SUDAN

North in the shadow of the South

Report from four seminars on challenges and opportunities for peacebuilding in Sudan, held in March and April 2012 in Uppsala and Stockholm, Sweden. Each of the seminars focused on a special theme, namely:

- **Environment, climate and the Sudanese conflicts**
- **The border between the North and the South – current status and challenges from a peacebuilding perspective**
- **The role of civil society in peacebuilding in Sudan today**
- **The Nordic countries as peacebuilders in Sudan?**

Speakers at the seminars were Sudanese experts and representatives of civil society and academia, as well as Nordic experts with rich experience from Sudan. High level policy-makers, practitioners and experts were in the panel in the discussion at the concluding seminar, held in the First Chamber Hall of the Swedish Parliament.

The seminars were jointly organised by the Life & Peace Institute and the Nordic Africa Institute.

Life & Peace Institute

Nordiska Afrikainstitutet
The Nordic Africa Institute

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Foreword

The conflicts in Sudan have been on the international community's agenda now for more than a half-century. The tensions between the North and the South have been the main conflict dyad, while regional crises in the western Darfur region and the country's eastern region have occupied the agenda at different times. Since July 2011 the focus has shifted. After South Sudan's independence the world is dealing with two separate states. From early on the attention of both the international community and global media turned towards the new state of South Sudan, leaving the "old" Sudan in its shadow.

The international community has invested remarkable resources in managing the conflicts of Sudan. Sudan today hosts the world's largest peacekeeping force, UNAMID, and together with the UNMISS in South Sudan the peacekeeping operations alone cost together over $2.5 billion per year. Still, the full toolbox of the international community has not yet been utilised in the attempts to build peace. Large-scale and high-level solutions are topping the agenda of the international actors.

This report is published one year after the separation. The year that has passed has seen outright armed conflict between the two states as well as a series of negotiations. In the border areas, where cross-border movement occurs daily, the line between two provinces has become a line between nations. The ones who have suffered the most from the unresolved crisis are the people living on both sides of the border.

In a series of seminars held in March and April 2012, Sudanese and Nordic experts and policy-makers have discussed the challenges and opportunities for peacebuilding in Sudan today. The seminars, which coincided with a rapid escalation of the conflict between Sudan and South Sudan, showed a clear need for holistic approaches and a continued engagement in Sudan.

We hope that this report from the four events will shed new light on the current state of the still unresolved conflicts of Sudan.

We also hope that it is able to not only bring up challenges, but also to point out some paths toward solutions, and that it will inspire its audience to fresh approaches to building sustainable peace.

Carin Norberg
Director
The Nordic Africa Institute

Peter Karlsson Sjögren
Executive Director
Life & Peace Institute

Introduction

When the Life & Peace Institute and the Nordic Africa Institute in the autumn of 2011 set off to plan a seminar series, it was a conscious choice to focus on the country that used to form the northern part of the old Sudan. Since its independence in July of the same year, South Sudan had received considerable attention in international media. Meanwhile, little interest was paid to Sudan. The former North had been left in the shadow of the South.

The result of the southern referendum, that paved way for the separation of the two countries, created a number of question marks. Legally the partition per se was undisputed. But otherwise the relationship between the two new countries was all but clear. How would the still pending issues be solved? What would life at the border look like?

To overcome these intractabilities a holistic approach is needed, which also includes grass root initiatives that enable peace to take root locally. To be able to support these initiatives a deep understanding of the issues at stake as well as of the conflict environment is needed. With this in mind we wanted to organise a series of seminars – dynamic, with recognised experts and with fresh perspectives – to highlight the needs and prospects for peacebuilding efforts in Sudan. For the seminars Sudanese experts and representatives of civil society and academia were invited, as well as Nordic experts with rich experience from Sudan. The aim was to get experienced views on the topics chosen, but to also pose the question: how can the Nordic countries as donors respond to these challenges?

This report summarises the four seminars in the series entitled "Sudan: North in the shadow of the South". The seminars were held in Uppsala and Stockholm in March and April 2012 and were organised by the Life & Peace Institute (LPI) and the Nordic Africa Institute (NAI). For the first and third seminar, respectively, the Uppsala Association of Foreign Affairs (UF) and ABF Stockholm joined in as organising partners. The fourth and concluding seminar was held in the First Chamber Hall of the Swedish Parliament and was organised in co-operation with the Swedish Green Party.

Global warming, whether influenced by humans or not, is one of the biggest challenges for mankind. Together with environmental degradation, climate changes form a set of conflict variables that are often overlooked, both as causes and, more locally, consequences of conflict. The first seminar in our series put the focus on environmental factors and the conflicts in Sudan. Pastoral migration, access to water and harvesting schemes are all influenced by environmental factors. However, as noted during the seminar by the speakers, Dr Gunnar Sørbø and Dr Guma Kunda Komey, the Sudanese crisis is more complex than that: it is above all a crisis of governance and a crisis of livelihood.

The second seminar came to be even more topical than expected. The theme of border issues, referring to the border between the North and the South, was on the agenda of global media due to a recent escalation between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Sudan People's Liberation Army. The border regime and the movement of people and goods became one of the main topics of the discussion. Both invited speakers, Dr Mohammed Ahmed Abdelghaffar and Dr Øystein Rolandsen, pointed out that the border zone is an economically vital area for both countries and its people are socially and historically inter-linked. The potential for cross-border initiatives, anchored in the local communities, should therefore be explored.

The third seminar mapped out the current field of civil society actors within the field of peacebuilding in Sudan. The organisational and structural challenges are many, but at the same time, there is a big potential for bringing the peace process down to grass roots level. Dr Buthaina Ahmed Elnaiem and Dr Yasir Awad Abdalla Eltahir request-

ed long-term commitment from donors and a switch from a humanitarian to a development approach. Once again, the far from fully explored possibilities of building on cross-border initiatives came up as a potential way forward.

The concluding seminar gathered some high level policy-makers, practitioners and experts to discuss the potential and challenges for civil society peacebuilding in Sudan. Besides considering the potential for civil society peacebuilding, the discussion also had a donor perspective, with the aim of exploring the capabilities of the Nordic countries as peacebuilders. The panellists in many ways brought the discussion to a concrete level, pointing out ways in which practices of donors can be adapted to support civil society actors in building peace.

Each seminar in this report is presented in a separate chapter. At the end of each chapter the session is summarised in a number of highlights. A few findings stand out as exceptionally strong. One of them is the need for a holistic approach. Building peace is complex and needs to be done on all levels. The seminars confirmed that far from all tools in the box have been used and there is a need to shift from humanitarian aid strategies to those with a development perspective. A second finding, which is perhaps reflected more implicitly in the report, is that conflict labelling has consequences. Not only does it affect our perception of conflict, it also affects the conflict itself. How the international community interprets conflicts and which narratives it chooses to accept has direct consequences on the ground.

The third and perhaps strongest finding is the need to tackle Sudan and South Sudan together. The border zone is crucial to both countries, and there is no way to create stable peace in the two without taking the other into account. Sudan and South Sudan are strongly inter-linked, and denying these links will only postpone the shift from piece-by-piece, pact-by-pact agreements to all-embracing, sustainable peace.

Acknowledgements

The editor would like to thank a number of people and partners who have made these seminars possible. First of all I would like to thank our generous sponsor, the Folke Bernadotte Academy, for believing in our idea and supporting the seminars. Among the people that have participated in making the seminars come true I would especially like to thank the directors Peter Karlsson Sjögren at the Life & Peace Institute and Carin Norberg at the Nordic Africa Institute: thank you for your support and good co-operation! In addition, several people assisted with the organising of the seminars. Special thanks at LPI go to Henrik Halvardsson, Tore Samuelsson, Linda Forsberg, Kristina Lundqvist and Patric Moreno and to Jody Henderson, Natalie Groom and the whole LPI team in Khartoum, and at NAI to Susanne Linderos and Johan Sävström. I would also like to thank Malin Bergwik at UF, Hanna Holmer at ABF and Håkan Sundberg at the Swedish Green Party for seamless co-operation during the seminar series. At this point I would also like to mention the keen interest shown by the Sudan Embassy, especially H.E. Ambassador Mr Abu Bakr Hussein Ahmed and Counselor Badreldin Ali, throughout the entire seminar series. Last but not least, I would of course like to thank all the speakers and panellists for their participation and written contributions to the seminars.

Uppsala, June 2012

Valter Vilkko, *editor*
Life & Peace Institute

SEMINAR 1

Environment, climate and the Sudanese conflicts

Climate change and environmental factors are often dismissed, or at least underestimated, as drivers of conflict. For the first seminar LPI and NAI invited two international experts to dig deeper into the environmental root causes of conflict in Sudan. The seminar also brought up the need for a holistic approach to the Sudanese conflicts and shed some light on possibilities to engage peacebuilding actors on a community level.

Environment, climate and the Sudanese conflicts

***Dr. Gunnar M. Sørbø**, Christian Michelsen Institute, Norway*

The January 2012 issue of Journal of Peace Research was devoted to climate change and conflict and contains a number of papers on African situations. The research reported offers only limited support for viewing environmental conditions, resource scarcity and climate change as important influences on armed conflict, says Gunnar M. Sørbø.

Rather, other factors dominate, including agricultural encroachment that obstructs the mobility of herders and livestock, institutional factors and the politicisation of access to resources. Available evidence from Sudan largely confirms such findings. In 2007, the United Nations Environmental Programme did a Post-Conflict Environmental Assessment in Sudan. A number of other sources, including a vulnerability assessment for Sudan, a few papers on environmental degradation, and a book on environment and conflict focusing on Darfur (2009) also support these findings.

According to Sørbø, the Sudanese conflicts are often over access to natural resources (land, pasture and water), and while some of them are essentially local, they have increasingly become absorbed into, enmeshed with, or at least affected by the wider struggles between the North and South, or between competing northern or southern interests. The civil strife that has spread throughout many parts of Sudan since the 1980s should be seen as part of a pattern of violence where the Sudanese state – as a vehicle for special interest groups – has played a major role.

In brief, the country continues to suffer from two sets of crises that are closely interrelated: (a) a crisis of governance, and (b) a livelihoods crisis. The conflicts that result from these crises take place on different levels and are also interrelated. One important dimension is the lack of environmental governance. The shift from subsistence agriculture to export-oriented, mechanised agricultural schemes has resulted in the dispossession of small-holding farmers of their customary rights of land and the erosion of land-use rights of pastoralists.

Gunnar M. Sørbø explained how he first came to Sudan as a student, in the summer of 1970, while the war between the North and the South was still on-going. At that time, local peace conferences, advertised in the papers, were still held in the Savannah belt. In Sudan, with the largest number of nomadic people in the world, conflict caused by lack of resources was addressed almost every year in these local peace conferences. A clear turning point was the passage of laws in 1970, undermining the control that local authorities and local people were able to exert on land. Grasping the importance of land is fundamental to understanding the way in which the Sudanese conflicts and the humanitarian crises have evolved.

Furthermore, the "politics of dispossession" has also been applied in what is now South Sudan, said Sørbø. Conflict and livelihoods are inextricably linked to one another in places like Darfur or Abyei, and the vulnerability of people's livelihoods remains deeply embedded in the policies, institutions and processes that influence their access to livelihood capital, and in the power relations between different livelihood groups and livelihood systems.

While it may be too early to state that Sudan is undergoing climate change, climate variability has always been an important feature of the environment, to which different production systems have traditionally tried to adapt more or less successfully, Sørbø argued. Because of the above factors, vulnerability to environmental hazards has generally increased, and growing competition between different livelihood groups promotes conflict as well as environmental degradation. However, an important message is that, while many conflicts have serious environmental dimensions, ways out of the livelihoods-conflict cycle that is experienced by a growing number of people in Sudan will require the support of wider systems of good governance that do not exist today.

PHOTO: LPI

Seminar 1 was arranged by LPI and NAI in collaboration with the Uppsala Association of Foreign Affairs and held in Uppsala University main building. From left in the panel: Dr Guma Kunda Komey, Dr Gunnar Sørbø, Director Carin Norberg (NAI) and Director Peter Karlsson Sjögren (LPI).

***Dr. Gunnar M. Sørbø** is a social anthropologist and the former director of the Norwegian Christian Michelsen Institute (CMI). He has vast field experience from Sudan and has published a number of books on the conflicts in the country. Sørbø is an experienced team leader for policy-oriented reviews and evaluations, often with international participation and for many different clients. Before joining CMI as director, he was the first director of the Centre for Development Studies, University of Bergen.*

The link between environmental and climatic changes and the recurring conflicts in Sudan

***Dr. Guma Kunda Komey**, Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Germany*

Climatic change coupled with deterioration and depletion of environmental resources is neither a new phenomenon nor limited to a specific country or region; it is a global and old phenomenon. What is new is its intensity associated with human failures to deal with its adverse effects in some countries, including Sudan, argues Guma Kunda Komey.

Sudan, as part of the Sahelian zone, has experienced severe climatic changes with far-reaching consequences on people. Long term analysis points to a cyclic trend of wet and dry seasons in the last century: the 1910s was a dry decade, the 1920s through to the 1950s were wet, followed by a dry period since the mid-1960s through to the mid-1980s and beyond. These climatic changes resulted in lasting and devastating changes in human livelihoods: severe competition over resources, violent conflicts, displacement, migration, and change in form of life and economic activities. Since the 1930s, an estimated 50 to 200 km southward shift of the boundary between semi-desert and desert has occurred. Rainfall has been declining in Sudan by 15 per cent in 1921-1950 and 1956-1985. The Sudanese state, however, has failed to pay attention to the centrality of the climatic change factor in its economic development path, said Guma Kunda Komey. In fact, the state has aggravated the situation through its environmentally unsound and distorted development interventions. The result is

further ecological deterioration coupled with natural resource-based, recurring conflicts and protracted socio-political instability.

In the absence of the state, local communities have changed their method of conflict resolution. Traditionally when nomads migrated, a pre-arrangement was made regarding how the migration routes would look to avoid clashes. In this arrangement annual rainfall, water sources and harvests were taken into consideration. Everybody in the communities was accountable for making it flow easily. This system was abolished by the government in 1970. The competition, which used to be regulated locally, now actually becomes a conflictual competition.

Guma Kunda Komey mentioned the conflict in Darfur as a very typical example. He also described his field work in Southern Kordofan, where he observed the full year cycle and how a failure of rainfall affected the timing of the nomads' decision to migrate. For both pastoralists and farmers, shifting the timing of migration and harvest is every year a matter of survival, he emphasised. When the regulating mechanism and the institutionalised dialogue is absent, this leads to almost inevitable conflict.

However, climatic changes alone cannot account for the recurring and escalating conflicts, Guma Kunda Komey concluded. Empirical evidence showed that environmental factors are always intertwined with a range of other social, political and economic factors that reinforce each other. This interplay increases the complexity of a conflict, thereby reducing the possibility of managing, or ultimately resolving it. The Darfur crisis is the most conspicuous living proof, said Komey. While climatic changes like droughts can trigger famine or resource-based conflicts, state-induced interventions also play a major role in aggravating these initially natural disaster phenomena.

To transform the conflicts in the border region between Sudan and South Sudan a new approach is needed, Guma Kunda Komey argued. Environmental governance, with locally rooted mechanisms, needs to be included in future peace agreements. Another measure would be to turn the border area into an interdependent economic area, a measure that would benefit both Sudan and South Sudan. The border zone composes the backbone of the region's economy and therefore requires a soft border regime.

In conclusion, warfare and civil wars are primarily socio-political. Meanwhile, it is also important to note that their ecological impact has been, in most cases, underestimated. In other words, climate change – causing cyclic droughts and desertification – is a crucial factor in many conflicts but has been overshadowed by ethnic and political factors.

Dr. Guma Kunda Komey *is an assistant professor of Human Geography, formerly at the University of Juba and as of July 2011 at the University of Bahri, Khartoum. Currently, he is a senior research fellow at Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Germany. He has published several journal articles and chapters in edited books on land, identity and conflicts with focus on the Nuba Mountains, Sudan. He is the author of Land, Governance, Conflict and the Nuba of Sudan (London, James Currey, 2010) and a number of other publications on Sudan.*

In brief

LPI and NAI wish to highlight the following policy-relevant findings presented at the seminar:

- *The Sudanese conflicts revolve around (a) a crisis of governance, and (b) a livelihoods crisis. The conflicts have increasingly become absorbed into, enmeshed with, or at least affected by the wider struggles between the North and the South. Therefore a holistic approach is needed when looking for solutions.*
- *Conflict in the border areas is primarily sociopolitical, but especially the lack of environmental governance makes climatic change and environmental degradation risk factors.*
- *The population in the border zone, as well as the Darfur region, has not always lacked the capability to solve resource based conflicts through dialogue. Traditional peace conferences used to be in place. Local communities have changed their methods of conflict management.*

SEMINAR 2

The border between the North and the South – current status and challenges from a peacebuilding perspective

In mid-April 2012, when the seminar was held, the situation at the North-South border had become increasingly tense. Two leading experts had been invited to re-cap the current status of the border and share their views on the recent developments and the implications of these for the communities in the borderlands.

Negotiating the new border between Sudan and South Sudan: National interests and local consequences

***Dr. Øystein Rolandsen**, Peace Research Institute Oslo*

Determining the border between Sudan and South Sudan is a difficult issue, which is not likely to be solved in the near future. Central to this process is determining the fate of a number of disputed areas, as well as finding a mutual agreement on a border regime. Essentially, when assessing the border situation we need to look beyond the current crisis, says Øystein Rolandsen.

Included in the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement between the Government of Sudan and Sudan People's Liberation Movement was the initiation of a process of determining the border between Sudan and South Sudan. Preliminary investigations revealed, however, a number of disputed areas along the border, and demarcation was consequently not carried out.

In January 2011 an overwhelming majority voted in favour of a South Sudan secession, which prompted an intensification of the efforts to reach a settlement on the border issue. However, by 9 July 2011 – the time of the secession – no agreement had been reached, and negotiations continued. These negotiations are not only about lines on the ground, but have consequences for ownership of natural resources.

In addition to the demarcation issues, the parties must agree on a border management regime, said Øystein Rolandsen. This can either be a soft regime, where movement of goods and people over the border is relatively unimpeded, or it may involve a "hard border" approach with strict regulations. The border management regime affects aspects of the livelihood of the people living in the border areas. Firstly, people living both on the northern and southern side of the border are, in most cases, semi-nomadic, which means that parts of the household follow the cattle herds to dry season grazing land. For the people north of the border, these pastures are often located south of the border. Hence, blocking their access to these would be a direct threat to the livelihood of these communities. Secondly, for several decades people in South Sudan living close to the border have migrated temporarily to the North, either looking for wage labour or fleeing from war. If the border continues to be closed, it becomes difficult for them to continue seeking wage labour in the north and for the displaced to return. Split families may also find it difficult to keep contact.

Finally, cross-border trade is very important along most of the Sudan-South Sudan border. This consists of both short-distance barter and long-distance trade in food stuff and other kinds of goods not available locally. At the moment there are few alternative trading routes, and the continued blockade has severe consequences for these activities, while there are few, if any, alternative trade routes.

There is however a considerable disparity between local preferences for a soft border regime and perceived security concerns of the national political elite in the two capitals, Khartoum and Juba, which dictate a close control of the border. Yet, in terms of reaching a negotiated solution on the Sudan-South Sudan border, a soft border management regime might be the key to a settlement, since it makes it possible to share resources and continue cross-border interaction. In this way a soft border solution circumvents the "winner takes all" aspect of a hard border regime.

***Dr. Øystein Rolandsen** is a researcher at the International Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) and a member of PRIO's Conflict Resolution and Peace Building Programme. He is a specialist on security, governance and development issues related to Sudan and the Horn of Africa. Rolandsen has followed developments in the region for over a decade and has conducted a number of field visits in war and post-conflict areas.*

PHOTO: LPI

Seminar 2 was held in the library of the Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala. From left: Dr Øystein Rolandsen and Dr Mohammed Ahmed Abdelghaffar.

Environmental degradation and cross-border pastoral conflict

Dr. Mohammed Ahmed Abdelghaffar,
University of Khartoum

The newly internationalised border between Sudan and South Sudan is one of the longest between two countries in Africa. However, currently the two states do not even agree on the length of the border, says Mohammed Ahmed Abdelghaffar.

Sudan suffered from a lack of delineation and demarcation of internal boundaries already before the separation with South Sudan. The border zone is an area rich in resources, which has led to disputes over oil, minerals and arable land throughout the history of Sudan, said Mohammed Ahmed Abdelghaffar. Meanwhile, traditional cross-border movements of pastoral communities and their claims to grazing lands have complicated the picture. The border conflicts are often perceived differently on state level and community level.

Mohammed Ahmed Abdelghaffar brought up the issues related to the degradation of environment and climate change and its impact on cross-border grazing land between Sudan and South Sudan. He spoke of conflicts that may arise between the cross-border communities because of historical acquired rights of pastoralism, farming and land ownership. The border between the two countries is one of the longest in Africa. However its exact length is disputed – the borderline advocated by Sudan is 1,973 km long, while from a South Sudanese perspective the border is 2,010 km. The difference stems from the northern variant being straighter, while the South claims a border that is zigzagging in some areas.

Abdelghaffar in his presentation listed nine areas of conflict along the North-South border. The conflicts range from mineral and oil related ones, to those caused by land rights and scarcity of resources like water. One of the areas he brought up was the Kafia Kinji area, where South Darfur and the South Sudanese state of Western Bahr al Ghazal meet. The area is rich in minerals and contested on both national and local level. The area was transferred from the

South to Darfur in 1960, but both the Sudan Armed Forces and the Sudan People's Liberation Army have maintained a presence in the area. As a case in point, the area serves as an example where both state level interests and issues of livelihood for the local communities are at stake.

On local level, many of the border conflicts are between northern nomad groups and ethnic groups that feel loyal towards the South. At the border between South Darfur and Northern Bahr al Ghazal, peace talks between Misserya nomads and the southern Dinka Malual have shown promising signs of local conflict management. A big threat to the peace at the border is, however, that the local conflicts risk being fuelled by the broader struggle between Sudan and South Sudan. The conflicting interests of government and community actors are a vital part of the continuation of hostilities at the border.

When discussing how the split between Sudan and South Sudan has been perceived by the affected communities, Mohdammed Ahmed Abdelghaffar said that there is a feeling of grievance and deception in many areas north of the border. Most people in the border lands did not expect the referendum result to be over 98 per cent in favour of southern independence. Now, after the former boundary has turned into an international border, there is a need for intervention and a search for common ground, he said.

In terms of governance both Sudan and South Sudan are lagging behind when it comes to accommodating the needs of the pastoral groups. The policies and practices of land and pastoralism do not favour the pastoralists on either side of the border, said Mohammed Ahmed Abdelghaffar. Especially for nomads, policies and practices do not counter drought periods and the encroaching desertification. Generally government policies disregard environmental sustainability and long term water security.

One of the most conclusive results Abdelghaffar put forward is that the environmental crisis – resulting in scarcity of resources, such as water and fertile land – contributes significantly to the border conflict. A main recommendation to this problem could be the establishment of cross-border co-operation after demarcating the borders, a task regional organisations as well as the international community should contribute to.

Dr. Mohammed Ahmed Abdelghaffar *is an Associate Professor and Fellow of Political Science, International Law, International Relations, Conflict Resolution and Strategic Studies at the University of Khartoum. As an expert on crisis management, he has published a number of articles and books especially in the field of early warning/rapid response. Dr. Mohammed is also a former career diplomat and Ambassador (retired 2008) to the DRC and Algeria and the former Director General of Global and Regional Issues at the Sudanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs.*

In brief

LPI and NAI wish to highlight the following policy-relevant findings presented at the seminar:

- *There is considerable disparity between the preferences of the local communities in the border zone and the concerns of the national political elites in Khartoum and Juba. Local communities in the border areas are dependent on cross-border movement. Meanwhile the governments of Sudan and South Sudan tend to prefer restricted cross-border movement due to security concerns.*

- *Finding consensus around a coherent border management regime will be crucial for the future of the North-South border region. Due to the historical and social cross-border ties, as well as the traditional migration flows, a soft border regime, which would allow relatively free movement of people and goods across the border, would have many advantages.*

- *The border region suffers from a lack governance in many aspects. One of the main challenges is accommodating the needs stemming from the annual migration movements of pastoralist groups. Taking into account environmental factors, like water security and access to land and other resources, is crucial when designing sustainable policies.*

SEMINAR 3

The role of civil society in peacebuilding in Sudan today

The role of civil society in creating conditions for sustainable peace is crucial. For this session two Sudanese guests were invited to give their views on the capacity of civil society in Sudan today and to speak about current initiatives and challenges within peacebuilding.

Civil society organisations and peacebuilding in Sudan: Many tangled routes to go

***Dr. Yasir Awad Abdalla Eltahir**, University of Khartoum; Life & Peace Institute, Khartoum*

The new country of South Sudan has moved centre stage following the overwhelming vote for its independence in 2011. Meanwhile Sudan has moved backstage. Too much attention has been devoted in different regional and international forums to the future challenges of South Sudan and very little to the emerging state of the North. Both new Sudans are facing serious challenges to peace and state building, and the two states are inextricably linked. One vital response to the crisis is civil society based peacebuilding, argues Yasir Awad.

Peace in South Sudan and Sudan has to be built jointly, without separating efforts in the two countries, said Yasir Awad. The two countries are strongly attached to each other, given their social history, current economic and political ties, as well as the pending issues like borders, oil revenue and citizenship, to mention but the important ones. Much of the attention is currently devoted to South Sudan. But in its northern neighbour the conflict in Darfur and the recurring conflicts in Southern Kordofan, Blue Nile and Abyei still remain unresolved. The ring of Sudan's civil conflicts now engulfs the west, the south and the eastern edges of the country. Given governance issues related to democracy, uneven development and the marginalisation of many groups from national wealth and power concentrated in Khartoum, the Sudanese conflicts should be seen as one web of conflict underpinned in, and circled around, the centre, Yasir Awad argued.

The continuation of this webbed cycle of conflict is mainly due to the dominance of piece-meal and elite-pact approaches to conflict resolution – with no genuine representation and inclusiveness – and the absence of a broad-based, participatory approach to conflict transformation. Greater inclusiveness requires the engagement of civil society actors in the peace process. With the assumption that civil society organisations (CSOs) can play a key role in building a more comprehensive and more stable peace in Sudan, Yasir Awad in his presentation brought up some questions concerning the potential, challenges, and obstacles, as well as what can be done to facilitate the work of CSOs in playing such a role. He highlighted that peacebuilding is the work of many hands, and that his aim is not to prescribe answers, but rather to foster debate.

The challenges facing Sudanese CSOs are numerous and related to both internal failings of CSOs and external conditions set by donors, as well as to structural conditions. Most of the powerful CSOs are urban (and mainly Khartoum) based and have a weak membership base, while the most important CSOs from a peacebuilding perspective are usually the weak, resource-starved ones in the rural areas. Sudanese CSOs also typically lack geographical, ethnic and religious representation. Often there is a lack of a long-term strategic vision from both the CSOs and the donors, which makes the CSOs reactive in their approach. The already weak formal structure of many organisations is also often mixed with informal, powerful ethnic and political dimensions. This adds to the lack of accountability, transparency and democracy, said Yasir Awad.

With these challenges in mind, engaging civil society is not easy and requires long-term engagement. While CSOs are facing many problems in Sudan, they have the potential to play a key role in achieving stable peace. The increasing complexity of the peacebuilding efforts requires a peacebuilding discourse with a stronger, more conflict sensitive focus on the role of civil society and CSOs. Sudan is one of the most diverse countries in a diverse Africa and thus displays a diversity of civil societies rather than a single one, Yasir Awad emphasised. What the different actors have in common is that civil society and CSOs, especially in a less developed country like Sudan, are facing the lack of an enabling environment. Government restrictions, internal failings and external conditionality crucially limit their manoeuvring space.

Sudanese CSOs initiated peace talks even before the government, yet their influence and role in contributing to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), signed in 2005, was very limited, said Yasir Awad. CSOs were annexed to the peace talks that led to the CPA in briefings and informal sessions very late and only after international actors' pressure. After the signing of the CPA, CSOs contributed to peacebuilding processes through awareness raising, public lectures, seminars, workshops and training to broaden popular understanding and support for the CPA.

Building peace and transforming conflict requires efforts by many actors. Understanding the conditions and obstacles that affect CSOs in Sudan is key for donors to be able to play a constructive role in peacebuilding. It is necessary to look at the nexus between CSOs, peacebuilding and democracy and not merely present opportunities, threats and recommendations, said Yasir Awad.

Many CSO actors also have connections on both sides of the Sudan-South Sudan border, Yasir Awad pointed out. Organisations like the Sudanese Organisation for Non-Violence and Development (Sonad) are now attempting to determine how to organise this work. But donor support is crucial to make it work in practice.

***Dr. Yasir Awad Abdalla Eltahir** is Senior Research Advisor at the Life & Peace Institute's (LPI) Sudan office. He is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Political Science, University of Khartoum, specialising in political theory, politics and society. Dr. Yasir has field experience from both South Kordofan State in Sudan and Upper Nile State in South Sudan, doing community research on political participation and the relationship between politics and religion. At LPI in Sudan he is working with participatory action research related to local peacebuilding initiatives.*

Promoting democratic governance – peacebuilding and conflict mitigation and the spheres of action for CSOs in Sudan

***Dr. Buthaina Ahmed Elnaiem**, Juba/Bahri University, Khartoum*

Before the separation of Sudan into two countries – Sudan and South Sudan – serious conflicts in Sudan were started in its new southern areas, the South Kordofan and Blue Nile states. Another conflict that started in 2003 is still continuing in Darfur in western Sudan. The causes of conflict are primarily related to self-determination, political participation, social and cultural life in the regions of conflict, as well as to distribution of resources and wealth sharing. To solve these conflicts a greater inclusion of civil society actors and long-term donor commitment is needed, says Buthaina Ahmed Elnaiem.

PHOTO: NAI

Seminar 3 was arranged was arranged by LPI and NAI jointly with ABF Stockholm and held in ABF's localities. Dr Yasir Awad Abdalla Eltahir and Dr Buthaina Ahmed Elaniem were speakers at the seminar.

Elnaiem, who is both an academic and a civil society activist, in her presentation emphasised civil society's role as a link between high-level politics and the people. Outside the political arena, the real affected party of the conflicts are the ordinary people of Sudan. Their interests, especially on the local level, should be reflected in the design of any peace agreements and conflict resolution processes, she argued. Therefore there is a crucial need for action to be taken by their representative bodies, the CSOs, which could keep the political elites and fighting groups from prioritising their own interests. Civil society, embodied in independent NGOs, religious leaders and traditional corporate actors, needs to assume the role of a critical public observer and pressure group, said Elnaiem.

Civil society has a function to play in initialising and supporting dialogue on a local level and in acting as an important vehicle for communication, trust and confidence building for the administrations, actors

and people of Sudan. This requires initiation and support for sustained peace forums and platforms that involve communities – men and women – and local chiefs and leaders. Such dialogue is critical to redefining the terms of debate over access to and the sharing of natural resources. It is also critical for creating and enhancing spaces, mechanisms and institutions for negotiating the diverse interests of the various state agencies and civil society, said Elnaiem.

More engagement is needed in order to initialise, encourage and strengthen public discourse on structural factors like wealth sharing, sustainable farming, the spread of arms and local militia. The role of civil societies, in particular the indigenous/traditional institutions, in peacebuilding and conflict resolution in border areas with South Sudan, needs to be discussed and explored more actively, said Buthaina Ahmed Elnaiem. Adherence to some shared values and social networking between the people living in conflict areas, in particular pastoralists and farmers, could help in smoothing the political tension in Sudan, she continued.

Buthaina Ahmed Elnaiem highlighted the interconnectedness of Sudan and South Sudan. She herself works for Juba/Bahri University, an institution that was divided and internally split following the separation of South Sudan. The connections between the two states are especially strong in the border areas, she remarked, so strong that the idea of separation is unfamiliar for the people in the border zone, where cross-border movement has been a daily occurrence. Elnaiem said that donors need to adapt their strategies to the new situation by initialising cross-border initiatives. She sees an alarming trend in separating activities in Sudan and South Sudan, which according to her applies also to current projects of many international actors like the United Nations Development Programme.

A second challenge for donors is the large focus on South Sudan, which has meant neglecting Sudan, said Elnaiem. The same phenomenon was visible when the Darfur crisis was on top of the agenda. Donors have to learn how to balance their efforts and how to move from a humanitarian response strategy to one of development thinking, she argued. A third challenge is adapting the funding for peacebuilding initiatives. Today, funding is mostly short-term and the donors want to see immediate impact. Funding peacebuilding efforts requires patience, Elnaiem highlighted.

Dr. Buthaina Ahmed Elnaiem *is an economist and Assistant Professor at the Department of Economics, Juba/Bahri University, Khartoum. She has worked as a consultant in several research and development projects in Sudan for different international development organisations, such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and the International Labour Office of the United Nations. Dr. Buthaina is also a civil society activist, who has worked with both Sudanese and international organisations.*

In brief

LPI and NAI wish to highlight the following policy-relevant findings presented at the seminar:

- *The Sudanese civil society actors are facing a number of challenges: internal, external and structural. Especially long-term commitment from donors is key for strengthening the capacity of civil society.*
- *The donor community still largely has a humanitarian approach in its engagement in Sudan. This often leads to reactive strategies. A more development focused approach would create a basis for more sustainable engagement in peacebuilding.*
- *Sudan and South Sudan are inextricably linked by a number of factors. There is a need and a potential for promoting cross-border initiatives to build peace. Donors should explore possibilities of supporting co-operation across the border instead of treating the countries as separable entities.*

SEMINAR 4

The Nordic countries as peacebuilders in Sudan?

For the concluding seminar in the Swedish Parliament LPI and NAI invited a number of experts and policy-makers to discuss ways to engage civil society and build sustainable peace in Sudan with particular reference to the international community and the role of the Nordic countries. The discussion was opened by a keynote speech delivered by Abiodun Bashua, Director of the Joint Support and Coordination Mechanism of UNAMID, who presented an address on behalf of Professor Ibrahim Gambari, Joint AU-UN Special Representative for UNAMID & Joint Chief Mediator. The panel discussion was given further food for thought by civil society expert Yasir Awad from the Life & Peace Institute, Khartoum.

Keynote address
by Professor Ibrahim Gambari, Joint AU-UN Special Representative for UNAMID & Joint Chief Mediator

Delivered by Ambassador Abiodun Bashua, Director, Joint Support and Coordination Mechanism, UNAMID, Addis Ababa

The headline of the seminars, "Sudan: North in the shadow of the South", is very timely, said the UNAMID representative.

– While there has been significant progress on the Darfur front and in the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), particularly in regard to the independence of South Sudan, we need to be mindful that the challenges that Sudan faces continue to be many. Hence, it is central that the international community upgrades and deepens its engagement with Sudan to consolidate the gains made so far, the UNAMID representative stated in his address on behalf of Gambari.

The UNAMID representative chose in his address to partly give an update on the progress in the Darfur peace process, before addressing the challenges still ahead. In his conclusion he outlined some elements on the way forward to achieve a lasting peace in the region. Much of the focus was devoted to the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (the DDPD), which was finalised in May 2011 and signed by the Government of Sudan and the Liberation and Justice Movement on 14 July the same year. UNAMID emphasises the role of civil society in the process:

– Confidence in the prospect of peace and progress was evident throughout Darfur during the dissemination of the DDPD to civil society groups. UNAMID continues to provide technical and logistical support to this important exercise. The Mission has so far facilitated 86 workshops with the participation of more than 16,000 Darfuris. Overall, the signs are positive that the local population believes in the DDPD as a legitimate foundation to build a common and shared future, said the envoy of Gambari.

While responses to the DDPD have been generally positive both within Sudan and among the international community, UNAMID is through its dissemination activities aware of the fact that some Darfuris have serious reservations about the agreement, Bashua says. The doubts concern both the Sudanese Government's willingness to implement the peace agreement, and whether it can be effective without the participation of the hold-out movements.

– This is despite the DDPD being developed and adopted using a more inclusive process than previous peace agreements in Sudan, with significant input from civil society, political parties and opposition movements. A notable amount of this ambivalence can be attributed to certain IDP camps and areas known for political and tribal polarisation. However, the concerns of these communities will need to be addressed if the DDPD is to truly take root in Darfur, the envoy stated.

There is a burgeoning civil society movement in Darfur, and international actors have important roles to play in continuing to provide capacity support for civil society organisations (CSOs) as well as institutional capacity development to the Darfur Regional Authority and Darfuri institutions, Bashua noted. The UNAMID representative also highlighted that the international community must recognise that Sudan faces new realities with the separation of South Sudan, and the internal conflicts of Sudan should not fall out of focus.

– While a sustainable peace is in sight, we have a great deal of road to travel to get there. The progress made remains fragile and may be easily reversible, should we lose focus. Given the numerous challenges Sudan faces, ignoring Sudan means forgetting Darfur. To do so would mean giving up on our pledges to support the people of Sudan in finding peace. The only real failure is to give up. It is my hope that we would not, the UNAMID envoy concluded.

PHOTO: LPI

Seminar 4 was held in the First Chamber Hall of the Swedish Parliament and attracted a diverse and broad-based audience. It was arranged by LPI and NAI in co-operation with the Swedish Green Party.

Opening statement for the panel

Yasir Awad Abdalla Eltahir, Life & Peace Institute, Khartoum

Working with civil society requires adopting new approaches and long-term engagement. Sudanese senior researcher Yasir Awad addressed the panel with a clear message:

– We need the comprehensive, inclusive, participatory approach of conflict transformation that addresses all levels of conflict, and not the part by part, piece by piece approach of conflict resolution. Yasir Awad also stressed the importance of involving civil society in peacebuilding and provided five recommendations to give some food for thought to the panel.

- **CSOs in Sudan have the potential and responsibility to lead the peacebuilding process in Sudan.** INGOs and donors share responsibility for ensuring that a climate exists where CSOs can play a positive role in peacebuilding.
- **INGOs and donors can play a role in supporting the development of CSOs in the Sudans**, including Community Based Organisations at the grass roots level, and help to create political space for these organisations to engage within Sudan, between Sudan and South Sudan, with the regional and international community.
- **Relations between Sudanese CSOs and INGOs must be based on partnership** that entails mutual transparency, accountability and risk-sharing.
- **Funding for CSOs should build capacity** and promote institution-building, organisational and technical skills to help long-term capacity and independence.

- **Peace is important not only within Sudan and South Sudan respectively**, but also between the two and in coordination. Given socio-cultural history, current economic and political linkages, and the pending issues between the countries, it is critical to recognise this. Shared visions of peace for both countries should be promoted, and cross-border/soft-border initiatives and dialogue should be encouraged.

Discussion

Panellists:

***Marika Fahlén**, Special Envoy and Advisor on the Horn of Africa at the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs*

***Pekka Haavisto**, Special Representative of the Foreign Minister of Finland in African crises*

***Nils Arne Kastberg**, former Country Representative for UNICEF in Sudan*

***Awad El-Sid El-Karsani**, Department of Political Science, University of Khartoum*

***Rosalind Marsden**, European Union Special Representative for Sudan*

***Gunnar Sørbø**, senior researcher and former director of Christian Michelsen Institute*

Please see panellist biographies on p. 22

The moderator, *Yasmine El Rafie*, journalist and professional discussion leader, opened the discussion by going back to the time when communities in Sudan handled resource based conflicts with their own mechanism of conflict management. She suggested that there has been a tradition of local peace conferences in Sudan in the past. Why is it that these conferences don't exist anymore? And is this broken tradition possible to use when donors want to support community based initiatives?

Traditional mechanisms of managing conflict and building peace

Gunnar Sørbø, who visited Sudan for the first time as a young researcher in 1970, explained that local peace conferences, especially along the North-South border, were announced in the newspapers annually.

– In the past there were conferences on solving the resource-based conflicts and finding agreements around pastoral migration. Then the Nimeiry government abolished this mechanism. Another problem is that the local conflicts have become more and more absorbed in bigger conflicts. Local peace undertakings are often undermined due to this.

Awad El-Sid El-Karsani confirmed this picture.

– I come from western Kordofan where traditional problem solving worked until 1970. Now the picture is more complex: the migration movements don't follow their traditional patterns, droughts strike the region harder than before, and since 1994 Sudan is also divided into a larger number of states. Also the native administration is divided. Due to this, mechanisms to solve land and resource based conflicts don't function. The tribal problems are difficult to solve, and the land committees, which were to be established in line with the CPA, never came into place.

The responses to the conflicts in the border zone and in the rest of Sudan have not involved the full toolbox of donor initiatives, **Nils Arne Kastberg** added:

– Regarding young people, we need to do much more, both at central and local levels. For example, starting football clubs is a fairly simple way of engaging in peacebuilding. But the international community is not geared towards helping that kind of initiative. It is easier to build schools than to promote peacebuilding.

A challenge for external actors is to find channels to engage on the community level, said **Marika Fahlén**:

– For external actors it is easier to be at the macro level than the community level. But it is of course of key importance to be engaged where conflicts start. We need to listen to voices of those affected by conflict. For example, Darfur was initially presented as an ethnic conflict and we therefore approached the concerns in the wrong way. If we had looked at it as livelihood-related it would have been better.

To the question of whether this suggests that traditional mechanisms for conflict resolution are outdated, Fahlén replied the following:

– Every time has its way. But it is important that we should be more sensitive to traditional mechanisms of conflict resolution. Solutions have to be rooted in the community and not imposed from the outside.

The politicisation of civil society: an obstacle to overcome

Pekka Haavisto wished to bring the political aspect of community based initiatives into the discussion.

– I want to make two remarks. The first is that we don't always understand how politicised the situation is. People are politically organised on the ground, which also means that civil society is politicised. You don't find a "clean", unbiased voice of civil society. The other thing is linked to arms. Once the arms are in the picture, it changes the context. How do I for example speak to a boy who has a Kalashnikov? It is not like before the situation got militarised, when I could easily talk to him.

Nils Arne Kastberg agreed that the situation on the ground is highly politicised. He raised the question of what the Swedish parliamentarians and Sweden as a donor can do.

– We have a responsibility to protect, but the risks we encounter have led to a passive behaviour. How do you help to re-build co-existence? This requires new ways to work that we are not prepared for.

Rosalind Marsden compared the situation at the border to the one in the Darfur region, and also pointed out that the degree of militarisation varies locally.

– It is crucial to try to work with civil society. But it is true that it is often quite politicised, and that is a problem. Also in Darfur we have seen traditional mechanisms break down. We have been looking for what the international community can do. One example is the Darfur Community Peace and Stability Fund. Within its framework projects in pockets of security bring communities together. The focus is on peacebuilding and not development and this is an interesting experiment. Resource-based conflicts, e.g. Abyei, which we have seen in recent years are marked by politicised issues and a break down of traditional mechanisms. In other parts there seems to be examples where it is better managed.

Finding successful strategies to engage civil society

Gunnar Sørbø wished to nuance the discussion on politicisation and to discuss how civil society actors can be engaged despite this.

– The concept of civil society is not always helpful; it covers so much. And why not be politicised? That is not the issue. The issue is rather that there are examples of people being sidelined. The problem is that if you take up arms, you are invited to the negotiation table, if not, you are not invited. I see some changes in the patterns. Today there are "conflict entrepreneurs" turning up, and initiatives are taken over and used for political causes. Many good initiatives are therefore undermined.

Sørbø also called for a growing awareness and more conflict sensitive approaches by international actors.

– Some NGOs may have been a little bit naïve in what they think they can achieve in conferences, declarations etc. What we see is a non-implementation of these. But commitments can be achieved in some areas, and these should be strengthened, spread as good examples. Here is a clear role for the international community.

Nils Arne Kastberg expressed a desire to see peacebuilding work that extends not only to civil society actors directly, but also to the lower levels of state administration.

– There is a need to work not only with civil society but also to realise the role of local administration, like governors, and engaging with them in constructive ways of raising awareness. If we can help them to build accountability, it will also give more space to civil society. If you want to develop peaceful co-existence, find common ground. In this process it is also important to generate data around social issues and promote engagement.

Kastberg also said that he would like to see more pro-active engagement:

– Eastern Sudan is also an issue. There are severe problems, and the international community is far less engaged here. It seems that we engage only where there is conflict and not where conflict risks breaking out.

Both Marika Fahlén and Rosalind Marsden mentioned that there have been positive examples of engaging civil society.

– EU has been supporting a dialogue project in the border area through an INGO and a Sudanese NGO, Marsden said. Discussions have been held with tribal leaders on both sides of the border. The

PHOTO: LPI

The panel discussion was moderated by Yasmine El Rafie. Panelists from left: Nils Arne Kastberg, Awad El-Sid El-Karsani, Marika Fahlén, Pekka Haavisto, Gunnar Sørbø, and Rosalind Marsden.

discussions revolved around how the communities want to manage their lives with the separation of the two countries. This fed into wider meetings and the high-level panel under Mbeki which is working with border demarcation. Work on the ground can feed into the higher level, and this is a good example of linking the grass roots, the regional level and the high level.

The role of INGOs and creating the space

Pekka Haavisto highlighted that the limitations for NGOs to work and engage cannot be accepted internationally.

– There is still a lot we can do in terms of pressuring for human rights and using the different roles of international donors.

Rosalind Marsden brought up the lack of access to the border areas for INGOs. Gunnar Sørbø shared the view that INGOs are restricted in their daily work in Sudan:

– For INGOs it is not easy, as the environment is not very enabling. In Darfur several humanitarian organisations were asked to leave in 2009. It is not easy to find space, but space can be found in good coordination with Sudanese organisations, even though there are restrictions and challenges.

Nils Arne Kastberg supported this claim:

– The issue of humanitarian access has been extremely difficult. The attitude has been to resolve issues with armed confrontation. As international community and donors, we have not adapted our systems. All eggs are put into the military basket to solve problems. And we have either development aid or humanitarian aid. Other forms of international cooperation are missing, and we have not created mechanisms to help civil society and NGOs to solve problems at the local level.

North in the shadow of the South?

When asked by the moderator whether there has been any kind of demonising of Khartoum or a bias towards the South on behalf of the international community, several of the panellists agreed that this has to some degree been the case.

Pekka Haavisto said that there has been a feeling in the international community that the attitudes towards Sudan and South Sudan, respectively, have had a moral ground.

– After the occupation of Heglig by South Sudanese forces views have changed. I am happy for the strong international reaction, he said.

Gunnar Sørbø affirmed that the message from the international community has been far from coherent during the CPA period, which has posed a problem.

– It is the only peace agreement in the world that has been treated this way. The message to Sudan has been, make peace, but also that its head of state, President Bashir, will be arrested, he said.

Rosalind Marsden confirmed that the signals sent to the Sudanese government have been ambivalent.

– The perception in Khartoum is that the international community is moving the goal posts. The message to the Government of Sudan has to be that they need to resolve the conflicts for the sake of their own people, not for the international community.

In brief

LPI and NAI wish to highlight the following policy-relevant findings discussed at the seminar:

- *Donors are often hesitant or not patient enough to engage on the micro level. There is a need for a stronger focus on new peacebuilding strategies in addition to the traditional humanitarian, development and military peacekeeping strategies already in place.*
- *More conflict sensitive strategies need to be adopted by donors. Civil society is often challenging to engage, not least due to its politicisation. Militarisation also changes the whole context and often leads to groups taking up arms often also are the ones invited to the negotiation table. The challenge for the donors is to involve groups that are currently sidelined.*
- *The Nordic countries and other donors could do more in terms of using their leverage to create space for civil society actors as well as international NGOs in Sudan. New forms of co-operation and partnership with Sudanese civil society actors can be used to promote inclusiveness and support peacebuilding activities in Sudan.*

Concluding seminar panellists

H.E. Ambassador Marika Fahlén is Special Envoy and Advisor on the Horn of Africa at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. She has a background in both government service and the UN, having served in UNDP, UNHCR and UNAIDS. In the 1990s she was Ambassador for Humanitarian Affairs and later on a member of the Board of Trustees of the International Crisis Group.

Pekka Haavisto is the Special Representative of the Foreign Minister of Finland in African crises, specialising on Sudan and Somalia. He is also a Member of Parliament and currently sits on both the Committee of Foreign Affairs and the Committee of Defence. In 2005-2007, Haavisto was the European Union's Special Representative for Sudan and Darfur and took part in the Darfur peace talks. In 2007, he served as Senior Advisor for the UN in the Darfur peace process. Haavisto also led the UN Environment Programme for the post-conflict environmental assessments in 1999-2005.

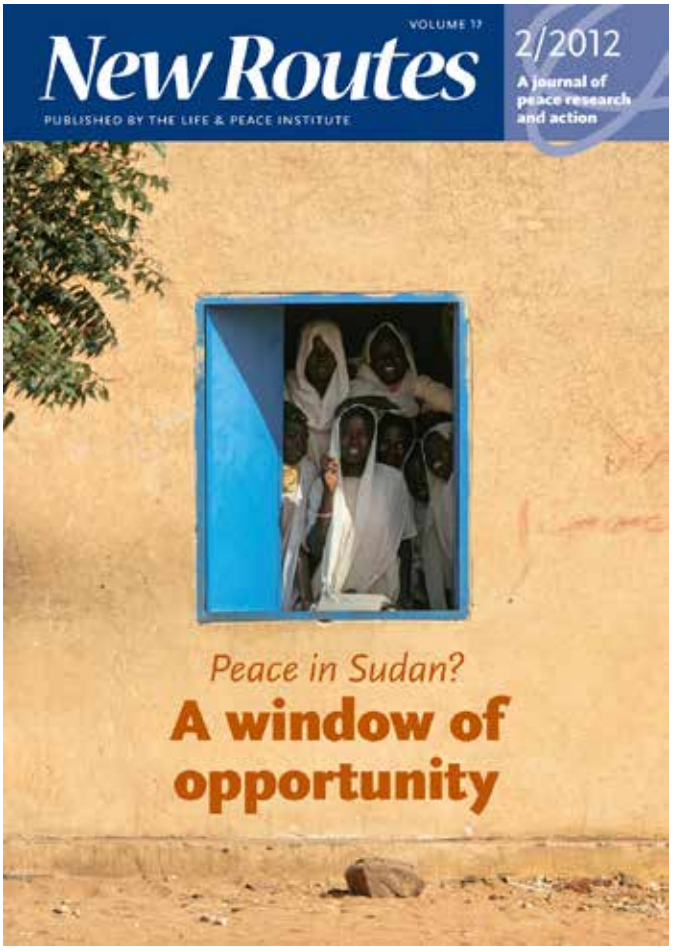
Professor Awad El-Sid El-Karsani is a Professor at the Department of Political Science at the University of Khartoum. He is an expert on Sudanese politics, federal and local government as well as the relationship between politics and religion. Professor Karsani has published a number of books on Sudan and its politics and has been an often consulted expert used by UNMIS, UNDP and others. He was also co-chairperson of the National Panel of Experts, connected to the Fiscal and Financial Allocation and Monitoring Commission, which monitored the wealth sharing protocol of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

Nils Arne Kastberg is the former Country Representative for UNICEF in Sudan. He is also former UNICEF Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean. Before joining UNICEF Mr. Kastberg worked for the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs in several functions, among them Head of Section for Humanitarian Affairs and as a seconded officer for the Office of the High Representative for the International Community in Bosnia. He has also worked with the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida).

Rosalind Marsden is a senior diplomat who since September 2010 has served as the European Union Special Representative for Sudan. She has large experience in African affairs and served as British Ambassador to Sudan in 2007-2010. During her time as Ambassador Mrs. Marsden built close contacts with civil society groups in Darfur. Formerly Mrs. Marsden has served as Ambassador to Afghanistan and Consul-General to the city of Basra, Iraq.

Dr. Gunnar M. Sørbø is a social anthropologist and the former director of the Norwegian Christian Michelsen Institute (CMI). He has vast field experience from Sudan and has published a number of books on the conflicts in the country. Sørbø is an experienced team leader for policy-oriented reviews and evaluations, often with international participation and for many different clients. Before joining CMI as director, he was the first director of the Centre for Development Studies, University of Bergen.

Further reading on Sudan: Special New Routes issue



Peace in Sudan? A window of opportunity

In connection with the seminar series Sudan: North in the shadow of the South, in spring 2012 the idea was born to produce a thematic New Routes issue with focus on Sudan and its interrelation with South Sudan. This was a brilliant opportunity to draw on the knowledge and experience of some of the seminar speakers, and five of them (Yasir Awad A. Eltahir, Buthaina Ahmed Elnaiem, Mohamed Ahmed Abdelghaffar, Guma Kunda Komey and Gunnar Sørbø) are among the authors in the issue. The aim of the journal, as well as of the seminars, is not only to point out challenges but also opportunities to transform conflict and build sustainable peace.

The seminars presented a variety of topics, as does this New Routes publication: border issues, natural resources, the potential of civil society based initiatives, the relations between farmers and pastoralists, environment and climate change and its connection to conflict.

– A common theme stressed by several of the speakers is that sustainable peace is not achievable if the two countries are viewed separately. The Sudanese themselves and the international community have to explore new ways of peacebuilding in Sudan, says Peter Karlsson Sjögren, Executive Director of the LPI, in connection with the seminar series.

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