



THE QATARI EFFORTS TO RESOLVE THE ARMED CONFLICT IN DARFUR – THE CHALLENGES AND OBSTACLES

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This paper aims to investigate Qatari role in achieving peace, security and stability in the western Sudanese province of Darfur.

Methodology: A before/after approach was used to examine the role of Qatar in resolving the conflict in Darfur.

Findings: Explains the important role played by Qatari government in its engagement in peacekeeping that guided this condition.

Originality/value: The approach and the results are original and valuable to evaluate the role of Qatar in Sudan.

Keywords: Sudan; Qatar; Darfur; Doha; Doha Document for Peace in Darfur; DDPD; UNAMID; AU; Justice and Equality Movement; JEM; Sudan Liberation Movement; SLM.

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INTRODUCTION

The article outlines the role of Qatari government in achieving peace, security and stability in the Darfur region, through the development effort to complete the peace process through the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD). It explains the important role played by the Qatar in peacekeeping as well as how its actions and decisions were received by the Darfurians and the government in Khartoum.

Darfur over the years has not been a concern of the Sudanese central government in Khartoum. The inhabitants of this region felt a growing dissatisfaction with the neglect and severe consequences in terms of impaired economic development and which are subject to strict controls. These factors, together with limited resources of arable land and water, greatly restrict their lives. In 2003, there was an escalation of hostile sentiment, which led to the war, involving armed groups the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) and the SLA which demanded greater autonomy for their region. In response to the rebels, the government in Khartoum organised and armed militias known as 'Janjawid'. This gave rise to a bloody, painful war that always brings a lot of damage, and most of all produces a vast amount of victims.

BACKGROUND OF THE CONFLICT IN DARFUR

Darfur is the western province of Sudan, bordering Chad to the west. Its area is about 500,000 sq km. It stretches of uninhabited desert areas in the north, through the semi-arid Sahel area in the center to a more fertile savannah landscapes in the south.

It is estimated that Darfur has a population of about 6.5 million. It is divided into three states of North Darfur, West Darfur and South Darfur, each with its own capital city. The whole region is inhabited by a mixture of 60–70 different ethnic groups. The largest tribe is Fur and has a population of about two million. Although any categorisation is a problem, people are often divided into old tribes of Africa, such as the Fur and Masalit that inhabited this region for years. Among the African tribes, there are also new ones such as the Dam, Dajo and Borgo, which are smaller and have less historical rights to their lands (Mohammad and Mahmoud, 1981).

For centuries, Darfur was an independent sultanate. Although the central part of the Sudan was under British control after the Battle of Omdurman in 1898, Darfur was not included in the colony of Sudan. Darfur played a minor role in the long civil war between the north and south of the country in the years 1956 to 1972 and in 1983. The overall decline in rainfall in 1970 and drought in 1985 led to a deterioration of relations between growers and nomads in Darfur (Suliman, 2004).

According to UN figures between 2003 and 2008, in a terrible conflict in Darfur, up to 400,000 civilians were killed, another two to three million driven from their homes and 1000–2000 villages razed to the ground.

Darfur was a well organised and successful empire – a Sultanate. It was Egypt's largest single trading partner, and controlled the region's salt, textile, iron, copper and slave trades. Its capital was a thriving town called Al Fasher where the Sultan ran his far-flung empire from the comfort of his sumptuous palace.

Most of the newcomers were nomads in drier parts of the Sahel. Clashes between indigenous residents and nomads have become commonplace. The conflict began when two rebel groups JEM and Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) announced their opposition to the government in Khartoum, and shortly after they launched an attack on the area under the government's control. JEM was dominated by the Zaghawa clan while the SLM were Futura, Masalit and Zaghawa as well as other clans. After a period of confusion, the government mobilised the militia of loyal Arab tribes – Janjaweed – which supported their huge campaign to combat the insurgency. The most intense fighting took place in the years 2003–2004. The government's main tactic was launching aircraft raids. The land army, though, was also involved in shooting men, raping girls and women, killing and stealing animals and poisoning wells. Systematically bodies have been removed and thus whole villages started diminishing. Passengers were forced to escape into the wilderness (Charlotte, 2011).

Security Council Resolution 2007 was established by the United Nations and the African Union UNAMID peacekeeping forces which currently include 19,000 troops and police officers. Their leader Martin Agwaj, in August 2009, found that the threat of war is serious. Earlier in March the same year, the prosecutor at the Criminal Court in The Hague issued an arrest warrant for President Omar Al-Bashir. He was accused of crimes against humanity in Darfur (United Nations Information Centre, 2013).

The key natural resources in Darfur are primarily crop plants such as millet as well as livestock, for example, camels. The main model of land rights in Darfur is a common law right of use on land and not private property in the literal sense of the word. If a household ceases to use a piece of land, a community leader can assign the land to another house, which is going to maintain it and where it is much more needed. The same is true for newcomers to a village. They can also be given land if they indicate their willingness to contribute to the local community. Another important element of customary land tenure in Darfur is that they are open to grazing animals after harvest. This law also applies to nomadic pastoral groups. It allows, with a prior notification, grazing animals in exchange for milk or meat. Sedentary cattle keeping groups sometimes leave the animals under the care of nomads.

The basic model of customary land ownership underwent modifications. While Darfur was an independent sultanate dominated by the Fur, a system called Hakura was implemented, which gave a possibility of granting land rights to teachers of Islam and other important people. Over time, in effect the administrative system of the Sultan Hakuras allocated land to the leaders of certain tribes. Such administrative Hakura law is commonly referred to as a gift for the largest tribes of Darfur, possessing formal ownership of such tribes of the Fur, Masalit,

Zaghawa and Rezeigat. Dar is such that most of the Masalit villages will be dominated by the Masalit and will have a Masalit leader. However, immigrants from other tribes are welcome if they are willing to contribute to the welfare of society and ultimately may own land. The described above joint land use continues to be widespread. The whole complexity of the ownership of land was approved by the Government of Sudan in 1970, stating that all land not owned by the government will be recorded. Recurrent droughts together with political manipulation by groups in Chad and other neighbouring countries have contributed to the difficult situation in Darfur between 1980 and 1990. Agricultural tribes like Fur and Masalit fought numerous battles with the nomadic tribes (Jaspars and O'Callaghan, 2008).

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY'S EFFORTS TO RESOLVE THE ARMED CONFLICT IN DARFUR

The international community over the years has taken action to put an end to the bloody war and bring peace to Darfur, but attempts to reach an agreement and therefore the signing of the truce is difficult because of the divisions that prevail among the parties involved in the conflict. Rebel side was fragmented and comprised nearly 30 different groups. These divisions, lack of willingness to cooperate and combine their efforts for peace are major causes of the current situation. When 5th May 2006 in Abuja, Nigeria, after long negotiations, signed a peace agreement providing for the disarmament of the Janjawid, and the rebels incarnation of the Sudanese army, part of their groups did not join this agreement. The truce accepted only faction of SLM/A led by Minni Minawiego.

Another measure aimed at establishing peace in Darfur was the adoption of a plan for the establishment of the military – peacekeeping force for the region. Branches would count 22, thousands of visitors. Documenting this provision was UN Security Council Resolution of 31 August 2006 Report No. 1706. This army would replace the African Union troops, whose level of professionalism and morale left a lot to be desired. However, the central government in Khartoum rejected the proposal as likely to prejudice the sovereignty of the state, but agreed to a partial technical and strategic support to the African Union troops by the UN.

A significant breakthrough came on 14 July 2008 when the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court has accused Sudan's President Omar Hassan Al-Bashir for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes in connection with the conflict in Darfur, and 4 March 2009. Issued an arrest warrant Bashir despite the lack compliance as to whether the evidence is sufficient genocide. However, objected to this other African countries and Arab, fearing a collapse of the situation and negative effects in the region. The president, in response announced 12 November 2008 unconditional ceasefire in Darfur by joining it to disarm the police units fighting on the side of the government.

THE CONTEXT OF QATARI MEDALION IN FARFUR

Qatar has been trying to mediate talks between the warring parties in Darfur since the conflict erupted in 2003. The Arab league and the African Union agreed in September 2008 to work together in order to end the Darfur conflict which has continued for more than six years. They both agreed on Doha as a host venue. Together with the AU-UN Chief Mediator, Djibril Bassolé, Qatar has been involved heavily in the negotiations by hosting the Mediation. Many of the rebel groups have been wary and skeptical of Arab mediation, seeing it mainly as a way to

protect Sudanese President Omar Hassan Al-Bashir from the possibility of indictment for war crimes by the International Criminal Court. Since then, the Qatari Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Abdullah Al-Mahmood has been vigorously engaging in meeting with the parties; Sudan government, the JEM, the governments of Chad and Kenya, to facilitate the peace process. Doha also succeeded in convening different summits for Arab and African ministers, mediators, special envoys to Sudan, and international partners, to decide on the next steps in mediating a peace agreement for Darfur. Doha has also hosted many capacity-building workshops for Darfuri activists (Ibrahim, 2010).

The Qatari's good relations with the government of Sudan, and its extensive provision of humanitarian aid to the Darfuri population, meant that Qatari policy makers enjoyed a high level of legitimacy in the eyes of both parties during negotiations to end the conflict in Darfur. This reputation for impartiality, however, has not remained unchallenged, with critics noting even in the case of Darfur that Qatari mediators may have been partial to Khartoum (Barakat, 2012).

Qatar is a key economic partners for Sudan, as well as its political role in the Darfur file, which contributed to the Darfur Development Bank, and in the process created five model villages in the states of Darfur, which is chaired today the International Committee for Enforcement document the Doha agreement and has committed to pay \$500 million for the reconstruction of Darfur.

Observers have additionally noted that the perception of Doha as a neutral venue may have had a positive effect on negotiations. Whilst some have argued that a city with closer ties to Sudan, such as Cairo, would have facilitated mediation through a deeper understanding of the Darfur problem, such arguments have been countered by those who perceive the impartiality of Qatar as a far greater asset. Analysts have noted that the neutral territory made participants more prepared to have a genuinely open dialogue on the difficult key issues surrounding the conflict (Abusharaf, 2010).

DDPD was signed in May 2011 in Doha, Qatar. On 14 July the Government of Sudan and the Liberation and Justice Movement signed a memorandum of understanding that provides a framework for a comprehensive peace process in Darfur. DDPD is the culmination of two and a half years of negotiations, dialogue and consultations with key parties to the conflict in Darfur, all stakeholders and international partners. The African Union with the UN mission in Darfur lent its technical expertise here the aim of inducing the parties to the conflict to create the document DDPD. Document DDPD provides a solution taking into account the causes of the conflict and its consequences, including relates to the separation of powers. It is a source of knowledge about human rights, justice and reconciliation, compensation and return to the internal dialogue between the parties.

In June, UN Secretary General Ben Ki-moon welcomed the DDPD as a basis to stop the ongoing eight years of conflict in Sudan. Assumptions of the document are supported by the African Union and the Arab League. UNAMID is chaired by committee. Armistice, referred to in the document DDPD. It reaffirmed its commitment to the National Constitution of the Republic of Sudan from 2005 to the full implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in January 2005, and to respect the Security Council resolutions on the need to achieve a political solution to the conflict in Darfur, in particular the agreement on ceasefire and humanitarian aid (Doha Document for Peace in Darfur, 2011).

DDPD was signed in July 2011 by the Government of Sudan and only one of the rebellious opposition parties: the Liberation and Justice Movement. From the very beginning of the DDPD was a flawed agreement, which does not refer to major political and security issues.

However, DDPD was a huge step ending a decade of conflict in the vast region of western Sudan. The government in Khartoum, unfortunately, consistently obstructed meaningful action for the implementation of this agreement, which was established on such a shaky foundation. It should be noted that the agreement itself is deeply flawed and incomplete. This is important because it does not take into account the basic security and political issues that led to take up arms in Darfur against the regime. Moreover, this does not stop the militias from further hostilities, which effectively prevent the return of IDPs and refugees. DDPD is incredibly similar to the peace agreement signed in Abuja in 2006, which was a diplomatic disaster. The agreement solves one of the manifestations of the broader issue of the government in Khartoum – that is, the marginalisation of communities living on the periphery of Sudan. Until the policy of integration and democratic transformation for all people in Sudan is comprehensively implemented, any subsequent peace agreement will bring only regional arrangement, as in the case of Darfur. Therefore, both the US government and other key aid organisations need to change their behaviour towards Darfur as a separate policy design separating it from the rest of Sudan. Then the Darfur must be incorporated into future planning policy in Sudan (Ismail and LaRocco, 2012).

THE EVALUATING OF QATARI MEDIATION EFFORTS IN DARFUR

This section will use a mediation evaluation in order to assess Qatari mediation efforts, and highlight how such efforts have helped to consolidate Qatar's new international standing and reputation for impartiality. There are several different types of mediation which can be identified, notably power-based mediation, which focuses on carrot-and-stick-type incentives to bring parties into agreement; interest-based mediation, which centers on problem solving techniques to satisfy all parties; and finally transformative mediation, a long-term enterprise which involves multi-level interventions to alter relationships and understanding between parties fundamentally (Lanz et al., 2008).

Qatar has thus far practiced power-based mediation, with its interventions heavily dependent on Qatari capacity to use its vast financial resources to offer incentives for conflict parties to come to agreement. This paper, however, goes further, to suggest that Qatari mediation is more advanced than pure power mediation, thanks to the rare legitimacy amongst both Arab and Western states which its three-pronged strategy of state branding, independence in foreign policy, and economic and political liberalisation has brought the country (Moran, 2009).

Doha document has responded to the demands of the people of Darfur Home, it can be explained in the following as stated in the text of the document:

- The adoption of the representation of the people of the region at all levels of government, including the presidency of the State.
- The adoption of the borders of 1956 limits of the province with the rest of the Sudan.
- Commissioner for the issue of the powers of land fair and guidance.
- Approve the compensation for the displaced and refugees individually and collectively and the protection of their security and ensure their voluntary return to their villages.
- Detailed measures for the development and provision of social services to remove the injustice regarding the right of the backwardness and the formation of a fund to that spotted him huge sums of \$5 billion.

- The adoption of the right of the people of the region in the central authority by the population. Commitment to the nationalism of the state institutions and revised to make it happen.
- Re-dismissed from the service of the reasons related to the conflict in Darfur as well as the release of prisoners.
- The composition of the specific powers to organise the voluntary return of displaced persons and refugees.
- Establishment of a fund for the compensation and reparation.
- The establishment of the Office of the truth, justice and reconciliation.
- The text on the detailed arrangements for the cease-fire, monitoring and accountability for violation.
- Agreement on the detailed arrangements for the disarmament and integration or demobilisation and rehabilitation of combatants. But the stimulus should not be confined to leaders as usual but should stimulate bases and soldiers to engage in peace zealously.
- Agreed to hold a meeting place Darfuri collector ownership agreement for all.
- The existence of a mechanism to monitor implementation was not in the Abuja Agreement.

Despite the fact that Qatari mediation and broader peacemaking efforts in Darfur remain imperfect, and – as we have seen above – have been criticised, such work has nonetheless been generally viewed in a positive light. In a region and a global community rife with power struggles, game play and vested interests, Qatar is one of the few actors that until recently appeared to have succeeded in rising above such matters, emerging as a genuinely impartial party, committed to working towards peace in difficult contexts. It had carefully constructed a niche for itself as an impartial, trustworthy and generous mediator in the Middle East, and its efforts, whilst not always successful, and rarely without controversy, had nonetheless laid firm foundations for the emergence of the country as a key global player in peacemaking and ending conflict.

The government of Qatar did not stop at mediation in the conflict in Darfur and its end with the signing of the 2011 agreement. Since then, one of the foreign policy goals of Qatar to Darfur were to monitor the situation to maintain stability and adherence to the terms of the peace agreement. For this reason, among others, on 7–8 April 2013, Qatar once again organised an international donor conference for the reconstruction and development of Darfur. The conference was held with representatives of the Sudanese government and one of its main objectives was to adopt a strategy of reconstruction and development of Darfur for the years 2013–2019 (International Donor Conference, 2013).

Despite the international and regional welcome given to the Doha Document for Darfur peace agreement, however, many observers agree that the document is facing a lot of obstacles and challenges, which can be summarised as follows.

The biggest challenges and most shortcomings faced by the Doha agreement is the refusal of the main movements participating in this agreement and sign it, in particular JEM and Liberation Army factions, forces of Arko Minawi and Abdel Wahid Mohammed Nur. Therefore, JEM sees itself as a key movement in the map of Darfur cannot be overcome and must give them adequate opportunity to dialogue with the government as well as the open document files and talk and discuss all the issues for negotiation (International Crisis Group, 2014).

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The absence of diplomatic personalities Western high-level for this conference means that all Western countries that participated in the negotiations felt that the conference is important enough to be attended, unfortunately, may be the outcome of the peace process worse than being the outcome is effective, there is a considerable likelihood that it will negatively affect the operations and future negotiations and wondering was it the secession of southern Sudan, a key factor in a hurry Khartoum to sign a peace agreement in Darfur (Jones, 2011).

Doha agreement did not include any item indicates clearly the individual compensation, while pointed to the implementation of the compensation, including Jawdiat transitional justice, civil administration, unlike the collective compensation specified in the services provided to the affected areas, mechanisms, and linked the agreement of compensation by the committees such as the verification of damage. You did not see the light until now.

CONCLUSION

Similar to the Darfur Peace Agreement negotiations in Abuja in 2006, civil society has largely been excluded from Doha up until this point, with the exception of a few dozen token civil society leaders and tribal chiefs playing an advisory role. The mediators plan to bring approximately 300 civil society leaders to Doha to secure their ‘blessing’ once the peace deals between the government and rebel groups are more solid, but there is still a strong possibility that these groups will not support the agreements negotiated by the rebels. Such was the case with the DPA, and the memory of what many Darfuris viewed as a betrayal is ever present. The signs are not encouraging that the mediators will do any better at ‘selling’ Doha than they did Abuja. This could render the peace process moot and mean continued conflict for the people of Darfur (Enough Project, 2010).

The increasingly disjointed process for negotiations in Doha reflects fundamental flaws in the structure of the talks. The initial agreement between the Government of Sudan and the JEM, has given way to a messy, poorly coordinated, multi-track structure that has discouraged transparency, substance and inclusiveness. This approach has also allowed the Government of Sudan to skillfully manipulate infighting among Darfur’s fractious rebel groups to its advantage, while avoiding international censure for conducting gross human rights violations, even as talks are ongoing. The mediators had initially hoped to unite all the non-JEM groups, and usher along a negotiation on a parallel track to JEM, with the idea that the two tracks could be merged at the end of negotiations. Unfortunately, this resulted in the emergence of *two* additional entities vying for inclusion in the Darfur peace process, both on their own terms: the Liberation and Justice Movement, or LJM, and the Roadmap group. Tensions among, and within, JEM, LJM and the Roadmap group remain high (Enough Project, 2010).

Despite more than four years after the signing of the Doha agreement for peace in Darfur, but that many of the issues and questions are still floating on the surface, and above all, the issue of the region is still at a standstill between the tides and crises successive, and above all overflowed finally sharp differences between the movement of components Liberation and Justice signatories of the DDPD, which will increase the fears of the potential impact on the course of implementation of the Convention and the continuation of the fragile coalition between components. Therefore, the movement that they represent a coalition of Darfuri rebel groups split into two factions: one led by the head of the movement and president of the Darfur Transitional Authority Tijani Sisi, and the second led by its Secretary-General and the current Sudanese Minister of Health Bahr Idriss Abu Garda.

In my opinion, that the Doha agreement for peace in Darfur is the best options today to resolve the current crisis in the Darfur region and the most suitable proposal by the international community to resolve this complex issue. The efforts made by the Qatari government is invaluable as there is now another better than Doha option to resolve this problem, even by the United Nations, which failed to resolve this issue in Abobja and N'Djamena.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

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