.<sup>70</sup> All this sent a message to the people and more specifically to the army not to consider any attempts to overthrow the government.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Crisis Group interview, SAF colonel retired in June SAF reshuffles, Khartoum, September 2010.

<sup>67</sup> Security is dominated by the Riverine tribes, which continue to appoint most senior staff from within their own ranks and those of their allies. It is widely believed in Sudan that the top echelons of the NCP come mainly from two tribes, the Jaali and Shaigiyya. President Bashir and Nafie Ali Nafie are from the Jaali, who also dominate the NISS. Salah Gosh, a former NISS director, Vice President Taha and Awad al-Jaz are from the Shaigiyya.

<sup>68</sup> These were so-called "economic cases" – people accused of hoarding foreign currency and executed after quick sentencing, without the least guarantees of a fair trial.

<sup>69</sup> They were sentenced to death by firing squad in a sham trial and buried in a mass grave. Some of the executed officers were in pre-emptive detention when the coup occurred, and did not take part in the coup.

<sup>70</sup> The system of pre-emptive detention avoided prisons that were still governed by international human rights standards and were unlikely to hand over prisoners without legal process. Many families of killed people during this time do not know where the bodies of their relatives are buried. Crisis Group interview, wife of a murdered military officer, Omdurman, July 2010. Also see, "Sudan: A Continuing Human Rights Crisis", Amnesty International, 14 April 1992; "In the Name of God: Repression Continues in Northern Sudan", Human Rights Watch, 1 November 1994; "Agents of Fear: The National Security Service in Sudan", Amnesty International, July 2010.

<sup>71</sup> It went further when it seized and executed without trial a well-known Islamist leader, Yahia Bolad, once chair of the University of Khartoum Students Union and of the Islamic movement's university secretariat. Bolad, from Darfur, disapproved of the Islamic movement's elitism and that its leadership was mainly from Khartoum. Though a leader in the university union, a position that would have qualified him to be a movement candidate, he went to Darfur to stand in the 1986 elections for the DUP. He later joined the SPLM, which gave Bolad military

## **B. THE POLITICAL ORGANISATION – THE NATIONAL CONGRESS**

After Turabi was released from his calculated "detention", he joined Bashir in the leadership. Their priority was to reconfigure the state and deal with the South. On 31 December 1990, the revolutionary council implemented more comprehensive and stringent Sharia, to be enforced by the Popular Police Force. It also announced the expansion of the PDF, to join the army in fighting the war in the South.

In the early 1990s, as part of their international Islamic agenda, they invited all popular and active Islamic opposition movements to Sudan and sought to form an alternative to the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC): the Popular Arab and Islamic Congress, headquartered in Khartoum.<sup>72</sup> After its first conference, 25-28 April 1991, many Islamists and extremists were invited to stay, were given Sudanese passports and granted concessions to start businesses. The settlers including Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman, who would later be convicted in the U.S. for his role in the first attempt to bomb the World Trade Center, in 1994, and Osama bin Laden, who brought with him many "Arab Afghans" and employed them in his multiple businesses in the country.<sup>73</sup> In June 1995, security hardliners under NCP leadership direction, plotted to kill Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Addis Ababa during an Organisation of African Unity summit. This resulted in UN Security Council Resolution 1044 branding Sudan as a state harbouring and sponsoring terrorism.<sup>74</sup>

However, relations between the military and civilian leaders were not smooth. The revolutionary council refused to be dissolved and hand power to an appointed national transitional council after three years, as originally planned. The transitional council was supposed to prepare for an elected legislative council that would draft a new permanent constitution. In a 1995 compromise, the revolutionary council installed its chair, Bashir, as president and his deputy, Al-Zuber Mohamed Salih, as deputy president. This was soon followed by disputes between the secretary general, Turabi, and his deputy, Ali Osman Taha, and internal competition over senior government positions. The

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supplies to open another front. When he went to Darfur he was caught and later executed – some suggest on orders from the top of the NIF.

<sup>72</sup> Robert O. Collins, *op. cit.*, p. 195.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 196-200.

<sup>74</sup> "Resolution 1044 (1996)", S/RES/1044 (1996), 31 January 1996.

discord affected the establishment of the political organisation the movement had planned.<sup>75</sup>

The formal political organisation is a consultative popular congress (conference) system that extends from the local to the national level (the national congress), an open system of Shura consultation meant to accommodate all sectors and levels of society.<sup>76</sup> During the initial phase, different sectors of the movement had their own ideas of how to organise the party system. Some argued the system was vulnerable to infiltration by opposition parties, which could dilute Islamist control; others thought it was only a plan by the military and the central elites to control politics and the economy. At the end, the scheme was reduced to an organisation in which power was fixed largely in official positions, running from state governor, to locality commissioner, executive manager of administrative units, to administrator of the large villages; and, at central level, from ministers, army division commanders, the PDF secretary general, presidents of institutions and organisations and directors of banks and government companies, each of whom became responsible for mobilising resources and support for the NIF and serving as conduit for the centre's decisions.<sup>77</sup>

The Shura became the central elements of a network of close friends and trustees through which popular congresses are managed and manipulated in the interest of the centre, augmented by a more powerful system of patronage. The holders of positions at regional level are the "barons", who uphold Khartoum's interests and are rewarded with lucrative government positions, luxury cars, high salaries and other economic incentives. During elections, the system is used extensively to mobilise the masses to vote.

In 1995, Bashir approved a decree to create a new and ostensibly popularly elected 400-seat National Assembly, but the NIF ensured it would remain firmly in power. In January 1996, 125 members were appointed to the assembly, with an additional 50 seats reserved for NIF members and supporters. The remaining 225 members were chosen in rigged national elections (6-17 March). Bashir was elected president with more than 75 per cent of the vote. Hassan al-Turabi was elected to represent a district and subsequently overwhelmingly voted speaker. Sadig al-Mahdi called the elections a farce, and Mustapha Mansur, the "General Guide" of the Muslim Brotherhood, said it

was not a proper *majilis al-shura* (Shura council), because it was created by and remained dependent on the military.<sup>78</sup>

One of the new body's main tasks was to adopt a draft constitution, which it did in March 1998. The document made Sharia the sole source of legislation and increased the power of the presidency. On 8 May 1998, it was approved in a referendum with 96 per cent of the vote. Firmly ensconced, Bashir restored multiparty politics, banned since the 1989 coup. Turabi, seeking to consolidate his authority, sought to reorganise the NIF into the NCP and take control of the party. This set the state for a major confrontation with Bashir.

### C. THE SPLIT

The period of debate and disagreement over consolidating the governance system and ending the war in the South marked a turning point in the movement's history. Serious disputes erupted between the civilian leadership led by Turabi and the military when the Islamists tried to implement the conclusions of the national dialogue conference (October 1989).<sup>79</sup> For some time, Turabi had supported autonomy for the South and argued that the goal of the war was to bring the SPLM to negotiate proposed solutions. The NIF and the SPLM did not reach a peace agreement, but the Islamists were able to sign a deal with several prominent dissident SPLA commanders in 1997.<sup>80</sup> That arrangement began to crumble the next year, however, and international pressure increased as the war intensified.

Turabi eventually convinced the military rulers to implement the conclusions of the national dialogue conference. The president allowed the permanent constitution of 1989 to pass the National Assembly and the referendum that endorsed it to be held. But this was badly received by the military rulers and their civilian allies. Many close Turabi associates suggested it was time to remove Taha, Nafie Ali Nafie, Awad al-Jaz, Salah Gosh and others from all official and non-official positions, because they were the civilians who had worked with the military leadership against the

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<sup>75</sup> A divided committee for appointments and accountability was unable to resolve the disputes between Turabi on one side and Bashir and Taha on the other.

<sup>76</sup> Mahaboub Abdel Salam, op. cit., p. 142.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>78</sup> Robert O. Collins, op. cit., p. 223.

<sup>79</sup> After initial talks between the NIF and the SPLM, facilitated by Ethiopia, in August 1989, the NIF proposed a national dialogue conference, with resolutions to be subjected to a referendum. The SPLM/A did not attend, because it disagreed on the modalities. Under the banner "Peace from Within", the NIF held the conference without the SPLM/A or opposition parties. It concluded that the country should be divided into nine states, in a federal system, with the president and governors to be elected.

<sup>80</sup> SPLA commanders who broke from their leader, John Garang, in early 1990 and signed the Khartoum Peace Agreement included Riek Machar, Arok Thon Arok, Lam Akol and Kerubino Kuanyin; together with the PDF militias, their forces helped to protect oil exploration in the South.

original NIF plans;<sup>81</sup> this would bring the country under the control of Turabi, who thought the time had come for a proper federal Shura system.<sup>82</sup> They convinced Bashir and others, however, that Turabi's call for reform was a plot to remove them. Knowing it might be difficult to mobilise internal support from the movement's grassroots Islamist constituency, whose respect Turabi commanded, they relied on their international connections to displace him before he could do the same to them. Egypt was their starting point.

Several delegations went to Cairo, including those accused of having planned the attempt on Mubarak.<sup>83</sup> Apologies were made and the relationship restored.<sup>84</sup> Egypt facilitated a rapprochement between the NIF and the U.S., resulting in cooperation between the NISS and CIA on international terrorism.<sup>85</sup> In December 1999, Bashir took "the Ramadan decisions", stripping Turabi of his posts, dissolving the parliament, suspending the constitution and declaring a state of national emergency. He ruled for a year under the emergency laws, after which he and his associates won presidential and parliamentary elections in December 2000.<sup>86</sup> To maintain grassroots support, they kept the rhetoric of an Islamic government, but their neighbours and key Western players knew that the new

regime was no longer ideologically extreme, at least for the time being.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> At the time, Nafie headed the national security service (the predecessor of the NISS), Taha was social affairs minister, Salah Gosh commanded the special operations unit of the national security service, and Awad al-Jaz was a senior party member. They were all fired, but quickly regained prominent positions: Taha became foreign minister, Nafie elections committee chair (to prepare for the 2000 elections) and then agricultural minister, and Gosh was reinstated in his old job.

<sup>82</sup> Crisis Group interview, senior Islamists, Khartoum and Nairobi, January 2011.

<sup>83</sup> Turabi and his deputy, Ali al-Haj, publicly accused Ali Osman Taha and Nafie Ali Nafie of having orchestrated the assassination attempt. See [www.globaljihad.net/view\\_page.asp?id=1488](http://www.globaljihad.net/view_page.asp?id=1488); and Eric Reeves, "Khartoum's central role in the assassination attempt on Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak", 3 October 2001, [www.sudanreeves.org](http://www.sudanreeves.org). Islamists still claim Taha was the key figure. Crisis Group interview, Nairobi, March 2011.

<sup>84</sup> Taha, Salah Gosh and Nafie made several trips to Cairo. On the most important, Taha was confronted with details of the plan, including the name of the Egyptian military intelligence officers recruited by the Sudanese. Since then the bilateral relationship has been repaired; Sudan dropped claims against Egypt for its occupation of the Halayeb triangle and returned property confiscated from Egyptians.

<sup>85</sup> Crisis Group interviews, Khartoum, London, Nairobi, 2009-2011

<sup>86</sup> This was the period when Darfurians who had been thrown out of power joined Turabi to publish the "Black Book", alleging the hegemonic doctrine of the Riverine tribes. Turabi was imprisoned in February 2000 for almost five years, accused of being a threat to national security for signing a memorandum of understanding with the SPLM/A.

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<sup>87</sup> In the run-up to the 2010 elections, Salah Gosh said the NCP had distanced itself from earlier extremism but could easily go back, "if they are pushed". "Sudan's spy chief vows return to Islamic extremism 'if necessary'", *Sudan Tribune*, 21 February 2009.

#### **IV. CORRUPTION OF POWER AND MONEY: THE SECOND DECADE OF THE "ISLAMIST" REGIME**

Over the regime's first decade, divisions deepened between the military and the intelligence officers with real power and Turabi and his civilians, who still dreamed of a decentralised, Shura-based state. Cabinet changes became difficult and increased mistrust among power brokers that ultimately led to a split in the movement. Since taking power, the NIF had rapidly become a party mainly interested in power. Opportunistic younger members like Taha, Ghazi al-Atabani and Nafie saw a chance and joined the security elites. Frustrated followers of Turabi set up the Popular Congress Party (PCP) in June 2000. Many from peripheral regions like Darfur joined, including Ali al-Haj (ex-NIF deputy secretary general, now PCP deputy secretary general) and Al-Haj Adam Yusuf, (ex-Southern Darfur governor, who rejoined the NCP after the April 2010 elections). Khalil Ibrahim, an ex-amir (prince) in the PDF, left the NCP to organise the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) rebellion. The PCP today is a leading opposition party. Given its knowledge of how the NCP operates and ties between the parties' middle and grassroots levels, two-way intelligence infiltration is significant.

Despite its national Islamist aspirations, the NCP central leadership is dominated by individuals from the Riverine tribes, who continue to rule through highly centralised decision-making, coercion and excluding opposition parties. Instead of building a new nation state based on the Arab-Islamic paradigm, it has expanded a corrupt patronage system, supported by firm security control. Decisions are taken in secret, dominated by security hardliners. The Shuras have largely collapsed and function only at the central level. The leaderships' exclusionary policies have deepened political instability.<sup>88</sup> Because of newly exploited oil wealth, the period after the split and before the CPA saw high economic growth and unprecedented wealth accumulation among Islamists, but poverty deepened for ordinary Sudanese.<sup>89</sup>

##### **A. CENTRALISATION OF POWER**

The formal pinnacle of the NCP organisation is still the National Congress (some 600 members) that elects the party president and the National Shura Council (60 mem-

bers). The latter elects twenty representatives to the executive leadership bureau, who in turn select another ten for a total membership of 30. Magzoub Abu Ali Magzoub heads the leadership bureau, which is essentially the chiefs of the sectors, chairs of the secretariats and governors. Besides internal consultation, a main function is to endorse the president's nomination of three NCP vice presidents: currently Ali Osman Taha, Nafie Ali Nafie and Riak Gai from South Sudan.

The four main sectors – political, economic, organisational affairs and cultural – are chaired respectively by Ahmed Ibrahim al-Tahir, speaker of the National Assembly; Awad al-Jaz, industry minister; Nafie Ali Nafie, assistant to the president; and Ibrahim Mohammed Omer, former NCP secretary general and head of the Shura council. Each sector has a number of secretariats. For example, the political sector includes political, youth, women, mobilisation, communication, organisations, foreign relations and media secretariats, each with branches in every state. The function of a sector is to consider recommendations received from its sub-secretariats and produce a paper for decision by the leadership bureau. Although this system still exists, decision-making is now in the hands of a very few security hardliners, who often disregard the deliberations and recommendations of the political bureau.

With the stakes raised after the 2010 elections and the South's referendum, the leadership has promoted many junior members and committed Islamists. They now hold important ministerial positions, including finance (Ali Mahmud); foreign affairs (Ali Karti); information (Kamal Ebied); youth (Magid Hassan Sowar); state minister, humanitarian affairs (Mutrif Sidig); and state minister, foreign affairs (Kamal Hassan Ali). Some of these figures also command security organs, such as party militias embedded in bodies like the army, the police, the PDF and security and intelligence, or are responsible for youth mobilisation in case of threats to the capital or party.

Abdel Rahim Mohamed Hussein, who remains defence minister, and his colleague, Bakri Hassan Salih, the presidential affairs minister, control the SAF. According to a retired SAF general, though Hussein is not a key decision-maker, he is a close, trusted friend of President Bashir, and able to fully execute military decisions, as in the early phase of the Darfur conflict.<sup>90</sup> Ali Osman Taha, though

<sup>88</sup> Crisis Group interview, Khartoum, July 2010.

<sup>89</sup> Before and during the six years of the CPA, those in power enriched themselves at the expense of the poor. Sudan ranks 154 out of 169 countries with comparable data on the UNDP human development index. "Sudan country profile of human development indicators", International Human Development Indicators, <http://hdrstats.undp.org>.

<sup>90</sup> When the current defence minister, Abdel Rahim Hussein, was interior minister, he was criticised after a new four-story building at the police hospital collapsed. The National Assembly demanded accountability. The president removed him from the ministry, then promoted him to major general and appointed him defence minister. He is one of the president's closest friends, with whom he apparently studied together in secondary school. Crisis Group interviews, Khartoum, April, September 2010.

vice president of the government of national unity and Islamic movement chair,<sup>91</sup> and Ghazi al-Atabani, who formally holds the Darfur dossier, are not part of the security chain of command and apparently are often frustrated by the secrecy of the security system, the political bureau and the Shura.<sup>92</sup>

## B. THE SECURITY SERVICES

After the party split, the security organs were further subdivided. The NISS remains the major security and intelligence institution,<sup>93</sup> but there are a plethora of others, including for security of installations/construction projects, economic security and popular security; the police are broken into regular, public order and popular police, the central contingency force and transhumance route police. The Jaali section of the top elite reportedly has a private force (the "Precious Stones"),<sup>94</sup> under Bashir's command. During each working shift, approximately 6,000 personnel are deployed to patrol Khartoum's strategic areas. A further 12,000 are based outside the capital. This special force, together with the operation units and the PDF, is viewed as the Islamists' most loyal fighting element in the event regime survival is seriously threatened. In March 2011, Bashir announced the establishment of yet another select force called, the "Strategic Unit". Nafie and Mandour al-Mahdi, deputy NCP chairman in Khartoum State, described it as the force that would crush any revolt against the regime.<sup>95</sup>

A retired general contends that the Riverine tribes have deliberately kept security officers from elsewhere out of the higher ranks. Over the past six years, many senior officers from the peripheries have been given early retirement rather than promotion. Reportedly many mid-level and junior officers are frustrated, which in turn is the main reason the government has relied heavily on tribal militias (PDF units) to fight in Darfur.<sup>96</sup> Though most SAF commanders are linked to the top elites, the NCP does not trust them. According to an army Brigadier General:

The few army troops in the capital are not in any state of readiness or have weapons to take any effective action to protect the capital, or to take part in any coup against the regime. The PDF is the army of the country, supported by specific forces within the SAF, such as the air force and military intelligence.<sup>97</sup>

The majority of the SAF is deployed along the North-South border, in Darfur and to a lesser extent in the East and to provide security for strategic establishments such as dams. For example, when the JEM insurgents attacked Omdurman in May 2008, the NCP relied on their special forces to stop them; only one army tank was deployed, apart from those guarding the TV building and other strategic places in the capital.<sup>98</sup>

According to a majority of sources, most security agencies are in effect subordinate to and report to Nafie Ali Nafie, though his official functions as adviser to the president involve no responsibility for oversight of any part of the security apparatus. An NCP hardliner, Nafie has enormous power.<sup>99</sup> Apparently, no director of a security structure, including the recently established National Committee for Security Advice, can take a major decision without his approval.<sup>100</sup> He also commands a sophisticated secret network that controls many aspects of consultation and decision-making within the party.<sup>101</sup> Reportedly, all rapporteurs of the various security secretariats are part of this network. They monitor performance and discussions during policy deliberations and report to a secretariat Nafie heads. The NISS director general also apparently reports to him. According to an ex-leadership bureau member, "the latent [secret] security organ of the party is first and last in deci-

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<sup>91</sup> After the split, no one can truly claim to head the Islamic movement, though the NCP believes it has the majority of members, and some still consider Taha, who replaced Turabi, chairman of the movement. Crisis Group interview, head of National Assembly committee, Khartoum, September 2010.

<sup>92</sup> Crisis group interview, member of the National Shura Council, Khartoum, December 2010.

<sup>93</sup> "Sudan: Agents of Fear: The National Security Service in Sudan", Amnesty International, 1 July 2010.

<sup>94</sup> Most mobilised members are Jaalis from areas of Hagar Al Teer, Hagar Alassal and Qala Alnahal. *Hagar* in Arabic means stone. Crisis Group interviews, Khartoum, Shendi, Blue Nile, Wad Medani and Kosti, 2010.

<sup>95</sup> The Strategic Unit was formed in March 2011 and is composed of highly trained and committed Islamists selected from other security forces, including the PDF, SAF, police, *dabba-been* ("tanks", the nickname of particularly fervent units that during the jihad phase of the war in the South were willing to risk martyrdom to destroy SPLM tanks), NCP youth militias, Students Union forces and Popular Police Forces. It is commanded by Mohamed Bakhiet al-Mufti, also the head of the PDF. Crisis Group telephone interview, NCP member of the National Assembly, Khartoum, April 2011. "The NCP vows to crush the opposition and the facebook youth", 23 March, www.sudanile.com.

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<sup>96</sup> Crisis Group interview, retired Islamist general and ex-NCP member, Khartoum, July 2010.

<sup>97</sup> Crisis Group interview, Omdurman, December 2010.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Crisis Group interviews, 2006-2010.

<sup>100</sup> After removal as NISS director general, he was named chairman of a security advisory committee reporting to the president.

<sup>101</sup> Crisis group interview, ex-NISS officer, Khartoum, September 2010.

sion-making regarding top strategic issues in the state and the NCP – it is the state”.<sup>102</sup>

This informal structure played a major role in preparations for the 2010 elections. It identified candidates for governor and the national assembly, as well as manipulated the elections to the National Shura Council and the leadership bureau during the last National Congress. Later, it also heavily influenced the composition of the new cabinet in the government of national unity. In doing so, it sidelined NCP moderates, especially those from Darfur who, as members of the previous leadership bureau, had occasionally opposed policies regarding that region.<sup>103</sup>

### C. FRUSTRATIONS AFTER THE APRIL 2010 ELECTIONS – COLLAPSE OF THE SHURA

The 2010 elections were intended to be a key benchmark in the democratic transition. Though it was not without difficulty, the NCP made sure it would prevail. President Bashir was re-elected, and the party won all Northern Sudan governor posts, except in Blue Nile state, and over 90 per cent of Northern National Assembly seats. Dividing the spoils also did not go smoothly. To fill senior staff positions for newly elected state and federal officials, the NCP initiated a nomination process by Shura councils and smaller allied parties that nominated candidates for the leadership bureau. Nevertheless, governors often made their own choices.<sup>104</sup> For example, those in Southern Darfur, Sinnar, White Nile, Red Sea and Al-Gezira states did not accept the nominations, instead appointing many from their own tribal groups to important jobs. This has aggravated tensions between these governors and leaders from other tribes, who felt marginalised, and undermined the NCP's alliance with smaller allied parties.<sup>105</sup> These grievances were felt the more strongly when the government reduced expenditures because of the uncertainties regarding future oil revenue sharing with the South.

While the issue of government jobs has become a serious problem at state level, it is even more critical at the federal level, where it involves influential figures in the party central leadership. After the elections in April 2010, Bashir formed a committee led by Ali Osman Taha to nominate

new NCP members of cabinet, but later Nafie Ali Nafie changed its list, triggering a major dispute. Taha refused to deal with Nafie, contributing to delay in forming the government.<sup>106</sup> Ultimately, Bashir accepted Nafie's changes and announced the NCP ministers – almost all security oriented – without Taha's approval.<sup>107</sup> In what so far has been an unsuccessful attempt to reconcile the powerful men, Bashir set up a committee led by Salah Gosh.<sup>108</sup> In its meetings, Nafie accused Taha of being responsible for the break-up of Sudan.<sup>109</sup> Taha countered by accusing Nafie of supporting Southern militias and renegade SPLA commanders, thus making unity even less attractive to the SPLM.<sup>110</sup> For a time, close observers of the NCP thought a new split might result, since Taha commands respect among leaders of what remains of the Islamic movement.<sup>111</sup>

Nafie held the stronger hand, however, because he had rigged the elections for Bashir, won a large majority in the national assembly and installed NCP-allied governors.<sup>112</sup> He was thus able to sideline a number of people, including Taha and Atabani. He tried to do the same with Awad al-Jaz, who as acting finance minister had refused his and Bashir's order to release money before the new government

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<sup>106</sup> Another reason was said to be that the NCP was awaiting a breakthrough in the Darfur peace talks and anticipated it would need to allocate a vice presidency and a few cabinet seats to Darfuris.

<sup>107</sup> For example, he installed Majid Hassan Sowar, who had led the youth militias, including the *dabbabeen*, as youth minister and Ali Kerti, who like Awad al-Jaz (now industry minister), had led NCP militias, as foreign minister.

<sup>108</sup> The committee included Nafie, Salah Gosh, Ahmed Ibrahim al-Tahir, Ibrahim Mohammed Omer, Taha, Awad al-Jaz and others.

<sup>109</sup> Taha was the chief NCP negotiator at the Naivasha talks that led to the CPA. The NCP approved the agreement as a party and implemented it as a government, thus Taha can hardly be blamed for the results. Attempts by Nafie and Al-Tayeb Mustafa to do so reveal the disarray in the NCP at the highest levels. According to the Islamist hardliners, the SPLM is implementing a hidden agenda designed to end Arab Islamic control. On 9 January 2008, in an Al Jazeera English TV broadcast, Al-Tayeb Mustafa, President Bashir's uncle, argued that the SPLM wants to Africanise the Sudan and remove it from the Arabic world, an agenda supported by the West. [www.youtube.com/watch?v=f9odkmRuLSw&feature=fvw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f9odkmRuLSw&feature=fvw). On 8 December 2010, Nafie Ali Nafie argued in an Al Jazeera Arabic TV interview that the U.S. and Israel are working to separate the South and that secession was just the beginning of a plan to divide Sudan into four small states.

<sup>110</sup> Crisis Group interview, senior NCP political bureau figure, Khartoum, September 2010.

<sup>111</sup> Many Sudanese political analysts, including Islamists, argue that the Islamic movement has collapsed.

<sup>112</sup> For more than two years, Nafie was the key person responsible for managing preparations for the elections. Crisis Group interview, NCP member of the National Shura Council, Khartoum, May 2010.

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<sup>102</sup> Crisis group interview, Khartoum, September 2010.

<sup>103</sup> Crisis Group interview, ex-members of Shura council and political bureau, Khartoum, Blue Nile, September 2010.

<sup>104</sup> The government of national unity formed after the CPA was signed included the SPLM, NCP and other Northern political parties. Mostly splinter groups from the National Umma Party and the DUP, they filled 14 per cent of executive and legislative positions at all levels. Over time these small parties allied with the NCP and defended most of its policies.

<sup>105</sup> Crisis Group interviews, Darfur, Sinnar, Blue Nile, Gedarif, Al-Gezira states, December-January 2011.

was formed. Al-Jaz threatened to resign, but the committee formed to deal with Taha persuaded him to stay on as industry minister.

Though Taha, as second vice president of the government of national unity,<sup>113</sup> oversees governors' work, Nafie, as NCP vice president for organisational affairs, had more direct influence before the elections and was in a position to replace them, sometimes without Taha's consent. Since the elections, the governors have gradually gained some autonomy, costing Nafie a degree of control.<sup>114</sup> This however, appears to have aggravated tribal divisions within the NCP leadership.<sup>115</sup>

This rift created a serious problem for Bashir. He and Nafie were criticised by some in the leadership bureau, who complained the party might collapse if Nafie was permitted to act unilaterally. While this matter was apparently resolved in July 2010, the relationship between Taha and Nafie remains bitter. The bad blood goes back to at least the third NCP convention, in 2009, when many members wanted to restructure the party by reinstating the secretary general position and proposed Taha for it, but security hardliners refused and convinced Bashir to maintain the current structure.<sup>116</sup>

The party leadership cannot compromise with its grassroots members without angering its security supporters. For now, Bashir convinced Nafie to leave Taha and Ghazi al-Atabani alone, but they want full autonomy to deal with their big issues – reform (Taha) and Darfur (Atabani).<sup>117</sup> Atabani, for example, has persuaded Bashir the negotia-

tions in Doha are not the final stage of the Darfur peace process and has laid out a new strategy to “domesticate” that endeavour.<sup>118</sup>

Particularly since the 2010 elections, decision-making is now in the hands of a few, and the Shura mechanism is failing.<sup>119</sup> After the first day of the National Shura Council, 2 December 2010, Bashir and Nafie apparently proposed that it declare war on the SPLM, saying a new conflict was inevitable, whether or not the South's self-determination referendum was held, because the SPLM was supporting the Darfur insurgency, refusing to compromise over Abyei and proving reluctant to genuinely discuss post-referendum issues. The same day Bashir authorised the governors to expel foreign organisations or persons disrespecting Sudan's sovereignty or disregarding its security and legal institutions. The next day, the Shura reportedly held a serious discussion, Taha and others rejected the proposal, and Bashir had to adjourn the session. The leadership bureau held a similarly inconclusive discussion.<sup>120</sup>

According to a National Shura Council member, there have been few deliberations on the papers presented by the political sector in December. Most delegates had to rubber stamp the president's positions. Similarly, the leadership bureau on 3-4 December had to endorse the NCP strategy papers for continued unity and its Darfur strategy paper (formulated in August). Since the elections, he added, it is dangerous for a member to object at these senior meetings, because he would risk isolation or become enmeshed in the Taha-Nafie disputes.<sup>121</sup>

In the days that followed the early December sessions, Nafie pushed Abdel Hamid Musa Kasha, the Southern Darfur governor, to publicly attack Taha, in a renewed attempt to sideline his foe. Taha, who has overall responsibility for disbursing federal money to the states and oversees the Fiscal and Financial Allocation Monitoring Commission, had made an enemy of Kasha when he authorised much less money for his state – the largest in the North after Khartoum – than it should have received, apparently because he believed Kasha did not allocate funds responsibly among the localities.<sup>122</sup> Moreover, Taha had

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<sup>113</sup> Government of South Sudan President Salva Kiir is still first vice president of the government of national unity, but has largely withdrawn from that position.

<sup>114</sup> Crisis Group interview, ex-federal minister, Khartoum, December 2010.

<sup>115</sup> The Nafie-Taha dispute is increasingly seen by NCP insiders through a tribal lens, with Bashir and other Jaali reportedly supporting Nafie, while Gosh, al-Jaz and other Shaigiyya said to be siding with Taha. Crisis Group interview, member of the NCP political bureau, December 2010.

<sup>116</sup> Many senior NCP members complained the Shura had become ineffective and decision-making too centralised. They said Bashir should not be both president of Sudan and chairman of the NCP and tried to reduce the power of Nafie. Bashir and his allies suspected this was a Taha and Shaigiyya plot to weaken Bashir, Nafie and the Jaaliyya. See Crisis Group Briefing, *Sudan: Preventing Implosion*, op. cit., pp. 11-12.

<sup>117</sup> A Darfuri NCP member said Atabani criticised Nafie's security approach, which sought to buy off al-Tigani Seisi, head of the Liberation and Justice Movement/Army (LJM/A), with the promise of a vice presidency and then to deal militarily with the Zaghawa, JEM and the Fur of Abdel Wahid. Al-Tigani Seisi denied that the NCP offered him the position. Crisis Group interviews, July 2010, Khartoum; and Eltigani Seisi, March 2011, Doha, Qatar.

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<sup>118</sup> Bashir has repeatedly declared that Doha will be the last international venue for the Darfur peace process. “No more talks with Darfur rebels after Doha-Sudanese President”, *Sudan Tribune*, 6 June 2010.

<sup>119</sup> Crisis Group interviews, Khartoum, Darfur, Kordofan, Blue Nile, Gedarif states, 2010.

<sup>120</sup> Crisis Group interviews, ex-member of the National Shura Council, ex-SAF Lt. General, Khartoum, December 2010.

<sup>121</sup> Crisis Group telephone interview, Khartoum, December 2010.

<sup>122</sup> He is accused by senior state officials and legislators of directing most local and central government development funds to his own tribe and urban centres. Crisis Group interview,

nominated someone else for the governorship but had been overruled by Nafie.<sup>123</sup> Kasha mobilised his legislative council and in a press conference threatened violence if Khar-toum did not give the state sufficient money.<sup>124</sup> Southern Darfur is a centre of pro-NCP tribes and militarised Arabs groups, so the threat was serious for the government.

#### D. REWARDS AND PATRONAGE

Since independence Sudan has always been ruled by Riverine elites.<sup>125</sup> They dominate other groups and extract economic resources from the periphery with the help of local political barons,<sup>126</sup> who receive patronage from Khartoum that they dispense in turn to their supporters in the states. This system of rule is no different from that of previous regimes. The traditional political parties, for example, long used a patronage-baron system with native administration tribal leaders of the Ansar or Khatemiya religious orders,<sup>127</sup>

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three Southern Darfur legislative council members, Nyala, December 2010.

<sup>123</sup> Kasha is an Arab Darfur leader responsible for Arab militia policies. Attempts to appoint him governor were rejected several times, and he was not the top nominee on the NCP state list in 2010. Nevertheless, Nafie insisted Kasha should be governor, because he was confident he could manipulate the elections successfully. He became governor in the last reshuffle of those posts just before the elections. Taha and Atabani preferred a more sensitive leader who could deal with the critical post-election period. The successful gubernatorial candidates in Darfur – Kasha, Kibir (North Darfur) and Jaafar Abu Hakam (West Darfur) were all suggested by Nafie. Crisis Group interviews, Darfuri NCP members, Darfur, December 2010.

<sup>124</sup> On 9 December, the state legislative council suspended its second session to protest lack of central government funding. The fiscal allocation and monitoring commission in Khartoum had reduced the state's budget from SDG 19 million (approximately \$6 million) to SDG 5.5 million (\$1.8 million). It also created a deficit in the state by refusing a report from the state committee of experts on allocation of revenues. State legislators said lack of development and the threat of tribal conflicts and armed movements had produced serious deterioration of infrastructure and citizen services. In a strongly worded statement, the legislative council voiced anger at the central government. The legislature has formed a delegation to meet top leaders in Khartoum and threatened to resign if it received no response from the central government. "S. Darfur Assemblymen demand more funds from Khartoum", <http://radiodabanga.org/node/6908>.

<sup>125</sup> Crisis Group Briefing, *Sudan: Preventing Implosion*, op. cit.; Crisis Group Report, *Sudan: Justice, Peace, and the ICC*, op. cit.

<sup>126</sup> Crisis Group interview, SPLM figure, Khartoum, September 2010.

<sup>127</sup> The Ansar sect is aligned with the Umma Party, and draws mainly from among the communities in Gezira and White Nile states, the Baggara (cattle-herding) nomads of Kordofan and Darfur, some of the Riverine Jaaliyyia and Danaqla tribes, the Nuba in Southern Kordofan, the Blue Nile and the Hadandawa

acting on behalf of the party/sect leaders and managing selection of representatives to parliament.<sup>128</sup> Today this system is managed by security structures loyal to the regime.<sup>129</sup>

#### 1. The economy of the Islamists

To compete with initially better-resourced traditional parties,<sup>130</sup> the Islamic movement reached beyond its original revenue sources – contributions from students and clergy – to capitalise in particular on the diaspora. Its situation improved significantly when it was allied to Nimeri's regime, and it was able to attract capital from the Gulf and Saudi Arabia and establish the Faisal Islamic Bank, in which Islamists occupied all positions. The bank received massive deposits from Sudanese and particularly Islamic capitalists, prompting the founding of a second, Bank al-Tadamon, with branches throughout the country. The movement followed this by entering into Islamic insurance and attracting foreign direct investment from the Arab and Islamic world.<sup>131</sup> After it seized power, it set up an economic committee to deal with the country's serious financial deficit and lack of key commodities (particularly fuel).

When NIF cadres replaced the non-NIF military council and the transitional government, Abdel Rahim Hamdi, a prominent Islamist economist, became finance minister. In February 1992, he put in place the strategy to shift to a free market economy.<sup>132</sup> The Islamist capitalists took advantage of the restructuring of the financial and economic management system to buy most of the former state companies under the privatisation program, including rail-

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(Beja) tribes in eastern Sudan. The Khatemiya order is aligned with the DUP and has members from all these communities, but mainly in the East.

<sup>128</sup> This is the old system that John Garang and other progressive forces opposed. They believed that the peripheries should be included in decision-making, not subjugated to the central elites through the political barons.

<sup>129</sup> Crisis Group interview, deputy general director of the NISS, Khartoum, September 2010.

<sup>130</sup> Traders and businessmen whose interests were linked to the party leadership traditionally funded these parties.

<sup>131</sup> These steps were facilitated by Nimeri's policy of tax exemptions for Islamic banks that marked the start of Islamising the banking system. Mahaboub Abdel Salam, op. cit.

<sup>132</sup> He is also known for a paper he presented to an NCP convention arguing investment should be focused in the Dongola-Kordofan-Red Sea triangle to create a viable Arab and Muslim state, in anticipation of the South's separation and continued conflict in Southern Kordofan, Blue Nile and Darfur. Crisis Group Africa Report N°145, *Sudan's Southern Kordofan Problem: The Next Darfur?*, 21 October 2008.

roads, transport and telecommunication firms and textile and tannery factories. They also acquired premium land.<sup>133</sup>

Money for the NCP comes not only from the state, but also from foreign investment and development assistance. Most Sudanese businesses that are sub-contracted by large international companies involved in major construction projects, such as building the Merowe Dam, roads and bridges, are linked to the Islamists' companies.<sup>134</sup> Reportedly, at least 164 companies, operating in a range of services and industries, are owned or controlled by the top leadership, including security officials (SAF, police and NISS). The president's brothers, Ali and Abdellah Hassan al-Bashir, are said to be major shareholders of High Tech, a business group with shares in 23 companies working in such sectors as petroleum, petro-chemicals, engineering, telecommunications (the Ariba mobile phone company), cement and railways and have business deals with foreign companies, including from South Africa.<sup>135</sup> They are also

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<sup>133</sup> In 2010, for example, Nafie Ali Nafie and Abdel Haleem al-Mutaafi bought premium building blocks in Khartoum North's industrial area, as well as thousands of acres of fertile land in the dissolved Rahad agricultural scheme that were sold to the Kenena Company. Crisis Group interviews, three building occupants, Khartoum, September 2010; farmers, Fao, Gedarif state, January 2011.

<sup>134</sup> Often these companies are awarded large government contracts without – or with disregard for the results of – bidding, thus stifling competition. For example, an NCP-affiliated company may “win” the contract for a large construction project and then sub-contract to local companies able to implement the project. The latter would receive only a small share of the contract's value. Only the largest and best established private businesses are able to survive in this environment. Many start-ups fail because of unfair competition from party-affiliated companies. President Bashir's brother, Abbas Hassan al-Bashir, is reportedly among the wealthiest Sudanese. He controls much of the cement market and was the main supplier for the Merowe Dam construction. At the time, the president headed the Dams Committee. Engineer Osama Abdalla al-Hassan, chairman of the government's Dams Unit, has since been appointed electricity and dams minister. “Corruption penetrates the house of President Bashir”, in Arabic, [www.alrakoba.net/news-action-show-id-7279.htm](http://www.alrakoba.net/news-action-show-id-7279.htm). Osama Abdalla Mohamed al-Hassan is a key person directing contracts to NCP-affiliated companies. Crisis Group interviews, lecturer, University of Khartoum; and others, Khartoum, 2010.

<sup>135</sup> It was also reported in early 2011 that a committee led by Salah Gosh discovered that two business people, Abdel al-Azziz Mohammed Osman and Abdel Bazit Hamza, control much of Sudan's external trade (excluding oil). In 2010, this allegedly earned them \$630 million (\$450 and \$180 million respectively). The committee reported that Ali al-Bashir, another brother of the president, is a business partner. Bashir referred the case to Ali Osman Taha, who ordered the return of \$300 million to the Sudanese treasury and left the rest for the traders, without recommending investigations. “Gosh tells the president about his brothers' corruption”, in Arabic, [www.hurriyatsudan.com](http://www.hurriyatsudan.com).

believed to be shareholders in the new luxury Salam Rotana Hotel, in Khartoum, and Giad Industries (car assembly and arms manufacturers).<sup>136</sup>

The current agriculture minister and ex-governor of Khartoum, Abdel Haleem Mutaafi, is reported to have major shares in eight companies; Ali Karti, the foreign minister, reportedly bought the Friendship Palace Hotel, in Khartoum North, for \$85 million;<sup>137</sup> Widad Yagoub, a prominent female Islamist, owns seven companies involved in petroleum and construction, including the Al-Nahla petrol stations. The Islamic Daawa Organisation controls fifteen companies,<sup>138</sup> including Dan Fodio.<sup>139</sup> The NISS owns several, including the Sariya business complex. Prominent Islamists and allied politicians have common investments and businesses. For example, Mandour al-Mahdi, Abdel Azziz Osman and others jointly own shares in fourteen companies. These businesses reportedly contribute to the party, and some of the money was used to win the 2010 elections. NCP figures and their political allies also exert great influence over many media outlets, including *Sudan Vision*, *Al-Raid*, *Al-Rayaam*, *Al-intibaha* and *Al-Wifaag*, as well as satellite TV stations like Al-Shrooq, Tayeba, Saheroon and Kowthar.<sup>140</sup>

Clan economic interests can come to the fore within the patronage system and strain elite cohesion. Awad al-Jaz as energy minister enabled members of his Shaigiya tribe to dominate the oil sector. Similarly, the Jaaliyya came to dominate the cement industry and telecommunication sector. NCP members from the periphery rarely participate in this system. According to one from East Sudan:

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<sup>136</sup> Saad Osman Medani, “Corruption in the Salvation regime before we forget”, in Arabic, [www.Sudaneseonline.org](http://www.Sudaneseonline.org), which documents numerous examples during the past twenty years from newspaper reports and the internet.

<sup>137</sup> He reportedly bought it from Gumaa al-Gumaa, a Saudi Arabian businessman who is now imprisoned for corruption in his home country. “Ali Karti buys the Friendship Palace Hotel with \$85 million”, in Arabic, [www.hurriyatsudan.com](http://www.hurriyatsudan.com).

<sup>138</sup> A major component of party-affiliated businesses emerged from the expansion of Islamic charities into lucrative business sectors under the guise of raising funds for parent charities. The expansion gave rise to what is known as “charitable companies”, which typically enjoy complete exemptions from customs duties, income and business taxes and other financial obligations. This helped many Islamists and sympathisers rapidly rise in business, having learned the necessary skills in charitable companies.

<sup>139</sup> Dan Fodio was established in 1981 as a construction and trading company and currently comprises 32 companies involved in the oil industry, dam construction and major agriculture schemes. It has recently entered into joint agreements with Chinese companies to mine iron and gold.

<sup>140</sup> Osman Medani, “Corruption”, op. cit.

Only those of us close to the Riverines can benefit from the top elites' control of the economy. The governors of the states benefit from the money sent to the states, and they have their own system of corruption supported by deliberate lack of auditing and accountability. The corruption and nepotism are beyond your comprehension.<sup>141</sup>

However, most oil money does not go toward development.<sup>142</sup> Although the CPA has provisions for oil revenue sharing and auditing between North and South, there is no transparency for the portion that goes to the North.<sup>143</sup> According to an ex-chair of a National Assembly committee, military and intelligence elements control this money.<sup>144</sup> A Bank of Sudan official explained that the annual budget mainly applies to the first and second lines of the national budget, notably salaries; expenditures for the military and security forces, including the purchase of arms and other goods, are never revealed, and few know the source of funding.<sup>145</sup>

Pervasive corruption, the weakness of the Shura and the concentration of decision-making have disappointed many committed Islamists, who have either distanced themselves from the party or been sidelined.<sup>146</sup> It has also led many others to join so as to profit from the patronage system.<sup>147</sup> Their loyalty is limited; if the party loses the ability to provide benefits, they could easily abandon it.<sup>148</sup> Recently, disgruntled Janjaweed (Arab militia) groups in Darfur joined the rebels.<sup>149</sup> This is one reason why wealth sharing is so important for the NCP, which needs oil money to lubricate its patronage system.<sup>150</sup> Disagreements over re-

source allocation of many kinds are becoming extremely divisive, with the threat described above of Southern Darfur – a state with an NCP governor and a majority Arab, normally pro-NCP constituency – to use force if deprived by Khartoum of its share of national financial resources symptomatic. These disputes will likely escalate after the South's secession, when government revenues will be even more limited.

Other issues that have come into sharp focus since the elections also raise serious questions about the ability of NCP elites to keep control, if the current system of governance continues. These include access to pasture and water across the North-South border, the need for developmental alternatives, instability in the East due to lack of peace dividends from the 2006 East Sudan Peace Agreement, the problematic popular consultations in Southern Kordofan and the Blue Nile and the unresolved Darfur conflict. The elections and the consultations around them were opportunities for the party to open space for more internal dialogue. By choosing to concentrate instead on rewarding the barons and others instrumental in the divisive policies of the last years, it has further increased grievances among its constituencies and Sudanese in general.

## 2. Selective rewards

As part of its distribution of senior positions, the NCP rewarded those who had worked hard for the party in the past years, particularly in Darfur. The grand leaders of affiliated Arab tribes received prominent posts. Nafie gave the finance ministry to Ali Mahmoud Abdel Salam.<sup>151</sup> Another key figure, General Adam Hamid, was elected head of the State Council (the senate).<sup>152</sup> Abdel Hamid Musa Kasha, as noted, is Southern Darfur's new governor. Abdullah Masar was reappointed a presidential adviser. Safi Al Nur was reconfirmed as head of the nomad organisation. Jaafar Abu Al-Hakam, a Fur, was made Western Darfur governor, because of his ties with Chadian rebels and the role he played during the early stages (2003-2004) of the Darfur war in Wadi Salih.<sup>153</sup> Mohamed Bushara Dousa,

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<sup>141</sup> Crisis Group interview, Gedarif state, September 2010.

<sup>142</sup> Most of the large development projects, such as the Merowe Dam, bridges and roads, are financed by foreign investment and loans. Crisis Group interviews, Khartoum, Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan, 2009-2010.

<sup>143</sup> Crisis Group interview, bank CEO, Khartoum, September 2010. For more on oil revenue mismanagement, see "Crude Calculations", Global Witness, January 2011; "Fuelling mistrust", Global Witness, September 2009.

<sup>144</sup> Crisis Group interview, Khartoum, July 2010.

<sup>145</sup> Crisis Group interviews, division head, Bank of Sudan, Khartoum, September 2010; ex-Lt. General, SAF, Omdurman, December 2010.

<sup>146</sup> Crisis Group interview, a member who worked for an NCP think-tank, Khartoum, September 2010.

<sup>147</sup> Crisis Group interviews, non-Islamist NCP members at state levels, Darfur, Gedarif, Blue Nile, Al-Gezira and Khartoum, September and December 2010.

<sup>148</sup> Crisis group interview, retired SAF general from the Baggara, ex-NCP and current PCP member, September 2010.

<sup>149</sup> Crisis group interview, Khartoum, January 2011.

<sup>150</sup> With the CPA ending and future sharing of oil revenues that account for 40 per cent of Sudan's GDP uncertain, the NCP in December 2010 instructed all Northern governors to halve expenditures and executive bodies, creating a dilemma for those

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who had already installed tribal allies and friends and putting the patronage system under strain.

<sup>151</sup> An ex-governor of Southern Darfur, he was the state minister in the finance ministry who allegedly controlled money for the militia operations in Darfur, 2003-2005.

<sup>152</sup> All these Arab leaders in Darfur were signatories of the Arab Gathering open letter to then Prime Minister Sadiq al-Mahdi in 1987 that made the existence of an Arab supremacist ideology and organisation known. During the 2002-2005 counterinsurgency campaign, the NCP mobilised Arab militias (known initially as Janjaweed) to fight non-Arab insurgents and displace non-Arab groups. Crisis Group Africa Report N°134, *Darfur's New Security Reality*, 26 November 2007.

<sup>153</sup> A Fur member of the NCP said Abu Hakam played a role in identifying some Fur members who participated in Yahia Bo-

a Zaghawa, became justice minister, an attempt to appease the tribe's Kopea section, from which JEM's Khalil Ibrahim also comes. In the East, engineer Ibrahim Mahmood Hamid retained the interior ministry post, while two signatories of the 2006 peace agreement, Amna Salih Dirar and Musa Mohammed Ahmed, chairperson of the Beja Congress, became the state minister at the labour ministry and remained assistant to the president respectively.

The NCP had less success with those who signed the failed 2006 Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA). Abu Al-Gasim Imam, ex-Western Darfur governor, was offered the job of state minister at the youth and sport ministry but declined, joined Minni Minawi in Juba and later went abroad when the government attacked his forces in Western Darfur. Minni Minawi himself, the chair of the Sudan Liberation Movement faction that signed the DPA, resigned as senior assistant to the president (the fourth highest position in government) and chairman of the Transitional Darfur Regional Authority (TDRA) in May 2010. Some of his fighters moved toward the Southern Darfur-Bahr Ghazal border,<sup>154</sup> and in December the government declared his forces hostile and froze TDRA bank accounts. Once the governors of the three Darfur states selected the governor of Western Darfur, Jaafar Abu Hakam, as new TDRA head, the DPA was dead.<sup>155</sup>

### 3. The federal governance system

Establishing a decentralised system of governance was the NIF's initial focus in 1991. On 4 February 1992, a constitutional decree provided for establishment of a federal system. Pursuant to the concept put forward by the transitional national council that drafted the permanent constitution, it was to be based on Sharia and democratic, with a proper Shura; it was assumed society would gradually assimilate its Islamist ideology. A presidential decree finalised the system in 1995, dividing government into three levels: locality, state and national. The law, which many constituencies were not given a proper opportunity to de-

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lad's rebellion and were executed without trial. He added that though the Fur of West Darfur and Jebel Mara have no faith in him, Nafie installed him as governor in a disputed election. Crisis Group interview, Khartoum, September 2010.

<sup>154</sup> He twice left Khartoum during the past three years to protest lack of DPA implementation. He also refused to disarm his troops.

<sup>155</sup> An NCP member suggested that by removing Minni and killing the DPA, the government may have created space for a deal at the Doha talks with another rebel group. Crisis Group interview, NCP central Shura Council member, Khartoum, September 2010. However, the government will continue to selectively implement DPA provisions that further its own policies, for example its recent decision to hold a referendum on the future administrative status of the region, a requirement of the agreement, despite widespread opposition.

bate, provided for appointment, rather than election, of governors and commissioners of localities.<sup>156</sup>

Over time the state governments have become increasingly powerful, at the expense of local government. Governors have sometimes used force (financial and physical) against the NCP organisation in their states. Corruption is prevalent at state levels, as is impunity and absence of auditing, conditions of which the national government is well aware.<sup>157</sup>

Federalism has come to mean, in effect, a decentralised system of political corruption rather than a decentralised system of governance.<sup>158</sup> The fraudulent nature of this federal system has both weakened the NCP and its Islamic state and contributed to the rise of insurgencies.<sup>159</sup>

Increasingly the primary functions of state governments are security and political mobilisation, rather than service delivery. Khartoum retains 55 per cent of total national revenue and divides the remaining 45 per cent among the states. Of these funds the large majority is allocated to salaries of federal civil servants. National development projects are still largely focused in the centre, rendering the rhetoric of devolution and distribution of resources meaningless.<sup>160</sup>

In addition, the 1995 dispensation that many believe was designed to accommodate the South included the decision to redraw the map, converting the nine regions into 26 states, in preparation for total social change. From the start, however, there was considerable controversy, such as over the degree of independence of the Federal Governance Divan (council) and the relationships between federal and state ministers, as well as increased conflict. The prospect of jobs in a new system created high expectations among the Islamists and their allies, and competition for positions was particularly intense at the level of commissioner of localities.<sup>161</sup> The efforts of tribal leaders to acquire important posts triggered numerous local disputes.

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<sup>156</sup> Mahaboub Abdel Salam, op. cit., p. 205.

<sup>157</sup> Crisis Group interview, ex-deputy governor, an eastern state, Khartoum, July 2010.

<sup>158</sup> Crisis Group interview, a scholar, faculty of economics, University of Khartoum, May 2010.

<sup>159</sup> Mahaboub Abdel Salam, op. cit., p. 27. The following discussion draws heavily upon the analysis in this book.

<sup>160</sup> Crisis group telephone interview, Sudan expert, New York, March 2011.

<sup>161</sup> The commissioner position is important and sensitive, representing political authority and standing between the state and its governor and the locality and its council. But its occupant lacks the power to sign off on Shura council decisions, which go directly to the appointed governor, who represents the central authority. The commissioner – the lowest baron in the patronage – is caught between the governor and his constituencies, while supposed to mobilise support and resources for the state party.

This and historical grievances over land ownership and use and local governance were major reasons for the outbreak of war in Darfur. Disputes centred on which cities or towns would become state or locality capitals also aggravated relations between tribes, particularly those whose *hakura* (tribal-owned land) was divided by the new maps – a problem still plaguing many parts of Sudan, including the South.

## **V. NCP SURVIVAL IN THE WAKE OF THE SOUTH'S SECESSION**

The NCP recognised that peace with the South could threaten its survival, and it negotiated the CPA with a view to protecting its power rather than addressing the root causes of perennial crises. The resultant preoccupation with self-interest and failure to make unity attractive led Southerners to overwhelmingly choose secession in the January 2011 self-determination referendum. After the South's separation, the NCP continues to deal with the conflicts in the Nuba Mountains, southern Blue Nile and Darfur without the political will to be inclusive or to collectively reform the governance system in the manner necessary for political stability and peace.

### **A. ANOTHER LOST OPPORTUNITY – THE CPA**

The CPA was intended to institute a new reality in Sudan. It was premised on three major principles: fairer distribution of power and wealth between the centre and the peripheries, democratic transformation and the right for southern Sudanese to determine their own future. General elections were scheduled half way through the six-year interim period, so as to widen participation in governance after the two signatory parties – the NCP and the SPLM – had laid down the foundations of the new dispensation. In the period after the elections, the new representative government was to build on those foundations in order to consolidate reconciliation, continue review of constitutional arrangements and establish conditions that would affirm the rights of the people of Southern Kordofan and the Blue Nile states and encourage Southerners to choose continued unity of their own free will.

The NCP and SPLM failed to hold elections as scheduled and manipulated them when they eventually were conducted, two years late, so as to ensure majorities in their regions.<sup>162</sup> Consequently, they wasted the period that had been intended to consolidate peace and unity, and the democratic transformation agenda was dropped.<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>162</sup>During the first half of the interim period (extended from five to three years), SPLM/A leaders shied from confronting their partners on national issues, except those mattering for the South. Particularly after John Garang's death, they sidelined their northern component to focus on consolidating control in the South. The SPLM failed to play a more active role in national politics, treated the election process from a Southern perspective and did not build the trust with Northern and Southern opposition parties to advance a democratic transition.

<sup>163</sup>Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°72, *Rigged Elections in Darfur and the Consequences of a Probable NCP Victory in Sudan*,

Sudan's interim national constitution (INC) needs to be amended by July 2011, with the end of the CPA, and the NCP has already prepared a draft to replace it.<sup>164</sup> According to an informed party member, it is simply the INC with all references to the South removed, which would serve continued NCP rule well.<sup>165</sup> If this draft is adopted, the party will have a clear majority in the National Assembly when the Southern members leave and thus the capability to legislate as it wishes.<sup>166</sup> Opposition parties are agitating for a much more inclusive constitutional review conference that would also address the shortcomings of the current federal system and state reform.

## B. CHALLENGES FACING THE NORTH

The successful conclusion of the Southern Sudan Self-Determination Referendum and President Bashir's announcement that Khartoum accepts its result has opened the door for real negotiation on the future relationship between North and South after July 2011. The CPA did not address many important matters, and agreements are needed particularly on citizenship, security arrangements, economic and financial matters and international obligations.<sup>167</sup> Among the most critical issues are decisions on still contested parts of the North-South border; management of the borders; the disputed area of Abyei; managing oil-related issues; and implementation of the key provisions in the Protocol for Southern Kordofan and the Blue Nile States.

Many common interests remain, because of historic, social, economic and political linkages, most notably in the savannah zone that extends from Ethiopia to the Central African Republic and is divided by the 1 January 1956 border.<sup>168</sup> There are significant questions about the fate of more than one million Southerners in the North, as well as thousands of Northerners in the South; the status of

some 40,000 SPLA military personnel;<sup>169</sup> and Southerners in the security organs of the North, including an estimated 25,000 soldiers and police. Further, there are political links between the SPLM in the South and in the North, as well as strong local SPLM branches in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile. The African Union High Implementation Panel (AUHIP), lead by the former president of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, the UN and key governments, such as those of the U.S., Norway and the UK, are trying to facilitate and support the negotiations. In addition to their common issues, North and South each has its own domestic challenges.<sup>170</sup>

### 1. A divided party lacking a coherent vision

The NCP remains a divided party, lacking a coherent vision. Many mid-level members believe it could recover if it could unite the Islamic movement by bridging the differences with Turabi's PCP and starting on reforms. They are calling for unification in discreet grassroots discussions in homes and social gatherings.<sup>171</sup> They think reconciliation is possible if they can limit the influence of security hardliners such as Nafie, which would also allow them to offer greater transparency and accountability, as well as resolve the Darfur conflict.<sup>172</sup> The PCP, however, has made it clear that unification cannot take place under current circumstances.<sup>173</sup> Turabi went further and tried to isolate the NCP from regional Islamic movements on a visit to Qatar, using a 17 September 2010 Al Jazeera interview to expose its shortcomings.<sup>174</sup> He has also openly challenged the policies of the security hardliners and called for a public revolt. The NISS detained him again, without charge, on 17 January. Despite an internal party decision to hold him through the end of the CPA, Bashir freed him on 2 May. In a press interview, Turabi said he had not been interrogated, and his party maintains solidarity with

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30 March 2010. The SPLM-North is continuing to push this agenda in North Sudan.

<sup>164</sup> When the South secedes, the INC can be amended by simply removing any reference to South Sudan. Some NCP members argue that the National Assembly can accept it as a permanent constitution or authorise a constitutional review process to establish a new permanent one. The NCP appears to favour modifying the existing interim constitution and holding a constitutional review process not bound by the end of the interim period.

<sup>165</sup> Crisis Group interview, ex-member of the NCP Shura council, Khartoum, September 2010.

<sup>166</sup> Southern delegates have opted not to participate in the current session.

<sup>167</sup> "Mekelle MoU between the NCP and the SPLM on post-referendum issues and arrangements", NCP and SPLM, 22 June 2010.

<sup>168</sup> The border between North and South Sudan as delimited by the British colonial administration.

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<sup>169</sup> These are the 9th and 10th SPLA divisions, composed mostly of troops from Southern Kordofan (Nuba Mountains) and the Blue Nile. They are officially citizens of the North and will need to be integrated into existing security forces, maintained as discrete units or formally disarmed, demobilised and reintegrated.

<sup>170</sup> See Crisis Group Report, *Politics and Transition in the New South Sudan*, op. cit.

<sup>171</sup> Crisis Group interviews, NCP and PCP Shura council members, Darfur, Gedarif, Blue Nile and Khartoum, December 2010-February 2011.

<sup>172</sup> The Joint UN-AU Chief Mediator for Darfur peace and the Qataris believe the Darfur problem cannot be resolved unless Khalil Ibrahim, the JEM leader, joins the peace talks.

<sup>173</sup> Crisis Group interview, Hassan al-Turabi, September 2010.

<sup>174</sup> Qatar thinks that bringing Turabi and Bashir together on Darfur might assist the mediation, but an attempt in Doha failed; the day Bashir arrived, Turabi left.

other opposition parties in seeking to overthrow the NCP regime.<sup>175</sup>

NCP internal divisions have worsened since December 2010. Though the leadership tries to project party unity and decision-making coherence, it remains broadly split between the security hardliners and more accommodating civilians, most visibly in the conflict between Nafie and Ali Osman Taha that has spilled into public a number of times. Since the elections, the divisions between the two camps around Nafie and Taha also extend to the peripheries, where there is discontent between the barons and the NCP state parties; among constituencies; and between governors and the centre. In most Northern states, there is also friction between supporters of the Khartoum-installed governors and NCP organisations.<sup>176</sup> For example, the governor of Red Sea state, Muhamed Tahit Eila, disappeared to Saudi Arabia for almost a month after Nafie threatened to have him removed because of the speech he gave at a donors conference in Kuwait in November 2010, in which he argued that aid money should bypass Khartoum due to corruption at the centre and go directly to the states.<sup>177</sup>

The divisions were aggravated after budget deficits forced the NCP to cut staff in all state governments by up to half. Taha, who headed this exercise, asked governors to submit reduced executive staffing lists in February 2011. According to several NCP members, they have yet to comply, and serious problems could result, because the measure would impact the state-level patronage-baron system that most governors continued after the elections. Moreover, there are implications for the Nafie-Taha dispute, since the former installed the governors and seeks to keep their loyalty, while the latter is now in charge and pressing them on a sensitive step they resist.

Despite their internal divisions, some NCP leaders are now calling for wide reform, a new "Second Republic of Sudan", but still based on the program the party adopted after the elections. This includes five key principles: arguments about cultural diversity are over – Sudan is an Arabic and Islamic nation; it will be governed by Sharia; the NCP is open to including opposition parties in a wider government but will not accept a transitional national government; the government will suppress public demonstrations; and reform of the federal system including dividing states

along ethnic lines.<sup>178</sup> Many options are being considered, including re-establishing the six regions of North Sudan, holding new elections and reforming the current governance structures, with governors to be appointed and elections only for the president and state and federal legislative bodies.<sup>179</sup>

Meanwhile, the NCP has formed two committees, one led by former intelligence chief Salah Gosh to discuss the way forward with other parties, and an internal committee led by Taha to develop a plan for reforming the government, including reviewing the federal system, the size of the state governments and development priorities.<sup>180</sup> President Bashir has made additional promises, including that he will not stand for re-election when his term expires in 2015 and that the party intends to limit the age at which a candidate can stand for a senior position to 60.<sup>181</sup> He also pledged to establish a national independent commission to deal with official corruption.

President Bashir's announced intent to relinquish power in 2015 has created serious concerns within the party, given the Taha-Nafie rift. Many senior members contend that Bashir should indicate soon how and when the party will choose a new leader. According to a senior figure, the top leadership will face a number of contentious issues, including whether the next chairman should be another Riverine, or from a different region, and whether this position can be held jointly with the presidency or should be separate.<sup>182</sup> He also claimed that President Bashir was advised by Islamist military officers as well as disgruntled members to hand power not to Taha or Nafie, but instead to another SAF general who would be acceptable to the wider NCP constituency, the army and the security apparatus and, most importantly, would not turn Bashir over to the International Criminal Court. Either way, Bashir would need to navigate the conflicting loyalties of a number of governmental and party security apparatuses. While Bashir has his own militias and the army behind him, Nafie controls parts of the party security apparatus, and Taha has the respect of several PDF militias and the Islamist movement linked to the NCP.

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<sup>175</sup> "Turabi: Dismissal of Gosh probably will not lead to another split", in Arabic, <http://arabic-media.com/newspapers/sudan/alsahafa.htm>, 3 May 2011.

<sup>176</sup> The Rezeigat-Misseriya clashes since June 2010 in southern Darfur, with over 1,000 killed, have been aggravated by the dispute between NCP members who voted for the PCP gubernatorial candidate, and Musa Kasha, the NCP nominee.

<sup>177</sup> Crisis Group telephone interview, member of the legislative council of Red Sea State, Khartoum, March 2011.

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<sup>178</sup> Though not so declared, some of the proposed splits reflect tribal divisions, such as in Darfur and the Red Sea states.

<sup>179</sup> Crisis Group telephone interview, member of the Shura council, Khartoum, April 2011.

<sup>180</sup> The NCP has limited the functions of Southerners in the Khartoum government and submitted a revised constitution to the National Assembly that eliminates all references to the South. From April, the parliament has had no Southern members.

<sup>181</sup> The opposition claimed this was intended to embarrass the leaders of four large opposition parties, National Umma Party, DUP, PCP and the Communists, whose leaders are all over 70, and less significant for the NCP, which has younger members to continue the Islamist project.

<sup>182</sup> Crisis Group telephone interviews, Khartoum, April 2011.

According to an Islamist analyst, the NCP leadership is unlikely to succumb to the serious pressures – external and internal – it faces. He argued that many of his one-time security colleagues fear that if the external pressure increases, due to an escalation of conflict in Darfur, Southern Kordofan or Blue Nile, hardliners could launch an internal coup. They would be willing to sacrifice Bashir, he claimed, because the army is not prepared to defend him.<sup>183</sup> Others argued, however, that a replacement would be worse than the current regime, because the hardliners would reinstitute the draconian laws of the 1990s.<sup>184</sup> Indeed, in some ways the North appears on the verge of repeating a number of the worst aspects of the Salvation Regime's first decade, with political violence at or near the surface and few promising peaceful options.

## 2. Manipulating the international community

NCP leaders have a history of making extensive tactical adjustments to retain power and privileges. In the late 1990s, they jettisoned Turabi, halted support for Islamic radicals and assisted Western counter-terrorism efforts against their former allies. They are willing to be similarly flexible today, but they can be expected to seek to dilute to the minimum possible any moves that would constitute genuine reform, otherwise accommodate the grievances of the peripheries or respond to the winds of change blowing from revolutionary events in North Africa.

Sudan and the NCP leadership are still under various sanctions because of past support for international terrorism. President Bashir has been indicted at the International Criminal Court (ICC) for serious crimes in Darfur. Nevertheless, the need to achieve implementation of the CPA has given Bashir and his party leverage that it has used with the international community to hold on to power.<sup>185</sup> With the CPA concluding in July 2011, however, much of this leverage could be lost, at a time when the South's secession may bring the North new problems; there is risk of greater troubles in Darfur, and economic hardships are mounting rapidly for most people.<sup>186</sup> It is an NCP priority, accordingly, to create new leverage. It seeks to persuade key governments, especially Washington, that it remains indispensable for North-South cooperation (with the implicit threat that it could otherwise destabilise the new

nation); for a Darfur settlement; and for countering international terrorism. It is in this context that its December decisions to let the referendum proceed and pursue the incentives on promise in the September 2010 U.S. roadmap can probably best be understood.<sup>187</sup>

## 3. The savannah belt – the new South?

The savannah belt includes the transitional areas of Southern Kordofan, the Blue Nile, Darfur, Abyei and other disputed areas along the border. Its people, whose livelihoods are intertwined, were the most affected during past wars, marginalised by consecutive central governments and highly militarised. With the South's independence imminent, they have serious concerns for their livelihoods and the nature of the border. A hard frontier would devastate the Baggara, who, because of seasonal rainfall need to move their herds freely, and put at risk local cross-border economies. NCP security hardliners believe they must control this zone, particularly the peoples who live north of the border. Their basic strategy is to maintain tribal divisions by capitalising on their militarised culture and divergent interests and co-opting tribal leaders. According to a retired SAF general, the NCP cannot afford to have a united savannah or create a new enemy of the Baggara.<sup>188</sup>

However, since the 2010 elections, there is a growing sense among Baggara tribal leaders that it is better to seek local solutions than rely on the political elites of Khartoum or Juba. Though NCP leaders claim to represent them, most Baggara native leaders, and some Nuba leaders as well, see the party as using them to advance its own political agenda.<sup>189</sup> The central government launched two North-South Border States Conferences, also known as Tamazuj ("intermixture") meetings, at which border-state elites and communities discussed concerns.<sup>190</sup> However, according

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<sup>183</sup> Crisis Group interview, former NISS officer, Khartoum, January 2011.

<sup>184</sup> Crisis Group interview, Khartoum, February 2011.

<sup>185</sup> Crisis Group interview, Sadig al-Mahdi, December 2010.

<sup>186</sup> Real GDP growth dropped to about 5 per cent in 2010, the currency has depreciated, inflation is in the double digits (16.7 per cent in January 2011), and domestic food prices have skyrocketed (19.8 per cent in early 2011). "Sudan after the Referendum: Economic Update and Challenges", World Bank presentation, 10 February 2011.

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<sup>187</sup> In September 2010, the U.S. suggested a "roadmap" to President Bashir that could lead to improved bilateral relations, including support for agricultural development, expanded trade and investment, exchange of ambassadors and, eventually, an end to such sanctions as the blocking of Sudanese government assets and travel restrictions on certain officials. The U.S. further indicated that if there was genuine accountability for crimes committed in Darfur, it would be prepared to normalise relations. "Obama renews Sudan sanctions, keeps pressure on vote", Reuters, 1 November 2010; "Remarks by the President in a Ministerial Meeting on Sudan", www.whitehouse.gov, 24 September 2010.

<sup>188</sup> He argued that more than 60 per cent of the regular military is from the Baggara tribes of Kordofan and Darfur. After the South secedes, he said, the NCP challenge will be to deal with a demoralised army. Crisis Group interview, September 2010.

<sup>189</sup> Crisis Group interview, a prominent ex-governor of a border state, Khartoum, September 2010.

<sup>190</sup> For more, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°75, *Sudan: Defining the North-South Border*, 2 September 2010, pp. 14-15.

to a participant, the agenda and approach were limited, and those who took part were conscious that free dialogue would produce recommendations that might undermine NCP power.<sup>191</sup> Shortly after, in July-August 2010, some prominent Baggara tribal leaders agreed to form a mechanism to coordinate responses to the issues related to their livelihoods, including cross-border movement. They believe their dependence on cattle and the major oil pipe lines crossing their lands make peaceful relations with Southern tribes and the Republic of South Sudan paramount for their well-being.<sup>192</sup>

Genuine dialogue among the local peoples has always been resisted by the NCP, particularly in Darfur. On many occasions, the party directly or indirectly polarised communities, as in Darfur between Arabs and non-Arabs, among the Misseriya leadership and between the Misseriya and the Rezeigat. According to a prominent Arab from Kordofan, "the NCP wants us to fight on their behalf with our children and wants us to fight each other to be weak. We are stopping this ... but some of our young leaders are co-opted by the small money paid for being a PDF soldier and happy to receive weapons and ammunition instead of schools and health clinics. They are destroying our children".<sup>193</sup> A genuine dialogue in the savanna zone would potentially produce common understanding and restore the capacity of local administrations to address their local problems. It also could bring about agreements on the minimum required to preserve peace and stability between North and South and among the border communities.

Social peace among peoples who have interacted for hundreds of years is viewed by NCP hardliners as a threat, however, because it could lead to a political peace that might isolate the party's ruling elites and impose a political agenda developed by the new South in what remains of Sudan.<sup>194</sup> The potential for this is all the greater because the area includes most of the country's core resources: oil, cattle and agricultural land, as well as much of its population. Such an agenda might be more appealing to many than what is on offer from traditional opposition parties. It would likely gain traction as well among Darfurians and

communities that will not benefit much from the popular consultations in Southern Kordofan and the Blue Nile.<sup>195</sup> Likewise it would have prospects to attract many who are not satisfied with the East Sudan Peace Agreement.<sup>196</sup>

#### *The transitional areas*

With the CPA concluding, its protocol for Southern Kordofan and the Blue Nile must also be wrapped up.<sup>197</sup> The consultation process should have taken place during the second half of the CPA's six-year interim period, after free and fair elections. Blue Nile held the elections, and Malik Agar, the SPLM's deputy chairman in the state and commander of the SPLA's 9th division, became governor.<sup>198</sup> However, he does not have a large natural constituency. He is supported by his Ingessana tribe as well as the Uduk and the Dowala indigenous tribes that are some 15 per cent of the state's population. The other tribes, such as the Al-Aneg, Fung, Arabs and Wataweet, traditionally support the National Umma Party, NCP and DUP. The Falata (Hausa) tribe, which migrated from West Africa in the last century, is linked to the NCP and has a highly mobilised PDF.

According to many in the region, the governor is accepted by some because of his efforts to improve social services and increase development. The public consultation now underway has revealed distinct differences between those influenced by the NCP, who think the CPA protocol has achieved its objectives, and those influenced by the governor, who think the state should be given self-rule.<sup>199</sup>

SPLM supporters in Damazin, the state capital, said the governor knows the NCP will not accept self-rule for the Blue Nile, and he is apparently not interested in it because

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<sup>191</sup> On July 2010 in Aweil, Northern Bahr Ghazal state, the conference deliberated on issues including border demarcation, security, stability and development. It decided to step up development projects in the South under the Unity Support Fund initiative and reaffirmed commitment to maintain security and promote peaceful co-existence between the neighbouring states. The next conference was supposed to be in Abyei in October, but did not materialise. *Ibid.*

<sup>192</sup> Crisis Group interview, prominent Misseriya leader, Khartoum, September 2010.

<sup>193</sup> Crisis Group interview, an ex-governor and a leader from Southern Kordofan, Khartoum, September 2010.

<sup>194</sup> Crisis Group interviews, senior SPLM and NCP politicians and two scholars, Khartoum, December-January 2011.

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<sup>195</sup> Crisis Group interview, University of Khartoum professor, Khartoum, September 2010.

<sup>196</sup> A military commander from the East front who decided not to join the peace agreement said many easterners are not clear on the status of their region; they think the agreement was between the NCP and Eritrea and has not made a genuine change for the people: compensation has not been paid, and the government shows no sign of reviewing the decentralised system, as promised in it. Crisis Group interview, Gedarif, September 2010. For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°102, *Sudan: Saving Peace in the East*, 5 January 2006.

<sup>197</sup> The popular consultations are a process negotiated as a separate protocol to the CPA to give the people of the two states opportunity to express grievances and offer recommendations to the central government.

<sup>198</sup> The SPLM made military threats as the results were to be announced. Many close observers from the region argue there was a deal, in which the NCP accepted Malik Agar as governor, and he agreed to support the unity of Sudan before the referendum.

<sup>199</sup> Crisis Group telephone interview, member of the Popular Consultation Committee, Damazin, February 2011.

he would be unable to defend it without support from the South. The public consultation is thus unlikely to produce substantive change of the sort Southerners have achieved with their referendum. The fighters and many civilian supporters of the SPLM-Blue Nile feel their years of combat have produced little other than a long ceasefire; if Malik Agar does not provide alternatives, their support may dwindle, and he could lose control of Blue Nile SPLA units to a new leadership that may emerge. The best he can probably hope for is to improve the situation by negotiating more development incentives for his state, coupled with regional autonomy; he would find it difficult to sustain a return to war unless South Sudan offered aid and strategic depth.<sup>200</sup>

Southern Kordofan lags considerably behind Blue Nile in its public consultation process. The NCP and SPLM agreed to hold elections in May 2011 and to start the popular consultation before July, which will be a daunting task.<sup>201</sup> Tension is mounting over the elections, especially the contest for governor between Abdel Azziz al-Hilu, the present deputy governor (SPLM), and Ahmed Haroun (NCP, indicted by the ICC). The Nuba are not united, and al-Hilu, does not command the support of all their tribes, especially since some Nuba commanders are imprisoned in the South. Haroun is not from a local tribe, but the NCP wants him re-elected. The Misseriya and Hawazma question why one of their own is not the NCP nominee. Some argue that Nafie wants Haroun because he is an experienced Islamist who needs to be rewarded for services in Darfur and to deal with future risks in the state.<sup>202</sup> The outcome of the popular consultations in the Blue Nile also will overshadow the process in Southern Kordofan.

Lastly, the CPA security arrangements also expire in July. If there is not a widely accepted outcome of the popular consultations and a new security arrangement, there is a high risk that one of the parties could resort to violence. The 9th and 10th divisions of the SPLA, from the Nuba and Blue Nile respectively, number some 40,000 active troops and can call on more.<sup>203</sup> Because of these forces, the NCP maintains high readiness among the PDF, contingency forces based just outside Damazin city and three

SAF divisions. Southern Kordofan is even more volatile, because of the disputed area of Abyei. The SPLA is highly mobilised south of Abyei, and the NCP has deployed four divisions near there. The Misseriya, particularly along the central and western transhumance routes, are likewise mobilised, because they rejected the Court of Arbitration's decisions on Abyei and suspect the NCP could make a deal to give the territory to the South, despite repeated promises that Abyei will remain part of the North.

These situations are thus very fragile. If the popular consultations fail, and there is no security agreement regarding the status of the northern SPLA forces there, conflict could reignite and possibly destabilise the entire savannah zone. The NCP so far has refused to accept a continued presence of the UN mission in Sudan (UNMIS) in the North after the CPA ends. UNMIS and the AUHIP, supported by the U.S., need to immediately facilitate a new security framework for the transitional areas, to include, crucially, international monitoring pending final conclusion of the peace process there; given the high level of mistrust among all the local and principle players in these areas, a third party's help is required.

#### *Darfur peace*

The Darfur conflict continues without a credible peace process.<sup>204</sup> At present, there are two tracks: political negotiations, led by external actors, between the government and a rebel faction that is a coalition of armed groups, the Liberation and Justice Movement (LJM) led by a former governor of greater Darfur, Eltigani Seisi;<sup>205</sup> and a government strategy to "domesticate" the peace process by managing it from within and minimising the role of external mediators.

In Doha, the government's apparent strategy is to settle politically with whoever is at the table and then close the door to further external processes and focus on its domestic peace process. Though JEM recently joined the Doha process, not all major rebel forces are there, which risks a repeat of the failed 2006 DPA, signed by only one of the three major rebel groups. Furthermore, Doha may founder over two main issues: reunification of the three Darfur states under a local vice president; and the nature of the regional authority. The government refuses reunification without a referendum and argues that giving the re-

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<sup>200</sup> Crisis Group interviews, a trader, SPLA officer and senior staff member of an international agency, Damazin, December 2010. Malik Agar said that denying the Blue Nile self rule as one outcome of the popular consultations would mean a return to war. "Agar: refusal of self-rule means return to war", in Arabic, [www.sudaneseonline.com](http://www.sudaneseonline.com), 22 March 2011.

<sup>201</sup> The SPLM claimed the 2008 census in Southern Kordofan missed large SPLM-dominated areas, particularly in the Nuba Mountains.

<sup>202</sup> Crisis Group interview, ex-governor, Khartoum, December 2010.

<sup>203</sup> Crisis Group interview, retired SAF brig. general, Blue Nile, December 2010.

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<sup>204</sup> Crisis Group will analyse the Darfur peace process more fully in a subsequent briefing.

<sup>205</sup> The Doha process is under the auspices of the AU and Arab League, led by Joint UN-AU Chief Mediator Djibril Bassole and Ahmed al-Mahmoud, state minister in the Qatar foreign ministry. Its mandate is to reach a political settlement with rebel groups before the conclusion of the CPA in July 2011. In March, Bassole announced he was stepping down to become foreign minister of Burkina Faso.

bels a vice presidency would lead to Sudan's implosion – implying it would open the door for similar demands from other regions. It also is not interested in addressing the return of the internally displaced (IDPs) and refugees to their homes, given the complexities of land ownership and removing new occupiers.<sup>206</sup> Further, there is a belief among many rebel leaders that the NCP is sliding into more difficulties as a result of the South's secession, so it would be advantageous to mark time in Doha until they see what happens around July 2011.<sup>207</sup>

The NCP's domestication strategy includes an attempt to address developmental needs in Darfur and envisages subjecting any peace agreement eventually reached in Doha to wider discussion within Darfur and possible consequential adjustments. It hopes that such a process might strip rebel groups of legitimacy that do not participate in the peace negotiations in Doha or elsewhere. The African Union High Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) and UNAMID support Darfur consultations<sup>208</sup> – a key element in the strategy – but some external actors, including the UN secretariat, are concerned insecurity would undermine the domestic process.<sup>209</sup>

The strategy also lacks credibility among the directly affected people, namely IDPs and refugees, as well as rebel groups, opposition parties and many Darfuri elites. Their criticism is mainly centred on their lack of trust in the government. Moreover, the NCP wants to operationalise its strategy, although for several reasons the environment on the ground is not yet conducive to the sort of consultation that it and the AUHIP seek to undertake. It would put resolution of the conflict into the hands of the political barons and governors who are part of the problem, as well as the NCP-dominated members of the legislative councils who came to office through fraudulent elections, co-opted native administrations and partisan civil society; it would sideline the Arabs, who are equally affected, have real concerns and most of whose militias are now beyond government control; it would also sideline armed groups that did not participate in the Doha process, opposition political forces, independent civil society, IDPs and refu-

gees; and it would discount a role for judicial accountability in a final settlement.<sup>210</sup>

Instead of taking decisions to improve the environment, the government, to the surprise of many, decided in early March 2011 to allow a referendum on the administrative status of Darfur per the provisions of the DPA. In a further controversial move, it submitted a proposal to President Bashir to form two new states in Darfur. Rebel groups oppose these ideas, pointing out that reunification of the region is under negotiation, so Khartoum should not take unilateral decisions, and a proper referendum cannot be held while fighting and impunity continue, and more than a third of the population is displaced.<sup>211</sup> A Darfur tribal leader complained that the NCP is setting the stage for reigniting old tribal wars, such as those between the Maalia and the Rezeigat. "The NCP Riverine [elites] do not care if our divide is deepened", he said. "They are getting the wrong advice from the Arab elites in Khartoum".<sup>212</sup>

#### **4. The need for reform**

The NCP emasculated the Northern opposition parties over two decades, destroying their financial basis, dividing them and co-opting influential members through its patronage system. Because of this, the parties have not been able to regenerate themselves sufficiently to push

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<sup>210</sup> The NISS continues arbitrary detention of local human rights, civil society and political party activists and reporters, such as those of Radio Dabanga, and to impede humanitarian agency access to remote Darfur villages targeted for military operations. "Darfuri voices silenced: 66th day since arrests", [www.radiodabanga.org](http://www.radiodabanga.org), 3 January 2011.

<sup>211</sup> From December 2010 to March 2011, over 35,000 people fled from areas north and west of Shangil Tobaya and villages east of Jebel Marra and arrived at Zamzam IDP Camp in dire need. Aerial bombardment, ground attacks by the army and pro-government militias targeted areas harbouring rebels groups; there was also daily looting, and many villages were burned. According to Radio Dabanga, more than 60 villages in the areas of Dar es Salaam, Tabit, Shangil Tobaya, Khor Abeche and Tutumar Targo were affected. "Pro-government militias continue to abduct and rape women and young girls fleeing attacks", [www.radiodabanga.org](http://www.radiodabanga.org). In March, the committee formed on recommendations of the all-political parties conference in Kenana (2009) to study dividing Darfur into more states recommended dividing South Darfur into two states, the new one with Daein as its capital, to accommodate the Rezeigat (majority Arabic population), Maalia (Arab tribe) and Birgit (non-Arab) – the latter two rejected the proposal; and West Darfur into two states, the new one to accommodate the Fur tribe of Zalengi and Jebel Marra, and leave the rest of the state for the Massaliet. It also proposed dividing other states, such as Red Sea and White Nile.

<sup>212</sup> Crisis Group telephone interview, Khartoum, March 2011. The Arab advisers in Khartoum he meant included such figures as Abdullah Masar, Ali Mahmoud and Adam Hamid.

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<sup>206</sup> Crisis Group interviews, NCP figures from Darfur and tribal leaders, Fasher, Nyala and Khartoum, December-January 2011. The SLJM rebels also insist on a real regional authority, embedded in the constitution to implement any peace accord.

<sup>207</sup> Crisis Group interviews, rebel commanders, Doha and elsewhere outside Darfur, December-January 2011.

<sup>208</sup> Crisis Group interview, diplomat, Khartoum, September 2010.

<sup>209</sup> Crisis Group interview, Western diplomat, Khartoum, February 2011.

the regime to make changes. Their only real opportunity to challenge the NCP was at the 2010 elections, but they won fewer than 2 per cent of the parliament seats; splinter parties did better by accepting NCP support.

With the CPA ending and the South seceding, the opposition parties see a new opportunity, but they are divided over what to do, between those who think that it is time for regime change through public revolt and those who think such a revolt would fail and so advocate dialogue about a more gradual way forward. A coalition of opposition parties, the National Consensus Parties, called for a wider national government to be established before July, as well as a new constitution and elections within an agreed time. The National Umma Party presented such a program in a memorandum to Bashir and set up a joint committee with the NCP to consider this course, but so far nothing has come of it. Similarly, the DUP and NCP agreed to form committees to discuss inclusive government and resolution of the Darfur problem.

The chance of a successful public revolt is slim at the moment, because the NCP is well organised, with substantial constituencies all over the country; disposes of large amounts of private and public money; and controls the official security bodies, the PDF and private militias. It would probably crush any revolt at its inception. In the wake of revolutionary events in North Africa, President Bashir implied that the party was ready to defeat in the streets whoever wished to replicate the Tunisian example.<sup>213</sup>

In December 2010 and January 2011, before Tunisia's revolution, hundreds of university students demonstrated in Khartoum against high food prices and for greater freedoms. The government responded with large forces, detaining and abusing more than 100.<sup>214</sup> These demonstrations followed earlier action in Gedarif, Gezira state, where young men burned crops to protest food price hikes.<sup>215</sup> As in other revolts in the Middle East and North Africa, these actions were organised through Facebook, but political parties and their traditional leaders – including those that called for regime change – did not come out in support. When Sadig al-Mahdi gave the NCP a 26 January deadline to respond to his party's memo, many thought it might lead to demonstrations, but he settled for an ambiguous rapprochement with Bashir, as did Merghani, the DUP head. Despite their weaknesses, opposition parties still think they can be the alternative to the NCP, but their acceptance is low in the peripheries, once home to major constituencies. Popular revolt in Khartoum led by tradi-

tional parties without help of new forces such as the Darfur rebels and the SPLM-North would be problematic.

Some opposition parties are now negotiating unilaterally with the NCP. A National Umma Party report in March 2011 on its discussions with the NCP (led by Salah Gosh) over three months revealed extensive talks.<sup>216</sup> They reportedly agreed that Sharia would be implemented on a territorial rather than personal basis and that both Sharia and local norms would be the basis for legislation. The National Umma Party also proposed, and apparently obtained NCP acceptance, that a democratically elected panel would ensure laws would adhere to Sharia, without contravening human rights norms ratified by Sudan, including freedom of worship. The party further proposed that citizenship be the basis for rights and duties, people be considered the source of power (to elect the president and their representatives to the legislature body), the legislature be the only entity able to create new laws (ending the practice of presidential decrees with the force of law), and future Darfur peace agreements must be incorporated in the constitution.

Issues that the two parties said they would continue to study and discuss include reforming the civil service, army, police, PDF, security and intelligence, as well as the reunification of Darfur into one region. The NCP rejected dual citizenship for North and South Sudan, arguing this was premature before the South becomes fully independent in July 2011, and refused to reinstitute the old six regions of North Sudan. As demanded by the National Umma party, the ruling party was willing to consider a more inclusive national government, but would not accept the participation of the PCP and the Communist Party. Discussions apparently are being pursued on these and a range of other issues. The government established a National Secretariat for Strategic Dialogue to create (with input from think-tanks) a road map for managing a transparent and strategic dialogue. It was to start its meetings in mid-April, and there is expectation that its spokesperson will soon be appointed.<sup>217</sup>

However, in a further illustration of the deep division within the top echelons of the NCP, Bashir suddenly fired Salah Gosh on 26 April as head of the security advisory committee, which means that he is no longer responsible for the NCP political party negotiations and no longer heads the team negotiating with the SPLM on post-independence issues. A few days before, Nafie had said that Gosh's talks with opposition parties were not sanctioned by the NCP.

<sup>213</sup> "Sudan's Split: As South Cheers, the North Protests", *Time*, 31 January 2011.

<sup>214</sup> "Sudan: Protesters Describe Torture by Security Officers", Human Rights Watch, March 2011.

<sup>215</sup> Local Sudanese newspapers, January 2010.

<sup>216</sup> "Disagreements around official forces, civil services and system of governance", in Arabic, *Al-Sahafa*, 23 March 2011, and reprinted by Sudanile, [www.sudanile.com](http://www.sudanile.com).

<sup>217</sup> "Start of strategic dialogue in mid-April", in Arabic, <http://arabic-media.com/newspapers/sudan/alsahafa.htm>.

Gosh publicly contradicted Nafie, whose remarks, he said, were personal, and insisted that he had the support of the presidency. But in less than 24 hours, he was fired.<sup>218</sup> It remains to be seen how this will affect the Taha-Nafie split.<sup>219</sup>

The same day (2 May) on which Turabi was released from detention, Gosh handed his portfolio for talks with opposition parties (mainly the Umma and the DUP) to Bakri Hassan Salih, who said he would continue dialogue with all parties. Also that day, Taha said the NCP would discuss the new constitution with all parties, implicitly including for the first time the communists and Turabi's PCP. A day earlier, twenty prominent Islamists, supported by second- and third-tier NCP figures, submitted an eight-point memorandum to the political secretariat calling on the party leadership to consider reforms to safeguard the country. According to a senior NCP member, Ghandor al-Mahdi, the secretariat chairperson, has endorsed the memo, which can be understood as in effect an endorsement by Nafie.<sup>220</sup>

Despite the talks that have been held to date, two senior opposition leaders assert the NCP has left the parties no option for constructive engagement, given how it has responded to the Umma Party proposals and its public threats to crush any demonstrations. The situation is coming to resemble that of the late 1980s, when the Islamists took power, they add, but this time the opposition leaders might be tempted to join with rebel groups out of desperation.<sup>221</sup> But even if the NCP is weakened and falling

back upon Khartoum, the peripheries would probably be unable to unite, because of the deep cleavages within and among them, for example in Darfur between Zurga (blacks) and Arabs; in Kordofan, between Misseriya and Ngong Dinka, Nuba and Arabs; and in Blue Nile, between the SPLM in the state and others. Grabbing territory would be the immediate objective of many. Because Sudan is full of arms, a weakened Khartoum could result in regional wars. The traditional parties no longer have the acceptance and capacity to prevent such chaos; a complex new civil war could easily result, with dire consequences for the entire region.

## 5. What the international community can do

The international community needs to see the Sudan problem in its totality. Khartoum's policies have changed little from regime to regime and are still dominated by divide and rule tactics and use of the state apparatus and party security forces to subjugate the citizenry. The status quo is unsustainable, but the international community cannot afford to permit state collapse. Thinking it can get along with an unreformed NCP is not realistic; pressure is required to open space for inclusive engagement. The multiple envoys for Sudan<sup>222</sup> need to agree on a common and coherent policy that reconciles Chinese and Russian notions with those of the Western powers, the AU and the Arab League on how to support the country – not on discrete issues but on the problem as a whole.

The NCP is responsible for peace and stability. In the circumstances, its survival is a practical necessity, but for this to happen, its leaders need to open political space for genuine dialogue and negotiation of a constitutional arrangement that respects the rights of the transitional areas, the savannah belt, Darfur, the East, the far north and the citizenry as a whole, while maintaining good-neighbour relations with South Sudan. The opposition parties' call for a more inclusive constitutional conference suggests a way forward. That conference should be a broader national consultative process that accommodates the popular consultations in the transitional areas and the Darfur people-to-people dialogue – two processes that, if separate, will not lead to a lasting peace.

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<sup>218</sup> "Sudan's president Al-Bashir sacks his security adviser Salah Gosh", [www.sudantribune.com](http://www.sudantribune.com), 27 April 2011.

<sup>219</sup> According to a senior member of the political bureau of the NCP, Gosh is likely also to be dropped from the party. The action against him, he added, is only the tip of the iceberg with respect to the serious divisions within the top leadership, in particular between the Bashir, Nafie, Mohammed Atta al-Moula (head of the NISS) group and the Taha, Awad al-Jaz, Gosh group. If these divisions are not contained and spill over to other issues, he said, the party could collapse, perhaps leading to a coup. Crisis Group Skype interview, Khartoum, 1 May 2011. Turabi on his first day of freedom (two days after Bashir fired Gosh), however, argued that the Gosh dismissal would not lead to an NCP split. "Turabi: Dismissal of Gosh probably will not lead to another split", *op. cit.*

<sup>220</sup> The memo, whose chief signer is a well-known heart surgeon, suggests that President Bashir should relinquish power within one year, and in the interim a government of national unity headed by a Darfuri should be formed with a mandate to review the judiciary and conduct elections. Crisis Group telephone interviews, Khartoum, 2 and 3 May 2011.

<sup>221</sup> Crisis Group interviews, Khartoum, Gedarif, Wad-Medani, September 2010. According to an intelligence officer, the government will not tolerate any revolt and has plans for containment. The show of force, when the state deployed 15,000 police during the Egypt-Algeria 2010 football World Cup quali-

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fier match in Omdurman, was part of a real-time exercise. Crisis Group telephone interview, Khartoum, September 2010.

<sup>222</sup> Haile Menkerios (UNMIS), the Special Representative for the UN Secretary-General; Ibrahim Gambari (UNAMID), the Joint Special Representative; Princeton Lyman, the U.S. Special Envoy to Sudan; Mikhail Margelov, the Russian President's Special Envoy to Sudan; Liu Guijin, the Special Representative of the Chinese Government on the Darfur Issue; Rosalinda Marsden, Special Envoy of the European Union to Sudan; Michael Ryder, the UK's Special Envoy to Sudan; Tom Vraalsen, Norwegian Special Envoy to Sudan; and Lissane Yohannes, IGAD Special Envoy to Sudan.

The cardinal issue of governance must be addressed in a national fashion. To do so, a united international community, but particularly the AU, the Arab League and the UN, should put pressure on the NCP to accept free and unhindered dialogue to establish a national reform program. This should include: creating a conducive environment for an inclusive national dialogue; the immediate release all political detainees; a prompt ceasefire in Darfur and postponement of the referendum on its future status; an impartial review of the supreme and constitutional courts; and agreement on the date and modalities of the constitutional review process. That review process preferably should start before July 2011 and be led by a national committee of representatives of the political parties, Darfur rebel groups and the East Front. The AUHIP could lead such a process if the NCP accepts – but if the NCP refuses, Sudan will be on the path of continued discord.

## VI. CONCLUSION

Explaining the current states of affairs, a prominent Baggara tribal leader said, “if the rope holding two water containers on each side of a walking donkey is cut, the two containers will fall. The rider must stop and rearrange the load and the saddle”.<sup>223</sup> With the South’s secession but months away, the situation in the North requires review as a whole. The NCP intends to continue the status quo – to maintain the political system as is, make isolated peace deals with whoever raises the gun and mobilise Islamist constituencies against their fellow citizens. This is not re-arrangement of the load but rather a prescription for more troubles in a long-suffering land.

**Khartoum/Nairobi/Brussels, 4 May 2011**

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<sup>223</sup> Crisis Group interview, September 2010.

APPENDIX A

MAP OF SUDAN WITH 1956 NORTH-SOUTH BORDER



## APPENDIX B

### GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND PERSONALITIES

Ghazi al-Atabani	A key NCP member, presidential adviser, leader of the NCP caucus in the National Assembly and a member of the party's Leadership Bureau. He led the government delegation that negotiated the Machakos Agreement with the SPLM in 2002 and was appointed presidential adviser after the signing of the CPA in 2005. He was the government's chief negotiator in the 2007 Darfur peace talks and continues to hold the Darfur portfolio.
Omar al-Bashir	President of the government of national unity (GNU) and head of the NCP. A military officer, he seized power in 1989. After the restoration of civilian rule, he remained president and has continued to centralise power in Khartoum. The International Criminal Court (ICC) indicted Bashir for crimes against humanity, war crimes and genocide in Darfur and has issued two arrest warrants. Bashir has said he will not stand for office after his term ends in 2015 and will also step down as head of the NCP.
Ali al-Haj	Ex-NIF deputy secretary general and a main figure in the Islamists' coup. After the split in 2000, he left Sudan; he is the current deputy secretary general of the PCP.
Awad al-Jaz	A NCP hardliner who, through his positions, has enabled members of his Shaigiyya tribe to dominate the oil sector. He is the former energy minister and finance minister and headed the NCP's armed militias. After the 2010 elections, he was installed as industry minister.
Sadig al-Mahdi	Leader of the National Umma Party, he was its presidential candidate in 2010. He is also the <i>imam</i> (spiritual leader) of the Ansar. He was prime minister of Sudan from 1966 to 1967 and again from 1986 to 1989, his second term ending with the Islamists' coup. He is accused by many analysts of killing the 1986 Koka-Dam agreement, which might have ended the civil war much earlier.
Ahmed Ibrahim al-Tahir	Speaker of the National Assembly in the GNU since 2001, he is also the former presidential adviser for peace affairs. He participated in peace talks with the SPLM leading to the CPA and was a key representative during numerous negotiations between the two parties, most notably for the initiative led by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). After the referendum results were announced, he contended that southern parliamentarians should no longer be allowed to participate in National Assembly sessions.
Hassan al-Turabi	Founder of the Islamic movement, the National Islamic Front and current leader of the PCP, he has long advocated establishment of an Islamic state. As justice minister, he convinced former president Nimeri to impose Sharia in 1983 and was subsequently appointed assistant for political and external affairs. He spearheaded the planning of the Islamists' coup. One of Bashir's closest advisers, he was NCP secretary general, but in 1999 the relationship broke down, prompting Turabi to form the PCP. Representing a strong opposition to the NCP, he and members of his party have been arrested on numerous occasions, most recently in January 2011. He remains in prison (presently under guard in a hospital) without trial.
Khalil Ibrahim	A prominent organiser of the PDF. After the split, he left the NCP to establish the JEM. After the Chad-Sudan rapprochement (2009), he was expelled from Chad and went to Libya, where he is currently stranded. Recently he signed a memorandum of understanding for co-ordination with the SLM-Minni Minawi rebel faction.
Abu Al-Gasim Imam	A former rebel leader, he signed an agreement with the government and was later appointed Western Darfur governor. After the 2010 elections, Bashir offered him the job of state minister at the youth and sport ministry, but he declined and joined Minni Minawi in Juba, then went abroad when the government attacked his forces in Western Darfur. He is said to be shuttling between Kampala and Juba.

Salva Kiir	First vice-president in the GNU, president of the Government of South Sudan and chairman of the SPLM.
Minni Minawi	Chair of the SLM faction (SLM-MM) that signed the DPA. As a reward, he was made a senior assistant to President Bashir and chairman of the Transitional Darfur Regional Authority (TDRA). In May 2010, he resigned his positions claiming that the DPA was dead. Since then the government has attacked his forces.
Jaafar Abu Hakam	Western Darfur governor since April 2010, he replaced Minawi as TDRA head. A Fur, he allegedly played a role in identifying some Fur who participated in Yahia Bolad's rebellion and were executed without trial. He reportedly has good relations with Chadian rebels.
Abdel Haleem Mutaafi	Current agriculture minister and ex-governor of Khartoum.
Nafie Ali Nafie	Co-deputy NCP chairman and a presidential adviser, he is not a party hardliner. He was responsible for preparing the 2010 elections in which Bashir was re-elected, and the NCP won a National Assembly majority and all but one governorship but that were characterised by many as not meeting international standards. He was a rising NIF member during the 1989 coup and headed the NIF security and intelligence institutions throughout the 1990s.
Jaafar Nimeri	Leader of the military regime and one-party government that ruled Sudan from 1969 to 1985. Starting as a leftist, he gradually moved to the right. In 1983 he imposed Sharia, which was one of the reasons the South revolted again. He died in 2009.
Amin Hassan Omer	Chief NCP negotiator for the Darfur peace talks in Doha and a key negotiator at the earlier CPA talks in Naivasha. Previously a Sudanese Communist Party cadre, he joined the Islamists before the 1989 coup.
Ibrahim Mohammed Omer	A senior Islamist and planner of the coup. Former secretary general of the NCP, he is currently head of the National Shura Council.
Ali Osman Taha	Second vice president of Sudan since 2005, Taha previously was first vice president and foreign minister. He negotiated and signed the CPA in 2005 and was chief NCP negotiator during the U.S.-sponsored North-South post-referendum talks in October 2010. He headed government efforts against Darfur rebels from 2003 to 2005 and has been accused of mobilising the Janjaweed militias.
Al-Haj Adam Yusuf	An Islamist and ex-Southern Darfur governor, he was PCP candidate for the Southern Darfur governorship in the 2010 elections. Reportedly in massive debt, he rejoined the NCP in late 2011.

## APPENDIX C

### GLOSSARY OF MAIN PARTIES, ORGANISATIONS AND ACTS

DPA	Darfur Peace Agreement. The failed peace agreement was signed under African Union auspices on 5 May 2006 in Abuja between the Sudanese government and the Minni Arkou Minawi faction of the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA/MM). Two other parties to the negotiations – the SLA faction of Abdel Wahid Mohamed Nur (SLA/AW) and JEM – refused to sign. The DPA is one of the references for the ongoing peace talks in Doha.
DUP	Democratic Unionist Party, led by Mohamed Osman al-Mirghani. It has long advocated an Islamic state. The DUP was a founding member of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), and went into opposition following the 1989 military takeover. Al-Mirghani is also the leader of the Khatemia Sufi order.
CPA	The 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement ended the civil war with the South and aimed for democratic transformation of the state. It guaranteed Southern Sudanese a right to self-determination at the end of a six-year interim period; the agreement comes to an end on 9 July 2011.
GNU	Government of national unity, the national governance structure established by the CPA. It is headed by President Omar al-Bashir, First Vice President Salva Kiir and Second Vice President Ali Osman Taha.
GoSS	The Government of South Sudan, a semi-autonomous regional government established by the CPA in 2005 and headed by GoSS President Salva Kiir.
INC	Interim National Constitution, the constitution governing Sudan during the CPA period. It is now under review, since consistent with the results of the January 2011 referendum, all references to South Sudan should be removed. The amended document will remain law of the land until replaced by a new permanent constitution for (North) Sudan.
JEM	Justice and Equality Movement, a rebel group founded and headed by Khalil Ibrahim. It was initially supported by Chad and then by Libya. JEM refused to sign the DPA in May 2006. It entered into an agreement with Khartoum on 20 February 2010 in N'Djamena on a preliminary framework that includes a temporary ceasefire and is also engaged in the Darfur peace process in Doha.
(S)LJM	(Sudan) Liberation and Justice Movement, an alliance of ten rebel groups that was formed in February 2010 to take part in the Doha negotiations. Led by a former governor of greater Darfur, Tigani Sessi, and backed by external actors, the LJM was created as a negotiating umbrella for two coalitions: the Libyan-backed Sudan Liberation Revolutionary Forces (the Road Map Group) and the Addis Ababa Group.
NCP	National Congress Party, the ruling party of the Government of Sudan, headed by President Omar al-Bashir. It is the successor of the National Islamic Front (NIF), which was the successor of the Sudanese Islamic Movement (SIM).
NDA	An alliance of opposition parties, unions and civil society that as the National Alliance for Salvation organised an intifada (uprising) in April 1985 and forced Nimeri to step down. After the NIF took power, this alliance went to Asmara and formed the National Democratic Alliance (NDA); the SPLM was a member of the NDA. After the CPA, it signed an agreement with the GNU in Cairo, and some members joined the government. It is now largely defunct.

NIF	National Islamic Front (former Islamic Charter Front). Based on the Muslim Brotherhood, it is the culmination of the Sudanese Islamic Movement's political work. Hassan al-Turabi was its leader. The NIF was committed to an Islamic state and rejected the 1986 Koka Dam agreements, which would have revoked Sharia. The NIF overthrew the democratically-elected government in 1989.
NISS	National Intelligence and Security Services, the major security and intelligence institution, headed by Mohammed Atta al-Moula. Formerly known as "Internal Security" (al-amn a-dakhili), it became a powerful security institution after the split in 2000. Former director generals include Salah Gosh, Nafie Ali Nafie and Ibrahim al-Sanousi. After the split, the NISS cooperated with the American CIA on exchange of information on terrorist groups and individuals in the region.
PCP	Popular Congress Party, founded by Hassan al-Turabi in 2000. Espousing democratic, pluralistic and Islamic values, it remains a leading opponent of the NCP, which considers it enemy number one.
PDF	Popular Defence Forces, established in January 1991 by the Islamists' revolutionary council to help fight the war in the South. The PDF was to have been dismantled under the CPA, but has so far only been reduced in size. It plays a major military role in Darfur and in protecting the NCP regime and is highly mobilised along the North-South border.
SAF	Sudan Armed Forces – the national army. The majority of senior staff are committed Islamists. Very few are from the periphery (Kordofan, Darfur, Nuba, Blue Nile and the East). The current defence minister, Abdel Rahim Hussein, is the president's personal friend.
SCP	Sudan Communist Party. Formerly the largest and best organised communist party in the Middle East. After the failed 1971 coup, Nimeri killed most of its leaders. Led since 1972 by Mohamed Ibrahim Nugud, it remains an important opposition party.
National Shura Council	In Arabic the <i>majilis al-shura</i> , it is the main Shura (consultative) council. Based in Khartoum, it is headed by Ibrahim Omar. Regional Shura councils also convene in each state, although these have become largely ineffective and are managed by Khartoum.
SIM	Sudanese Islamic Movement, led by Secretary General Ali Osman Taha. Founded in the 1940s, it spearheaded the Islamic Convention Front in 1964, demanding an Islamic constitution. Although this failed, the SIM continued as a front that sought to take over the government and impose an ethnic Arab-Islamic identity. The NIF and NCP are its successors. Today, many Sudanese argue that there is no such movement; the NCP does not represent an Islamic movement; and it is now sub-divided among many Islamic political parties.
SLM/A	Sudan Liberation Movement/Army, a Sudanese rebel group that splintered into a number of factions – the main ones are SLM/MM led by Minni Minawi and SLM/AW led by Abdul Wahid al-Nur – because of rivalries and disagreements over the DPA.
SPLM	Sudan People's Liberation Movement, the Juba-based Southern rebel movement turned political party that signed the CPA in 2005; it is now the majority ruling party in South Sudan and is headed by Salva Kiir. The SPLM-North branch will become an autonomous party after the South's independence.
TDRA	Transitional Darfur Regional Authority, a DPA-established interim authority for Darfur created in April 2007. After Minawi resigned, it has been headed by Jaafar Abu Hakam, governor of Western Darfur.
TMC	Transitional Military Council. It was formed by Lt. General Sowar al-Dahab in April 1985, after the intifada, and relinquished power after democratic elections in 1986. Al-Dahab is currently the chairman of the Islamic Daawa (religious mission) organisation.

National Umma Party (NUP)	A large traditional party in Khartoum, led by Sadiq al-Mahdi. It has historically drawn its support from the Ansar sect and had large constituencies in Darfur and Kordofan. Al-Mahdi is also the religious leader of the Ansar. During the NCP regime, many leaders split from the main Umma party (NUP) and formed their own versions of the name Umma; the majority joined the NCP-led GNU. Today there are more than three different Umma parties. Before the referendum in January 2011, the second largest, led by the cousin of Sadig, Mubarak al-Fadil, rejoined the mother party.
UNMIS	The United Nations Mission in Sudan, a peacekeeping operation authorised by the Security Council on 24 March 2005 (Res. 1590). Its primary mandate is to support and monitor implementation of the CPA. It is likely to be replaced by a new UN presence in 2011.