



Humanitarian Agenda 2015 Sudan Country Study

By **Tasneem Mowjee**

July 2006

Humanitarian Agenda 2015 (HA2015) is a policy research project aimed at equipping the humanitarian enterprise to more effectively address emerging challenges around four major themes: universality, terrorism and counter terrorism, coherence, and security.

The Feinstein International Center (FIC) develops and promotes operational and policy responses to protect and strengthen the lives and livelihoods of people living in crisis-affected and -marginalized communities. FIC works globally in partnership with national and international organizations to bring about institutional changes that enhance effective policy reform and promote best practice.

Full report and other country studies available at fic.tufts.edu

Context

Sudan is the largest country in Africa (about the size of Western Europe) and one of the most diverse. For centuries, it consisted of a number of independent countries. In the early 19th century, Egypt invaded and gained control on the northern part. In 1881, a rebellion started in the south but, in 1899, the British and Egyptians joined forces to gain control of the whole country.¹ The timeline below provides a chronology of key events in the country's history.² It demonstrates that Sudan has been torn by conflict and political strife throughout its history.

Detailed Timeline

- 1899-1955: Sudan under joint British-Egyptian rule.
- 1956: Sudan gains independence.
- 1962: Civil war begins in the south, led by the Anya Nya movement.
- 1969: Jafar Numayri leads "May Revolution" military coup.
- 1972: Under the Addis Ababa peace agreement between the government and the Anya Nya, the south becomes a self-governing region.
- 1978: Oil discovered in Bentiu in southern Sudan.



1983: President Numayri introduces Sharia (Islamic law). Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement (SPLA/M), led by John Garang, begins another civil war in south.

1985: After widespread popular unrest, Numayri is deposed. Transitional Military Council set up to rule the country.



1986: Coalition government formed after general elections, with Sadiq al-Mahdi as prime minister.

1988: Coalition partner the Democratic Unionist Party drafts cease-fire agreement with the SPLM, but not implemented.

1989: National Salvation Revolution takes over in military coup.

1993: Revolution Command Council dissolved after Omar al-Bashir appointed president.

1998: US launches missile attack on a pharmaceutical plant in Khartoum, alleging that it was making materials for chemical weapons.

New constitution endorsed by over 96% of voters in referendum.

1999: President Bashir dissolves National Assembly and declares state of emergency after power struggle with parliamentary speaker, Hassan al-Turabi. Sudan begins to export oil.

2000 September: Governor of Khartoum issues decree barring women from working in public places.

2000 December: Bashir re-elected for five years in elections boycotted by main opposition parties (he is still President).

2001 February: Islamist leader Hassan al-Turabi arrested a day after his party, the Popular National Congress (PNC), signs a memorandum of understanding with SPLA.

2001 March: World Food Programme struggles to raise funds to feed three million facing famine.

2001 April: SPLA rebels threaten to attack international oil workers brought in to help exploit vast new oil reserves. Government troops accused of trying to drive civilians and rebels from oilfields.

2001 June: Failure of Nairobi peace talks attended by President al-Bashir and John Garang.

2001 July: Government says it accepts a Libyan/Egyptian initiative to end the civil war. The plan includes a national reconciliation conference and reforms.

2001 September: UN lifts largely symbolic sanctions against Sudan, imposed in 1996 over accusations that Sudan harbored those who tried to kill Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

2001 October: President Bush names Senator John Danforth as US special envoy to tackle Sudanese conflict.

November: US extends unilateral sanctions against Sudan, citing its record on terrorism and rights violations.

2002 July: After talks in Kenya, government and SPLA sign Machakos Protocol on ending 19-year civil war. Government accepts right of south to seek self-determination after six-year interim period. Southern rebels accept application of Shariah law in north.

2002 October: Government and SPLA agree to ceasefire during negotiations but hostilities continue.

November: Negotiations stall over allocation of government and civil service posts, but both sides agree to observe ceasefire.

2003 February: Rebels in western region of Darfur rise up against government, claiming the region is being neglected by Khartoum.

2003 October: PNC leader Turabi released after nearly three years in detention and ban on his party is lifted.

2004 January: Army moves to quell rebel uprising in western region of Darfur; hundreds of thousands of refugees flee to neighboring Chad.

2004 March: UN official says pro-government Arab "Janjaweed" militias are carrying out systematic killings of African villagers in Darfur. Army officers and opposition politicians, including Islamist leader Hassan al-Turabi, are detained over an alleged coup plot.

2004 April: Government of Sudan and rebels in Darfur sign a humanitarian ceasefire under the auspices of Idriss Deby, President of Chad.

2004 May: Government and southern rebels agree on power-sharing protocols as part of a peace deal that follows earlier breakthroughs on the division of oil and non-oil wealth.

2004 September: UN says Sudan has not met targets for disarming pro-government Darfur militias and must accept outside help to protect civilians. US Secretary of State Colin Powell describes Darfur killings as genocide.

2005 January: Government and southern rebels sign the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), which includes a permanent ceasefire and accords on wealth and power sharing. UN report accuses government and militias of systematic abuses in Darfur but stops short of calling the violence genocide.

2005 March: UN Security Council authorizes sanctions against those violating ceasefire in Darfur and votes to refer those accused of war crimes to International Criminal Court.

2005 April: International donors pledge \$4.5bn (£2.38bn) in aid to help southern Sudan recover from decades of civil war.

2005 June: Government and exiled opposition grouping—National Democratic Alliance (NDA)—sign reconciliation deal. President frees Turabi, detained in 2004.

2005 July: Former southern rebel leader John Garang is sworn in as first vice president. A constitution which gives a large degree of autonomy to the south is signed.

2005 August: Government announces death of vice president and former rebel leader John Garang in air crash. He is succeeded by Salva Kiir. Garang's death sparks deadly clashes in the capital between southern Sudanese and northern Arabs, as well as violence in the South.

2005 September: Power-sharing Government of National Unity formed in Khartoum.

2005 October: Autonomous Government of South Sudan (GoSS) formed, in line with the CPA. The administration is dominated by former rebels.

2006 May: After lengthy negotiations in the Nigerian capital, Abuja, a peace agreement is signed between the Sudanese government and the faction of the Sudanese Liberation Army/Movement (SLA/M) led by Minni Minawi. However, the faction of the SLA/M led by Abdulwahid Al Nour and the other rebel group, the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) led by Khalil Ibrahim, refuse to sign.

As a result of the various conflicts, the political and economic situation in different parts of Sudan is very different. North Sudan is largely

The conflict began because Darfur felt neglected by the authorities in Khartoum and excluded from the peace talks between North and South Sudan, but it is exacerbated by tribal conflict which began in the 1980's.

peaceful with a stable, well-established government rich from oil revenues, though unemployment is a major problem (people complain that it is very difficult to get jobs without the right government connections. As a result, young men are going to the Middle East or Europe in search of work).

With the signing of the CPA, South Sudan is heading towards sustainable peace, and people displaced by the war are returning gradually. Under the terms of the CPA, there is a “unified”³ UN mission to monitor its implementation in the South (though the Mission HQ is in Khartoum). However, since South Sudan had no government institutions for over 20 years, the fledgling Government of South Sudan (GoSS) is struggling to establish itself. There is almost no infrastructure either. Juba, the capital, has few whole buildings and had lost electricity at the time of the study due to the breakdown of generators supplying the town. Interviewees highlighted housing, sanitation, and jobs as their most pressing problems.

The conflict in Darfur has raged for three years, resulting in 300,000 deaths and the displacement of over two million people.⁴ Most of the displaced have been living in IDP camps, though some have tried to find shelter in large towns or with relatives. Understandably, interviewees in the camps complained of a lack of employment, food, shelter, education, water, etc. The shortage of food was one of the greatest problems and this has undoubtedly been exacerbated since the World Food Programme had to halve rations from May 2006 due to a lack of contributions from donors. However, in some of the IDP camps, interviewees were also concerned about the lack of money and opportunities for young adults to get married or continue with a university education (most education services in the camps are up to primary or secondary school level only).

The conflict began because Darfur felt neglected by the authorities in Khartoum and excluded from the peace talks between North and South Sudan, but it is exacerbated by tribal conflict which began in the 1980's.⁵ Despite the recent peace agreement, the violence shows no sign of abating. In fact, since February, there have been reports of Janjaweed attacks on villages in Chad and of Darfuri rebel groups forcibly recruiting young men from Sudanese refugee camps in Chad.⁶ The African Mission in Sudan (AMIS) is tasked with monitoring the humanitarian ceasefire that was signed in April 2004. It deployed in 2004 but has a very limited mandate and is severely under-resourced. Therefore, there has been discussion of a handover from the African Union (AU) to the UN since the beginning of 2006 (strongly opposed by

the Sudanese government) but, since the May 2006 agreement, the process has accelerated.

There are also indications of conflict brewing in Eastern Sudan, where economic conditions are poor. However, little donor attention has been paid to this and few aid agencies are working in the area.

Methodology

This paper is based on interviews and focus group discussions with around 110 people. These were conducted in Khartoum, Juba (South Sudan), and Nyala (South Darfur) from 26 January–12 February 2006. The interviews were with a wide variety of respondents including:

- Both deputy Humanitarian Coordinators
- Three Humanitarian Aid Commissioners
- OCHA staff
- UNMIS/DSS staff
- International NGOs in Khartoum (focus group), Juba and Nyala
- Local NGOs in Juba and Nyala
- Local staff of an INGO in Nyala and one INGO in Juba
- Focus groups with IDPs in Khartoum, Juba, and Nyala; a focus group with returnees in Juba; some representatives of the local community in Khartoum

In Khartoum and Nyala, CARE International provided office space and logistical assistance and helped set up focus groups with IDPs. In Juba, OCHA assisted with office space, accommodation and transport. The IDPs interviewed in Khartoum and Nyala were all beneficiaries of CARE activities in some way so this may have influenced responses to some degree. In Nyala, the IDPs were receiving assistance from several agencies (which they could name and distinguish), so the effect was probably small. In Khartoum, there was a clear difference between the views of the IDPs interviewed in the focus group arranged by CARE (who were receiving assistance as they were a vulnerable group) and IDPs picked for interviews at random since they were not receiving any assistance (almost all INGOs had closed their programs in this particular camp due to lack of funding). In Juba, interviewees were selected opportunistically due to the severe difficulties with communication⁷ and attendant problems with setting up interviews in advance.

One INGO interviewee felt that “Neutrality is an operational, pragmatic principle; an endeavor more than a fact.” Nevertheless, others thought that humanitarian principles like neutrality and impartiality were easier for people to accept and could be more easily demonstrated through their work.

Universality

The aim of this “petal” was to explore whether core humanitarian values like neutrality, impartiality, and independence as well as international humanitarian and human rights law were accepted as universal or whether there was tension between them and the values and norms held by people in Sudan.

Discussions with a group of international NGOs (INGOs) in Khartoum highlighted the fact that there was tension between human rights and local traditions, so INGOs have to be pragmatic. As one staff member explained, “You have to accept the opinions of the community. You can try to mitigate against it, but you have to compromise. In Sudan, practically, you can’t be rigid, or you won’t get any work done. For example, you can reduce FGM [Female Genital Mutilation] but you can’t eliminate it.” This tension was evident not just in the Muslim parts of Sudan but also in the Christian South. An INGO in South Sudan had discovered that humanitarian principles and local traditions clashed within the organization itself—some of its local staff and guards could not sign up to the Red Cross/NGO Code of Conduct because they had wives as young as thirteen. Although it was working to bring about a change in social customs, the NGO was also developing a Code of Conduct based on international standards but adapted to working in Sudan. As the head of an INGO pointed out, “If you want sustainability, you can’t impose things on people.”

However, sometimes, when aid agencies try to provide assistance in a culturally sensitive manner, this can play into the hands of local power structures which subvert attempts to ensure equitable aid. In order to involve IDPs in food distribution in camps in Darfur, NGOs generally worked through the sheikhs (local leaders). However, in one camp, women interviewees complained that most of the food was going to the sheikh’s families and those they favored while others got little or no food.

Though NGOs may apply principles and human rights in a way that is sensitive to local beliefs, one interviewee thought that since “You have to choose the issues on which you’re going to take a stand,” different NGOs could adopt different and complementary approaches in order to tackle a difficult issue. For example, her organization had decided that “getting humanitarian principles into action” on sexual violence required it to address the problem at the legal level, working with the local government to change the law. Other groups gave priority to more programmatic approaches to dealing with the issue.

One INGO interviewee felt that “Neutrality is an operational, pragmatic principle; an endeavor more than a fact.” Nevertheless, others thought that humanitarian principles like neutrality and impartiality were easier for people to accept and could be more easily demonstrated through their work. According to one INGO, no one is turned away from its health centers in Darfur, as long as they leave their guns outside. Other issues, like universal gender rights, “are a very political issue in North Sudan, so it is difficult to get people to accept them.” Also, sovereignty and national self-determination are “hot issues in Sudan,” as they are the basis for the conflict in South Sudan as well as Darfur. An INGO interviewee believed that these “are not seen as compatible with internationalist humanitarian principles. Where we are explicitly building the capacity of local authorities, there is a potential conflict between the two.” As a result, one local government official had told an INGO that it was doing “more than NGO work” when it talked about principles.

This view was reflected in the comments of a Government of Sudan representative. He praised Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS) for the application of humanitarian principles: “The UN helped the two parties to work together. This is the good side of humanitarian principles.” However, he criticized NGOs in Darfur for not respecting humanitarian principles by raising human rights issues when they should be focusing on health, food delivery, or other services. He felt that the way in which NGOs raised these issues was also problematic—rather than addressing a local incident with the different levels of local government in Sudan, “the information goes straight in an email to Copenhagen and other capitals.” “Sometimes,” he said, “Even the HAC⁸ doesn’t know the details before they are reported internationally.” The representative questioned, “Do the NGOs really want to solve the problem or do they want to raise claims against the government or rebels?” In other cases, if an INGO has a problem, it takes it to its Embassy in Sudan to raise the issue with the government. He argued that this is a political move and blurs the distinction between NGOs and their governments.

The government official claimed that aid agencies are also exaggerating the extent of need in order to attract funding. Furthermore, he felt that they were not transparent about their funding. He explained, “Sudan has signed conventions on terrorism, cross-border crimes and money laundering, so the government is entitled to information about how the agencies got their money and how they are spending it. There is a lot of money for assistance in Sudan, but sometimes the NGOs don’t tell us the information, and sometimes even the donors don’t put us in the

picture. So how can the government trace and monitor this money and fulfill its commitments to these international conventions?”

These comments show that the government in Khartoum is highly critical of international NGOs and resents their censure of the government for human rights abuses in Darfur.⁹ One INGO staff member explained that this is because the NGOs are providing the services that the government should be providing (since Sudan is not a failed state, has substantial oil revenues, and the entire country is not at war), so they are a constant reminder of its failure.¹⁰ The government has tried to discredit INGOs by accusing them of being spies for Western governments or Western companies seeking to exploit Darfur’s natural resources (several interviewees in Khartoum mentioned newspaper articles to this effect).



The INGOs felt that most people, particularly local communities that benefit from international assistance, do not buy into this government propaganda because “people don’t believe what the government says” and they can see the work of aid agencies for themselves. This was generally borne out by interviews. However, some local people in Khartoum have accepted the government’s views. A group of unemployed young men thought that INGOs were gathering information on Sudan’s natural resources for Western companies. One of them argued that Western nations do not provide help unless there is some benefit for them and gave the example of oil in Iraq. They may have been more likely to accept the government’s propaganda because they could not see what

INGOs were doing for ordinary people in Khartoum. As they pointed out, “All the help is for Darfur or South Sudan.”

One INGO staff member explained the impact of this on the application of humanitarian principles: “It’s difficult to get people to accept that we’re impartial when the government is explicitly saying that foreign NGOs are spies.” Another INGO interviewee agreed that “what we say then has no credibility.”

Given these negative views of INGOs, one INGO staff member argued that it was important to provide regular education on humanitarian principles, particularly to local staff. As she explained, NGOs have a high staff turnover and when new staff members join, the emphasis is

**In a state of conflict,
application of principles
depends on the interests of
recipients and of rival powers.**

on program delivery rather than training them. She felt that while an understanding of humanitarian principles is important if an organization is undertaking emergency, life-saving activities, it is even more important if it is engaged in advocacy or activities which may be regarded as controversial by local populations. Other interviewees (from INGOs in both North and South Sudan) agreed. Although most NGOs provide an orientation for their staff, the notion of humanitarian principles tends to get forgotten, so there is a need for regular refresher courses. This was starkly highlighted for one INGO which found that its local staff in Darfur believed that INGOs were working for the CIA. Alleging that INGOs had helped the US army in its bombing campaign in Iraq by providing information about key locations, they thought that they would do the same if Western armies came to Darfur. When asked why, in the light of their views, they worked for the organization, they responded that it was for the good salary.

The problem of lack of training on humanitarian principles and human rights law is not restricted to NGOs. A UN interviewee pointed out that the UN also does not train staff on humanitarian principles because there is an assumption that anyone can “do good work” (although in East Timor UNTAET established a unit mandated with providing training in cultural sensitivity). He argued, “The principles are all about interpretation and how you interact with others.” Therefore, staff need to be trained in cultural sensitivity. Without it, there are instances of insensitivity, like sending a male protection officer to interview a rape victim or, in extreme cases, “you have peacekeepers raping kids.”

One assumption behind providing training to staff is that it will enable them to explain humanitarian principles to the local communities with which they work. However, the local staff members of an INGO in Juba felt that people had become dependent on aid so that they were more interested in material assistance than in trying to understand humanitarian principles. As one interviewee explained, “The Red Cross does disseminate information on International Humanitarian Law and HIV/AIDS guidelines, but local communities are not active in receiving it.”¹¹ Nevertheless, the interviewees argued that NGOs could do far more to involve local communities in the planning of activities. This is partly to avoid a mismatch between what the agency provides and the community’s expectations but mainly to develop people’s capacity to help themselves. It is easy for local communities to develop negative perceptions of an agency if they do not understand its way of working. Some interviewees in Juba complained that there was no milk for children in hospitals even though a UN agency had a large store of milk and biscuits in storage that had then expired and been “thrown in the river.” One suggested that the agency may not have had enough

operating partners to ensure distribution, but they still could not understand why it had not given out the milk.

An UNMIS official was much harsher in his assessment of the knowledge and application of humanitarian principles. He himself did not know the principles and felt that, in practice, the principles are ignored because all parties to a conflict manipulate aid agencies. A representative of the South Sudan Humanitarian Aid Commission, who had been a member of the SPLM (Sudan People's Liberation Movement), explained this simply. "Warring parties would like to use humanitarian services as a means of war because, if the lives of the other side are sustained with food and health services, it makes it more difficult to defeat them." Therefore, people do understand humanitarian principles but, "in a state of conflict, application depends on the interests of recipients and of rival powers."

The study found that humanitarian and human rights principles and values were not only promoted by expatriate staff or INGOs. In Darfur, a local NGO was promoting women's rights (but also working to provide healthcare, education, and food). A male staff member of the organization reported a discussion with young women about the Islamic law of inheritance which decrees that sons should receive two-thirds of their father's inheritance and daughters should receive one-third. He was arguing that men and women should inherit equal amounts, but the women said that this would be against their religion. He concluded that tradition could make women argue against their own interest. Thus, it is not only Westerners or foreigners who have beliefs that may be alien to local culture.

In South Sudan, those with "outside" or "foreign" values were NGOs that local interviewees referred to as "Arab." Several respondents reported the deep suspicion of Islamic NGOs amongst the largely Christian population in the South. This was because people associated them with the Islamic North Sudanese government that mistreated them during the war. They also suspected them of proselytization. As a result, one Islamic NGO had taken pragmatic steps to reduce suspicion, such as providing concrete assistance like building schools and hospitals that were then run by the Government of South Sudan. It had also appointed a Christian as its Director in South Sudan. A government official thought it was understandable that "warring parties want aid workers who share their ideology," which is why the government in North Sudan was more comfortable with Islamic organizations while people in South Sudan were more comfortable with Christian organizations. It did not matter that this made it difficult, if not impossible, for aid agencies to be neutral and impartial. Contrary to

this, though, in Darfur, where people are Muslim, interviewees in IDP camps were overwhelmingly in favor of assistance from the West. This is because they believed that Islamic governments and aid agencies supported the government, which was responsible for their displacement. In one positive example that there do not have to be clear cut distinctions between organizations on religious grounds, an Islamic NGO had received funding from an American Christian organization for its work in Darfur.

While the above examples highlight open tensions between “local” and “outsider” values, there is evidence that the tension is not always overt because aid workers (local as well as expatriate) are not aware of the cultural “baggage” that they carry. Two local NGO interviewees in Darfur argued that they could promote human rights for women in a more culturally sensitive way than INGOs and ensure that these did not contradict Islam, which grants women rights. However, when questioned about the issue of inheritance (described above), their response was that this was God’s law so it could not be changed. To demonstrate that men and women are treated equally in other matters, they pointed out that, in the Sudanese tradition of blood money paid for the killing of a person, the same amount is paid for men and women. However, they did not seem to be aware that the issues were different because, in the case of blood money, it is a woman’s family (not the woman herself) that benefits from an equal payment whereas the inheritance law discriminates against individual women.

A lack of cultural sensitivity is an easy criticism for local people to levy against INGOs. A government representative criticized the use of large numbers of expatriate staff by UN agencies and INGOs on the basis that they lack an understanding of local traditions, culture and language. For example, the representative argued, “Arabic is spoken with different accents in different parts of the country. When they interview people, they don’t understand what they are saying. Then the agencies present wrong evidence and findings.” However, he also went on to against the use of expatriate staff because he regarded this as unnecessarily expensive and resulting in a large proportion of assistance being spent on expatriate salaries and lifestyles rather than on local people and beneficiaries. Hence, he claimed that Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS) spent 60-65% of its funding on administration.¹² Thus, the charge of cultural insensitivity can be used as a proxy for other grievances.

Some interviewees (almost all expatriate) felt that the behavior and lifestyle of expatriates did create a negative image. One senior national staff member of an INGO argued that even when expatriates tried to be

culturally sensitive they could inadvertently give offence. He gave the example of a senior female expatriate who wore Indian “shalwar kameez” in Darfur as a modest form of dress. However, on one occasion, when she was sitting with male local staff at an outdoor café, she sat with her foot up on her chair, which the Darfuris regarded as improper. Her male colleagues were ashamed but could not say anything because she was their senior. The interviewee went on to explain that, when local staff in Khartoum see expatriates driving large cars (that are parked in the shade while any cars that national staff have must be parked in the heat) and living in expensive areas, they resent the fact that their requests for higher salaries are turned down. They complain about this to others in the local community and this adds to the negative image of INGOs. He argued, though, that expatriate staff use the humanitarian imperative to justify their lifestyle—they say that, if an expatriate was hurt or kidnapped, the NGO may have to close its entire operation so it would not be able to continue to help people.

Expatriate staff in South Sudan were amongst the most critical of their colleagues. They accused some expatriates of being colonialists who chose to be humanitarian aid workers for the money and the lavish lifestyles: people in humanitarian aid are “madmen, missionaries or mercenaries.” Therefore, as one interviewee put it, “You meet some aid workers and you think ‘what the hell are you doing here?’” They also felt that expatriates are arrogant, even when dealing with local government representatives. Giving the example of a meeting at which UN staff arrived in brand new cars while the governor “didn’t even have a pencil,” one INGO staff member thought that the difference in lifestyles and resources caused understandable resentment amongst the Sudanese. Finally, they argued that expatriates lead very insular lives and rarely take the time to talk to local people, even national staff, to understand their views and traditions. This problem is exacerbated because staff turnover in INGOs and UN agencies is very high so expatriates do not spend enough time in a country to understand complex local politics and traditions.¹³ In Khartoum, an INGO staff member who had spent about three years in the country was regarded as having been around for a long time—and he was leaving shortly after the interview. A couple of expatriates in South Sudan were the exception, though, having spent eleven to twelve years in the country.

Despite the criticism of expatriates by aid workers, beneficiaries in both South Sudan and Darfur were very positive about the work of international aid agencies and made no criticism about the lifestyles or behavior of aid agencies. In Darfur, this view can be explained not just by the gratitude of aid recipients but also by the fact that IDPs trusted

foreign aid workers far more than Sudanese staff. This is because they suspected national staff of sympathizing with the government that was persecuting them (particularly as the appointment of national staff had to be approved by the Humanitarian Aid Commission). As one IDP put it, “We accept aid workers from abroad because they don’t take sides, but national staff take sides. The government is causing problems, and they are hired through the government. We don’t accept them because they are not neutral.” Another interviewee described national staff as having “a double face.” For the same reason, a staff member of a national NGO in Darfur also argued that donor staff should be Western and selected carefully to ensure that they are neutral. The level of mistrust in Darfur was clearly demonstrated during the visit of the Emergency Relief Coordinator, Jan Egeland, to Kalma IDP camp on 8 May 2006. A woman refugee accused a national staff member of an INGO of being “Janjaweed,” whereupon a crowd of IDPs attacked him.¹⁴

This section has highlighted the fact that, although humanitarian principles and human rights law are not universally accepted in Sudan, these values are not regarded simply as Western—in some cases local Sudanese people affirm and promote them. In South Sudan and even in Darfur, hostility is not always directed towards the West and the values that it represents but also to Islamic organizations and values. Therefore, although there is some tension between core humanitarian values and Sudanese traditions, the picture is not entirely clear-cut. Thus, it would be helpful if aid agencies were more sensitive to the nuances of opinion and range of views around humanitarian principles and human rights.

Although US sanctions against the Sudanese governments were still in place so that no assistance is channeled through the government, the US had stopped referring to the violence in Darfur as genocide. The government has certainly sent mixed signals.

Terrorism

The purpose of this petal was to explore the extent to which the Global War on Terror (GWOT) has had an impact on the ability of humanitarian aid agencies to undertake their work.

Sudan had a direct link with Al Qaeda because Osama bin Laden settled there in 1991 and remained until 1996, when he moved to Afghanistan. However, after 9/11, the government decided to cooperate fully with the United States on terrorism. It has been argued that this was because the Sudanese government wished to avoid being added to the US’s list of targets after Afghanistan and also because it was desperate to end US sanctions and attract American oil investors.¹⁵ According to interviewees, the government handed over its files on Al Qaeda to the CIA and allowed the Director-General of Security to be taken to Washington for a week of interviews. The government has also allowed the CIA into Eastern Sudan.

During interviews, neither IDPs nor aid agency staff used the language of terrorism to describe the violence in Darfur. This would seem to indicate that people in Darfur had not made the link between the terror they were experiencing and the global discourse on terrorism.

A UN official argued that the US has changed its policy vis-à-vis Darfur as a result. Although US sanctions against the Sudanese governments were still in place so that no assistance is channeled through the government, the US had stopped referring to the violence in Darfur as genocide. The government has certainly sent mixed signals. At a press conference in Washington, DC, on 3 February 2006, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Jendayi Frazer would not respond to a direct question about whether the violence in Darfur was still regarded as constituting genocide. He described it as “a series of small attacks and incidents,” in which the government was not “directing the militia attacking civilians.” He went on to say, “The United States has said that genocide has occurred in Sudan, and we continue to be concerned about the security environment in Darfur” but that the violence was not “as systematic” as it had been.¹⁶ However, on 16 February 2006, when urging the AU to handover to the UN in Darfur, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said that genocide was continuing in Darfur “through a widespread campaign of rape, looting, and killing.”¹⁷ As a result, an NGO interviewee believed that the war on terror has caused confusion in the US government “and the implications ripple through to the field.” For him, this was demonstrated in Sudan by the fact that the US has renewed sanctions while “the CIA is feting a general whose hands are bathed in blood.” As another NGO interviewee put it, because of the war on terror, Khartoum and Washington have become “odd bedfellows.”

Apart from the Sudanese government’s cooperation with the USA on Al-Qaeda, though, there was little perceived connection between the conflicts in Sudan and the war on terror—people felt that the latter was something distant. A South Sudan government official summed up this view, “The war on terror is far from us. It is mainly in the Middle East and Asia, and I don’t know the details of how humanitarian aid suffers.” A group of young men in Khartoum felt that the actions of the West in Iraq and the killing of Palestinians were the real acts of terrorism rather than the actions of Al Qaeda but they did not believe that these affected their lives in Sudan (though the link between terror and Islam in the eyes of the West implicated all Muslims). However, the local staff of an INGO in South Sudan argued that the events of 9/11 had increased suspicion of Islamic aid agencies. People feel that “If they [Arabs] can do this to the US, they must be coming here to take our land and to chase us out.”

Unlike in some other countries such as Uganda and Burundi, neither the rebels nor the Janjaweed militias have been labeled terrorists, although the Janjaweed are clearly engaging in a campaign of terror

against civilians, supported by the government. The US government called the violence in Darfur genocide, though a UN International Commission of Inquiry described the actions as crimes against humanity but lacking genocidal intent.¹⁸ The campaign has certainly been successful since simply the rumor of an impending attack was sufficient to cause population displacement (as demonstrated by security briefings in Nyala in February 2006). Despite this, during interviews, neither IDPs nor aid agency staff used the language of terrorism to describe the violence in Darfur. This would seem to indicate that people in Darfur had not made the link between the terror they were experiencing and the global discourse on terrorism.

The one way in which the war on terror may have had an impact on the conflict in Darfur is that it may have prevented a more robust international intervention. One government representative speculated that, "If their army was not tied down in Iraq, America may have looked for other hotspots. Now, the American administration is cautious about opening another front. So they are just barking but not moving on Sudan and Iran."

Some interviewees commented on the effects of the war on terror more broadly. An UNMIS official thought that the war on terror had had an impact on the work of the UN, though not NGOs, because the UN was more of a target for terrorism than it had been (as reflected in the attack on the UN in Baghdad). He argued that there were terrorist cells active in Sudan and East Africa (Nairobi, Addis Ababa). So in Khartoum, the UN was "an iconic target because of the size of the mission." In Nairobi, it was a potential target because it had its operational headquarters there.¹⁹ However, he made a distinction between the UN as a political target and the UN being attacked when doing humanitarian work because he did not believe that the UN was a target for terrorists when it was providing humanitarian assistance on the ground.²⁰ Iraq was an exception because of the nationalities of the occupying forces. In Sudan, the presence of UNMIS troops has not caused any problems with the delivery of humanitarian aid. However, he speculated that this could change if the UN took over from AU forces in Darfur.

Another UNMIS official argued that the war on terror had considerably reduced the freedom of action previously enjoyed by aid workers. Taking the example of Iraq specifically, he argued that aid workers were a pawn in the war because they had no recognized status with the insurgents. However, as demonstrated by the section on security below, this was not the case in Sudan where expatriate aid workers seemed to enjoy far more respect than in other countries.

An OCHA interviewee felt that discussion around the war on terror had been formulated in an “unsophisticated way” so that it had dichotomized debate. “This has closed avenues for critical dialogue between countries and there is no middle ground anymore.” A Sudanese interviewee also noted this dichotomy—the “either you’re for us or against us” stance adopted by both sides—which has left little room for moderate Muslims. The OCHA official highlighted effects of the war on terror such as the labeling of legitimate rebel movements as terrorists (as in Palestine) and changes in the recruitment policy of some agencies (so that the best person of a job may not be appointed because s/he was of the wrong nationality).

The findings outlined in this section demonstrate that, despite a direct link between the Sudanese government and Al Qaeda in the 1990’s, GWOT has not had a significant impact on humanitarian action in South Sudan or Darfur or on the lives of people in Sudan. In fact, it is surprising that, unlike in some other countries, the government has chosen not to term the rebels “terrorists.” This may be because, in light of its past history and the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, it wishes to avoid a direct link to GWOT and the potential for greater international intervention in Darfur. The government of Sudan may also be concerned about drawing attention to its previous links with Al Qaeda (thereby being labeled terrorist sympathizers) or of being accused of terrorism in Darfur.

Coherence

For the purpose of this study, coherence is understood in the broad sense of the relationship between humanitarian action and other priorities in conflict and post-conflict situations, such as political and military objectives. But the study also looked more specifically at these relationships in the context of peacekeeping missions. Therefore, this section begins by outlining interviewees’ views on humanitarian aid and politics more generally before focusing on the two peacekeeping missions in Sudan—the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) in South Sudan and the African Mission in Sudan (AMIS) in Darfur.

Humanitarian Action and Politics

Interviewees made a few brief comments on INGO involvement in politics. One gave the example of church-based NGOs in South Sudan consulting with Christian NGOs in the US, briefing US senators on the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), and contributing to the discussions on the CPA. These NGOs were clearly in favor of an independent South Sudan so he argued that this had contributed to the negative perception of NGOs in North Sudan. One staff member of

People are returning to the South and they have high expectations but there has been no response [from the international community]. When they lived in a conflict area, there was a response for them but there is none for those living in peace. People may think it is better to go back to conflict because they get more help then.

an American NGO also mentioned InterAction writing to Condoleezza Rice, expressing support for the government's reform of USAID (which would make US NGOs a part of US government policy more explicitly) and acknowledging that NGOs help to make US foreign policy successful. The national staff of the organization had learned of the letter and were debating its implications in the context of suspicion in Sudan that INGOs have hidden agendas. In both these examples, NGOs were perceived as taking a political stance that has led to a negative view of them amongst local people.

The issue of taking a political stance has been much more acute for aid agencies in Darfur. One interviewee made a direct link between humanitarian aid and the politics of the situation when he argued, "The UN needs a reality check in Darfur. We're keeping 3 million people alive artificially so there is no incentive for a peace agreement. We're perpetuating the conflict. The longer it continues, the less people want to lose face—too much money has been spent on the aid effort. If the violence lessens, it's because there are not many villages left to burn." Although they did not discuss the issue in detail during interviews, INGOs have had to make difficult decisions about the extent to which they speak out about human rights abuses in Darfur (which from the outset has been widely recognized as a crisis of protection rather than a simple assistance crisis). As noted in the section on universality, the government of Sudan has resented criticism on this issue by INGOs and has retaliated by threatening organizations with expulsion or by using visas and permits to making access difficult.²¹ This may be one reason why aid agency staff are avoiding political issues and did not discuss the implications for their work of the fact that the Janjaweed were not included in the Darfur peace talks, although the agreement signed on 5 May 2006 provides for their disarmament (only one UN interviewee flagged the issue). However, as noted in the context section, the humanitarian crisis is being extended as the Janjaweed are already "striking deeper and deeper into Chad, leaving a bloody trail as residents defend themselves with only bows and arrows."²²

By contrast with the policies of the Sudanese government, donor policies had affected the work of INGOs participating in the study to a small extent only. One INGO had been affected by the pro-life stance of the Bush administration. It had submitted a project proposal to USAID, carefully removing "34 references to family planning," but it missed one and the project was not funded. The NGOs attempt to provide contraception in Darfur was further thwarted by Sudanese government propaganda, which had created a perception amongst the local population that family planning was designed to cause sterility and ultimately wipe out the population. Two INGOs in South Sudan had

found that, due to US sanctions against Sudan, USAID funding precluded them from using certain companies or banks or buying American computers and software.

Although donor policies may not have had a significant impact on the ability of aid agencies to provide humanitarian assistance in Sudan, levels of donor government funding clearly do affect where aid agencies can provide humanitarian assistance and whether they can meet needs adequately. An INGO staff member made the point that, in Darfur, “because of funding, we didn’t start working outside the camps early enough,” which had created resentment among the host population. More recently, the World Food Programme (WFP) had to halve rations for IDPs from the beginning of May due to a huge shortfall in requested funding at a time when UNICEF had reported increases in malnutrition rates amongst children.²³ Also, during interviews in IDP camps, there were widespread complaints that there was not enough food available and that WFP had been cutting rations.²⁴ The further halving of rations will have affected them even more.

Although the government in Khartoum has accused aid agencies of exaggerating the extent of need in Darfur, an official criticized donors for failing to meet needs adequately in other parts of Sudan. Sudan has two Multi-Donor Trust Funds (MDTF's), managed by the World Bank, to support recovery and reconstruction in North and South Sudan respectively. There have been considerable delays with this so at the time of the field visit and over a year after the signing of the CPA, no money had been disbursed. Substantial amounts of donor money were committed to the MDTFs, and the government was co-financing two-thirds of MDTF projects so its own money was tied up in the mechanism. The lack of recovery assistance in the South, which has enormous needs, was a real concern for the government in the North and the South because “People are returning to the South and they have high expectations, but there has been no response [from the international community]. When they lived in a conflict area, there was a response for them, but there is none for those living in peace. People may think it is better to go back to conflict because they get more help then.” Similarly, a humanitarian crisis is developing in eastern Sudan, but there has been very little donor interest so few NGOs are working there. As the government interviewee explained, “People see humanitarian convoys going from Port Sudan in the East, through the centre, to Darfur. They begin to think that the international community needs us to raise guns, to loot things to get food. So response has to be balanced.”

While the government feels that donor governments are not doing enough in South and East Sudan, it thinks that there is too much political interference in Darfur. A senior official argued that “Darfur is a community of tribes with a tradition of revenge for killings” and that the rebels were using this to create a humanitarian crisis in order to get attention and support from the international community. The official believed that the international community was playing into the rebels’ hands by putting pressure on the government of Sudan to resolve the conflict. He argued, “During the twenty years of civil war in South Sudan, there were no Security Council resolutions, no sanctions against Sudan. But in the two years of fighting in Darfur, there have been lots of resolutions and sanctions. There is something wrong here. Things have been pushed to this stage by exaggeration.”

The views reported above show that the link between humanitarian action—particularly its motivations, scale, timing, and efficacy—and external politics is certainly present in Sudan, though aid agencies may not feel it as acutely as in countries like Iraq and Afghanistan. The most direct impact of politics on humanitarian action in Sudan has been the involvement of the government in Khartoum in the violence in Darfur and its obstruction of humanitarian aid. More recently, a lack of adequate donor government funding is hampering the ability of aid agencies to meet needs in Darfur.

Humanitarian Aid and International Military Operations

As noted earlier, there are two international military operations in Sudan—UNMIS and AMIS. This section looks at the relationship of humanitarian action to each of these missions in turn.

UNMIS (United Nations Mission in Sudan)

As noted in the context section, UNMIS is described as a unified mission rather than an integrated mission. The mission has about 750 military observers to monitor adherence to the terms of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed in January 2005 by the Government of Sudan and the SPLM. The CPA has three important provisions relating to the mandate of UNMIS:

1. International observation
2. A separate army for the South
3. Power- and wealth-sharing guarantees

It has about 4,500 soldiers to provide force protection to the military observers (which is supposed to increase to 10,000). A government official argued that the military observers are safe because the Government of South Sudan (GoSS) has no reason to violate the CPA

(since it got what it wanted and does not want to lose it). However, their presence is necessary because the GoSS is suspicious that the government in the North feels that it conceded too much and may not adhere to the CPA. This suspicion was shared by people in Juba, who were concerned about the continuing presence of government soldiers in the town.

The deployment of UNMIS was delayed till November 2005 so at the time of the study, it had not reached full strength (at a Security Management Team meeting at the beginning of February, the UNMIS Director reported that 62% of personnel were in place). UNMIS has a Chapter 6 mandate, so it has a limited role in providing protection to civilians, though it can provide escorts for humanitarian convoys and has funding for Quick Impact Projects (QIP's) that can be accessed by NGOs and UN agencies (although UNMIS soldiers themselves were providing direct assistance). A UN interviewee also felt that the military observers did not really need much force protection, and this may be why UNMIS has focused so much on humanitarian activities (as described below).

In theory, in an integrated mission, as soon as troops are deployed, the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) and the mission's military head sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). There are supposed to be very precise rules and consultation mechanisms built into the system so that all military activity which affects the UN Country Team (UNCT), ERC (Emergency Relief Coordinator) function, and NGOs has to be cleared with the HC pillar. In Sudan, though, the MoU had not been signed at the time of the field visit. At first, because UNMIS troops were not deployed in large numbers, the HC's office did not make it a priority to sit down with the military and agree rules of operation. Then there was some disagreement between the two sides of the mission at the lack of consultation by the military, so the HC's office decided to wait for the arrival of a new force commander before finalizing the MoU. As a result, an important opportunity to codify cooperation between the military and humanitarian wings of the mission may have been lost. This underlines the importance of the HC and force commander agreeing the rules as soon as they are appointed.

Perhaps due to the absence of an MoU and a subsequent lack of a clear understanding about the roles of the military and humanitarian wings in UNMIS, UNMIS soldiers had been engaging in humanitarian activities without consulting humanitarian aid agencies or the HC's office. Interviewees highlighted the fact that there are several reasons why the peacekeeping soldiers were engaging in humanitarian activities. One argued that each battalion in UNMIS was looking for a

“project” so that it could plant its flag and show that it was doing “good” work. One example was the building of orphanages.

Another reason was that the soldiers saw a perceived need and decided to address it because they did not see aid agencies doing so. An UNMIS official was openly critical of humanitarian agencies. He felt that while missionaries “really stay with people and help them,” UN agency and NGO staff are “too ‘Emma’s War’²⁵: full of exotic people who are not really engaging with communities in a meaningful way.” As a result, he believed that aid agencies were not as effective as they could be, creating a gap-filling role for the military and private sector. As part of their shortcomings, he felt that aid agencies had failed to recognize that the situation in Sudan had changed so that what people needed was

seeds, not food aid. Therefore, UNMIS battalions were setting up “model farms” as part of a food-for-work program.



Thirdly, UNMIS officials saw these assistance activities as a good use of the ample peace-keeping budget. As one pointed out, “With a Chapter 6 mandate, there is nothing for them to do, but it’s costing \$1 billion a year so why not use them for development work?” This view was reinforced by an interviewee from the South Sudan government. He pointed out that, “The average person wouldn’t understand why the soldiers are staying in nice camps, driving good cars, and moving around but not doing anything for them.” So the local population is more likely to accept

UNMIS’s presence if they get tangible benefits from it.

There were certainly examples of UNMIS providing useful assistance, such as Bangladeshi doctors’ visiting IDP camps and soldiers’ filling up water tanks and digging latrines. However, a couple of interviewees expressed real concern at the potential harm that UNMIS assistance could cause. For example, although building orphanages may be a good thing to do in theory, UNMIS had not considered the socio-economic implications of this in South Sudan: that parents would be likely to give up their children to an orphanage so that they could have the food and clothes that they themselves could not provide. In the case of the model farms, an UNMIS official thought that commercial farmers from Uganda and Kenya should be encouraged to come to Sudan to run these farms and employ the South Sudanese. However, the military seemed to have little understanding that this could create conflict over

land ownership and stewardship in a country where hundreds of thousands of people, displaced for many years, are returning to claim land occupied by other displaced people. There was already an example of this conflict in one IDP camp in Juba—the owners of the land were returning and demanding it back, but the IDPs who had lived in the camp for nine years had few means to travel back to the town from which they had been displaced. Therefore, an INGO staff member argued that it would be better for the military to stick to rebuilding roads and bridges as this would support local traders by enabling them to travel between villages and towns (although they should be careful not to deprive locals of employment opportunities).

Despite these tensions in the relationship between humanitarian agencies and the military wing of UNMIS, one UNMIS official believed that both sets of agencies needed each other. He pointed out that, “The military can support humanitarian operators by providing security in the humanitarian field, negotiating access and providing information.” In situations where negotiated access is not possible (such as parts of South Sudan because the LRA does not have a unified chain of command and are impossible to negotiate with because they are “nutters” or “fruitcakes”), the military can provide more robust support. In return, humanitarian workers supported the peace process because “You can work on capacity building, governance, and other such activities but you also have to meet basic needs for food and medicines.”

Operational UN agencies have had to reorganize their own structures to develop a “one country, two systems” approach that reflects the country’s governance structure, while also working out the structure of the unified mission.

Although, as noted by the UNMIS official, UNMIS had the potential to provide armed escorts to humanitarian convoys, in practice these had been provided by the Sudanese or the SPLA (the South Sudanese armed forces) because UNMIS had been slow to deploy. However, it had increased access for humanitarian aid in a different way. UNMIS is responsible for determining whether roads are safe or not for UN agencies to travel on them. If it applied “the letter of the law,” UN agencies would not be able to travel on almost any roads, so it had adopted a policy of “minimum risk.”²⁶ In situations when the military provides an armed escort, the UNMIS interviewee admitted that “Some agencies have a valid argument that the presence of the military is off-putting for beneficiaries.” He countered this, though, by arguing that, in conflict areas, people are used to a military presence, so “a UN soldier is just another person with a gun,” and people take no notice, “especially when behind that person is a person with bread and medicines.” While this may be true in places like Sudan, where UNMIS’s presence is accepted as part of the peace agreement, the situation is far trickier in places like Afghanistan. Therefore, the extent to which aid agencies are comfortable with armed escorts is likely to be

context-specific as well as dependent on the organization's ideological stance on relations with the military.

In Sudan, the structure of the UN has further complicated the establishment of the unified mission. During the conflict in South Sudan, UN agencies in the North and South had separate reporting structures (so, for example, UNICEF in the south reported to Nairobi and UNICEF in the North reported to Amman) and operated independently. Even within South Sudan, agency sections working in government-held areas reported to Khartoum while the sections working in SPLA-held areas reported to Nairobi.²⁷ Therefore, operational UN agencies have had to reorganize their own structures to develop a "one country, two systems" approach that reflects the country's governance structure, while also working out the structure of the unified mission. This two-system approach is reflected in UNMIS's structure—although the military is in South Sudan to monitor adherence to the CPA, the troops are not controlled by the UNMIS Director in Juba but by the force commander in Khartoum.²⁸

"I don't know how we are going to protect humanitarian space if we're party to the conflict."

Interviewees highlighted a number of general issues in relation to integrated missions, but a reading of these comments should be nuanced by the fact that integrated missions are a relatively new structure and their initial implementation has been somewhat problematic. A senior UN official had found a contradiction in integrated missions: the humanitarian side of the mission had to be more conciliatory and diplomatic in its dealings with the military than it would have to be if it was outside the mission. One reason may be that the military has its own humanitarian capacity, so there is more of a turf war. A couple of UN interviewees emphasized that the leadership provided by the SRS and HC is critical for both the successful operation of the integrated mission and for ensuring that the perception of the neutrality of humanitarian aid is not compromised. Another UN interviewee argued, though, that "perceptions are much more important than theories." He did not believe that the "average militia guy" or civilian from the Sudan could make sophisticated distinctions between the humanitarian and political sections of UNMIS. Therefore, his agency was careful to avoid situations in which its position as a humanitarian organization could be misinterpreted, such as a joint assessment mission with UNMIS. A Government of Sudan representative felt that, while the operational UN agencies deal with technical staff at various levels of Sudan's decentralized government structure, the creation of an integrated mission leads to centralization, which can create difficulties. He also believed that the Mission had resulted in a new structure and hierarchy and that money was being spent on this rather than the Sudanese people.

A couple of UN interviewees raised concerns specific to Sudan and UNMIS. An OCHA official noted that OCHA commanded respect in the field and its separation from the AU force provided an element of protection. He was worried about the implications of a move from an AU to a UN peacekeeping force, though, particularly if the UN had a Chapter 7 mandate. “I don’t know how we are going to protect humanitarian space if we’re party to the conflict.” Another interviewee argued that, since all OCHA reports and communications had to be sanctioned by the SRSG’s office, OCHA had stopped publishing critical reports. This was because UNMIS wanted to “make things look good” so as not to jeopardize the Darfur peace talks that were taking place in Abuja. Thus, “UNMIS is creating problems for the freedom of speech and humanitarian space,” he said. This highlights the danger that humanitarian and human rights concerns become subordinate to political objectives in integrated or “unified” missions (although it has been argued that one of the reasons why the international community was slow to respond to Darfur was because it did not want to alienate the authorities in Khartoum and thereby threaten the North-South Sudan peace talks).²⁹

Although individuals within UNMIS and UN agencies could work well together, there were structural problems with coordination. This was best illustrated by the issue of identity cards. UN agency staff had been waiting for identity cards for a couple of months even though their cards had expired (which posed a security risk). In an integrated mission, identity cards are issued centrally rather than by individual UN agencies. The machine for producing the cards was ready and waiting, but UNMIS could not issue them until UN agencies had signed MoUs with it. The MoU was Sudan-wide so it had to be signed in Khartoum, even though the problem with the identity cards was in South Sudan. An inordinate amount of senior staff time had been spent on the issue, without any resolution at the time of the study (even though senior staff realized that the situation was an “absurdity”).

Although integrated missions can be problematic, a senior UN official argued that they are popular with governments providing troops because, whether it is African governments providing troops for Darfur or other governments providing troops to implement the CPA, it is much easier to get a deployment authorized by parliaments if it has a humanitarian aim. He believed that populations in troop-providing countries do not understand the nuances of different UN chapters and mandates so it is much easier to justify the sending of troops as a humanitarian mission rather than a peace-keeping or protection mission. Then, since journalists are present on the ground, the military

has to show that it is doing humanitarian work such as distributing medicines. However, there is a danger of the military getting distracted by its humanitarian work—a temptation because soldiers feel better about this aspect of their tasks—to the point that it does not fulfill its real mandate, such as protection of civilians and aid workers. He acknowledged that, in certain circumstances, the military could provide a capacity that humanitarian agencies lack but emphasized that the military should not prioritize humanitarian tasks at the expense of its military chores.

From an NGO perspective, the presence of UNMIS has proved problematic for several reasons. Firstly, UNMIS has to work closely with the Government of Sudan and its Humanitarian Aid Commission, which is highly critical of INGOs and creates bureaucratic difficulties for them. So bringing the political and humanitarian sides of the UN's work together could be more of a hindrance than a help. Secondly, political objectives seem to win out in the international agenda over the humanitarian imperative. For example, in the negotiation of access to Eastern Sudan, NGOs felt that the UN should have negotiated humanitarian access first but the political side of UNMIS had already become involved in the negotiations. Also, the returns process for IDPs displaced during the conflict in South Sudan had been very slow and an INGO interviewee felt that “the political aspect has trumped the humanitarian.” He explained that UNMIS has “entered into a political negotiation that has bogged down the whole process.” Thirdly, INGOs believed that coordination within integrated missions was questionable and coordination between UNMIS and NGOs was more difficult because the UNMIS “bureaucrats and politicians” did not really understand NGOs (unlike OCHA or operational UN agencies). An INGO interviewee pointed out that it was problematic for the NGOs too to develop a common interface to interact with UNMIS because each NGO has its own perspective, so it is like “herding cats.” Also, NGOs do not have the necessary capacity at a senior level to devote to coordination. Finally, interviewees had found that, unlike OCHA staff members, UNMIS human rights officers lacked field experience. So when a kidnapped NGO staff member was released by the SLA, an UNMIS human rights officer tried to debrief him within three meters of an SLA representative.³⁰

Local residents in Juba were critical of UNMIS because it did not protect them from LRA attacks. The local staff of an INGO described how, when there was an attack at 9:30 pm one night, UNMIS soldiers did not arrive at the scene until 11pm and then only to take notes about the situation. They wanted UNMIS soldiers to patrol the town at night and in the early mornings, when LRA attacks usually take place,

and to actively seek out LRA fighters in nearby forests. This supports the view of one interviewee who pointed out that local people do not understand the difference between Chapter 6 and 7 mandates, so they do not understand why UNMIS is only protecting military observers. He argued that, despite local views, the SPLA or SAF would be far better able to “take the LRA out” than UNMIS because they are better equipped to fight a guerrilla war.

In another incident, INGO local staff members described how a government ammunition store in the middle of a market exploded, killing sixty to seventy people and destroying nearby houses. UNMIS was present in Juba but, in accordance with its mandate, left it to the government to deal with the situation. As a result, people were left without compensation. The interviewees believed that it was wrong of the government to store ammunition in the town and that such cases should be taken up by the international community. An UNMIS official also found the Chapter 6 mandate frustrating and thought that this was an “irresponsible” decision by the Security Council.

Within its mandate, though, a senior UN official felt that UNMIS has contributed to security. The presence of military observers had defused potentially violent situations which were due to inter-tribal tensions or political positioning by provincial governors.

Although integrated missions were criticized by interviewees, one UN interviewee believed that they could have benefits. The most significant of these was that the UN’s DSRSG/HC could command more resources because the Resident Coordinator’s office, OCHA and authority over the UN Country Team and NGOs could be combined. However, there are two difficulties with this in practice. One is that OCHA is part of the Secretariat, so it necessarily maintains an independent reporting line to New York and Geneva. The other is that the operational UN agencies play politics to ensure that the HC does not get too many resources. The interviewee was resigned to this, though. “These are agency games that we have to deal with,” he said. Integrated missions also give humanitarian agencies the opportunity to guide the work of the military and allow for better integration of human rights and the rule of law with humanitarian and political activities. From the viewpoint of an UNMIS official, integrated missions are a “no-brainer,” especially when the military has a Chapter 6 mandate. As described above, he believed that, given the high cost of the peace-keeping operation, it was sensible to use the military to undertake humanitarian/development activities as well. While this is a pragmatic view and may be cost-effective, it overlooks the dangers and difficulties that can arise when the lines between humanitarian assistance and military action are blurred.

AMIS (African Mission in Sudan)

In Darfur, the African Mission in Sudan (AMIS) is not integrated—it is a military deployment supported by UN Resolution 1590. AMIS was created by the signing of a humanitarian ceasefire agreement in 2004 (this was to be a stop-gap measure till a final peace agreement was signed, based on talks in Abuja which were on-going at the time of the study but ended with the signing of a peace agreement with one of the rebel groups at the beginning of May). Its rules of engagement were revised in January 2006 by the AU so that they are slightly more open-ended. Nevertheless, AMIS cannot intervene in a conflict between warring factions without their consent—it can only take robust action in self-defense. A senior AU official admitted that these rules of engagement were frustrating because, in the case of ceasefire violations, the AU can only record the details of the violation and speak to the side that has been attacked and request restraint in its response to the violation. He explained, “Human rights people would like us to grab the warring factions by the scruff of their necks and shake them thoroughly. Sometimes, we feel like doing it but then the human rights people would ask us how we could do this.”

AMIS does have a humanitarian body and a liaison officer at sector commander level, but it has not undertaken humanitarian work because it is under-resourced and struggling to fulfill its mandate of ceasefire monitoring. Unlike UN peacekeeping operations, AMIS is funded by voluntary contributions, a mix of cash and in-kind contributions. The lack of certainty makes logistics and planning “a nightmare.” In addition, a UN official argued that its mandate is difficult to implement because the AU Security Council, which is supposed to enforce the mandate, has failed to follow up on important issues. It has been reported that between May 2005 and January 2006, there had been about 139 violations by the parties to the conflict and other armed militias but no action has been taken on these.³¹ “Every day, there are serious violations of the ceasefire, but the AU doesn’t even bring the issue to the negotiating table [in Abuja],” he complained. Therefore, mandate and the role of the UN Security Council will be issues of concern if and when the responsibility for a peacekeeping mission is handed over from the AU to the UN.

This was emphasized by an AU official who argued that “I don’t think it matters whether it is an AU or UN force as long as it has the wherewithal to deal with the situation. That doesn’t just mean resources like money and helicopters but for the parties to agree to a stronger, enforceable mandate. The consequences of ceasefire violations should be clear. This takes a long time to hammer out. If the UN comes in with the same mandate, it will face the same difficulties—

even if it has certainty of funding—and it will have to solve the problems the same way.”

However, a Red Cross interviewee thought that the debate about a shift from an AU to a UN peacekeeping force in Darfur was unhelpful. He argued that this has “put a shelf-life on the AU’s forehead” and that this will reduce support for the AU because “people don’t buy products that are going to expire soon.” Therefore, the discussion has further weakened AMIS. Nevertheless, the AU has been keen to handover the mission to the UN since January 2006 because of the financial strain (\$17 million a month), even though the European Union, UN, and US have been providing most of the financing.³²

There was a general feeling that AMIS’s presence had improved protection for civilians to some extent. But it had not been able to tackle some serious protection issues (see security section below). As a result, in February, a group of 40 women IDPs marched peacefully to the AU base in Gereida in South Darfur to present a petition asking for the AU force to be withdrawn and replaced by an EU force within 72 hours. There was potential for another demonstration, which could have been violent, after the expiry of the deadline. However, this did not materialize and, instead, the women withdrew their petition. Similarly, following the signing of the peace agreement on 5 May, there were demonstrations in IDP camps calling for a UN force. Although there was clear popular support for a move from AMIS to a UN force, it seemed from interviews with IDPs that they expected UN forces to provide better protection for civilians. What they did not seem to have grasped was that the UN’s presence and mandate would require the agreement of the government in Sudan. Also, as the deployment of MONUC in the DRC has demonstrated, even a Chapter 7 mandate and a high level of resources does not mean that a UN force can protect civilians in a situation of guerrilla warfare.³³

A UN official believed that AMIS could achieve much more by deploying more police officers. In Darfur, IDPs regard the police as aligned with the Sudanese government so there is “total mistrust” of them. A security briefing reported that, as a result, in Mershing in South Darfur, people refused to return until the AU had established a base there (though it was conducting ad hoc patrols). Therefore, policing will be another issue to be considered for the transition from AMIS to a UN force.

An INGO interviewee felt that AMIS had been warmly welcomed by the civilian population initially, but when they realized that its mandate and ability to provide real protection were limited, its standing had

been lowered. He had found that there was a problem with the level of skill of AMIS soldiers and the responsibilities with which they were entrusted so that they were out of their depth. This, in turn, affected the way they tried to negotiate with different factions. The section on universality made the point that most INGO staff had spent insufficient time in the country to understand the complexities of the situation. Given the youth and inexperience of AMIS staff, this points to the need for an investment in personnel in conflict situations so that they can better understand the nuances of the situation and thereby minimize the potential for inadvertently causing harm.

The Sudanese government has been vehemently opposed to a change from an AU mission in Darfur to a UN mission.³⁴ Following the signing of the peace agreement on 5 May 2006, it has been more mixed in its approach—saying, on one hand, that the peace agreement allowed it to accept a UN force and, on the other, arguing that there was no political justification for a US or UN force in Darfur and that Sudan had “no interest in internationalizing” the Darfur crisis.³⁵ One interpretation of government’s opposition is that the government wants an under-resourced and ineffective mission in Darfur that does not interfere with its support to the Janjaweed and the violence perpetrated by government soldiers and the Janjaweed. However, a UN official offered a more nuanced interpretation. He explained that Islamic extremists already view Sudan as leaning towards the West because it has provided information on Al Qaeda to the US (see Terrorism section), and the government believes that Sudan is on their target list. The government does not want the composition of peacekeeping troops to provide an opportunity for terrorist activity in Sudan so it is easier to keep the local population and other Muslims happy by opposing a UN peacekeeping force in Darfur.

This seems a legitimate concern—it has been reported that, in an audio tape broadcast on Al Jazeera, Bin Laden has called on “the mujahideen and their supporters in Sudan” to prepare for a long-term war against Western would-be occupiers in Darfur. He accused the US of planning to send “Crusader troops to occupy the region and steal its oil under the cover of preserving security there.”³⁶ (Also, see the security section below for reaction to the publication of the Danish cartoons of prophet Mohammed.) Therefore, the handover from AMIS to a UN peace-keeping force, which seems inevitable, will not be an easy transition. Unless the UN force is given an adequate mandate and sufficient resources to contain the violence in Darfur (which may escalate if Islamic fundamentalists become involved), the provision of humanitarian assistance will continue to be extremely difficult.

“To an IDP, security is food to eat, a place to put his head down and to not get harassed. To the SLA, security is when they are not attacked but the Arab militia. Apart from that, they are used to a Spartan existence. The pro-government militias, or whatever they are, think they have security as long as you remove the threat of the SLA. A businessman sees security as being able to move from one end of Darfur to another with cattle or goods without being stopped or threatened.”

This section has described the relationship between two very different missions in Sudan—UNMIS and AMIS. Although they are operating under very different conditions and with different mandates, they have both faced problems with inadequate mandates that have prevented them from providing any real protection to civilians. In the case of UNMIS, there were also tensions in the relationship between the military and humanitarian aid agencies over some of the types of assistance offered by UNMIS soldiers. Overall, a “unified” or “integrated” mission in Sudan does not appear to have resulted in better services for beneficiaries. In fact, UNMIS’s handling of the program for returnees to South Sudan resulted in severe delays and various problems with the provision of assistance.³⁷ UNMIS’s most useful contribution was in fulfilling its mandate, i.e., in preventing flare-ups between the armies of North and South Sudan and containing other flash-points caused by cattle-raiding and other crimes.

Security

As an AU official pointed out, security is a broad concept and means different things to different people. In the context of Darfur, he gave the following examples: “To an IDP, security is food to eat, a place to put his head down and to not get harassed. To the SLA, security is when they are not attacked by the Arab militia. Apart from that, they are used to a Spartan existence. The pro-government militias, or whatever they are, think they have security as long as you remove the threat of the SLA. A businessman sees security as being able to move from one end of Darfur to another with cattle or goods without being stopped or threatened.” This section examines some of the different viewpoints on security—UN, INGO, local staff and populations, and IDPs in Darfur and South Sudan. Khartoum is one of the safest capitals in the world, so security was not a problem, even for local people.

There was general agreement among non-Sudanese interviewees that aid workers are globally less secure than they used to be, though one INGO staff member felt that it was possible to over-romanticize the “good old days.” He argued that Iraq and Afghanistan are exceptional situations. According to an UNMIS official, conflicts during the Cold War were state-sponsored, so there were rules of engagement. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall, this has changed and aid workers are targeted for what they can offer—ransom as a hostage or the commodities they carry. However, sometimes aid workers are targeted because belligerents believe that they are supporting the wrong side in a conflict and “belong to the enemy.” So the reasons for attacks on aid workers may be banditry or have a political purpose.

Sudan is perhaps unusual in terms of aid agency security, in that a very high regard for foreigners is inherent in Sudanese culture. The representative of an American NGO described how he was traveling from the agency's office in Nyala to the airport when he suddenly found himself in the midst of an anti-UN and anti-American demonstration. Since he speaks Arabic, he rolled down the car window and explained that he was running late for his flight. The crowd immediately parted to let the car through though it clearly had the agency's logo with the word American on its side. Then they went back to shouting "down with Bush, down with the US." As he put it, "They have a certain etiquette when dealing with foreigners." Another INGO had a policy of sending at least one expatriate staff member in a car when national staff members were traveling outside main towns in Darfur. In one case, the expatriate staff member was Congolese. The car was stopped by a couple of Arab gunmen who assumed that all the staff members in the car were nationals because they were all African. However, when they realized that one of them was Congolese (he could only speak French), they returned his belongings, apologized, and allowed the car to drive on.

Western aid agencies were deliberately attacked only when cartoons depicting the prophet Mohammed were published in a Danish newspaper, sparking global protest. In Darfur, the Norwegian Church Aid compound in Nyala was attacked in the early hours of 7th February 2006. Gunmen fired 14 bullets into the door and left a message demanding an apology for the cartoons. They claimed to be from the Islamic Struggle Movement, a group that security forces did not seem to know about. The following day, a Danish Refugee Council office was burnt in West Darfur.

One NGO interviewee in Juba felt that NGO expatriate staff members were generally quite safe in Sudan though security does depend on the behavior of individuals to some extent. "If you treat people well, you're fine. If not, you get shot. It seems fair enough," he said succinctly. However, in Darfur, national staff, who outnumber expatriate staff by roughly 4:1³⁸, are targeted more often by both rebels and the government. In one case, the government gave the UN the names of some national staff members working for two UN agencies and said that they no longer wanted them working in Darfur because they were SLA spies. The agencies complied with the government's demand and transferred the staff members. Also, one INGO withdrew from Darfur in December 2004 because two Sudanese staff members had been forced from their vehicle and shot dead when returning from a health clinic to Nyala.³⁹

The local community's suspicion of Sudanese aid workers was described in the section on universality. As a result, they face far more hostility and are more likely to be kidnapped than non-Sudanese staff. Despite this, INGOs did not seem to provide security measures for their local staff outside of working hours. Also, security briefings were attended almost exclusively by the expatriate staff of INGOs. This is supported by a RedR survey of INGO security measures in Darfur that found that INGOs do not provide systematically for the security of their national staff, particularly for those that cannot be relocated⁴⁰, or take advantage of their local knowledge when preparing security plans. It cites one interviewee as saying, "I'm not sure that national staff should be involved in drawing up security plans . . . the plan is for the expats only."⁴¹

Despite the respect accorded to foreigners in Sudan, in Darfur INGOs are often robbed of their 4-wheel drive vehicles so that fighters can mount their guns on the back, and their communications equipment is also stolen fairly regularly. Thus, ironically, the very equipment that aid agencies use to protect themselves makes them a target for thieves and fighters. Despite this, an aid agency staff member pointed out that "Given the amount of aid workers in Darfur, their resources and the huge political and military value this has, the situation could be much worse." A UN official agreed. He highlighted the fact that there are about 14,000 aid workers in Darfur and that the international community is delivering 40-50,000 tons of aid every month to about 3 million people. "Given its size and compared to other aid operations, the Darfur operation is a smooth one."

One interviewee argued that aid workers tend to get attacked if there is a perception that they are part of the conflict. However, this has not been the case in Darfur due to the way that the aid community is operating. A government official tried to argue that aid agencies in Darfur were not regarded as neutral so that "People in Darfur are always asking why humanitarian aid is focused on one group against another."⁴² He felt that aid agencies needed to do more to ensure that humanitarian aid was "for both farmers and nomads, because both are affected by the conflict."⁴³ In this respect, he believed that ICRC was "doing the best work. It does not have complicated security measurements or bureaucracy like the UN. It is covering the people not covered by other agencies." But even he did not believe that attacks on aid agencies were due to the perception of a lack of neutrality but to do with looting and armed robbery.

Nevertheless, two UN interviewees felt that the security situation had deteriorated in Darfur, returning to what it was in early 2004, "with

NGOs being harassed and humanitarian space a real issue.” Different parts of Darfur pose different levels of security risk. While South Darfur was a “hotspot” in 2004, in early 2006 it was considerably safer than West Darfur, where the situation has been further complicated by cross-border fighting with Chad and where aid workers have to be transported in and out by UN helicopters because roads are too dangerous. North Darfur has remained relatively stable, “with only occasional harassment, hijacking, or people being abducted for a few days.” The interviewees believed that the fighting in Darfur continues

because “neither side is tired of fighting,” and there is always some source of support for the fighters. Also, “when the SLA runs out of food, it holds up a convoy.”



The security problem in Darfur is exacerbated by the fact that the violence is not simply due to fighting between the rebels (the SLA and JEM are the two main rebel factions) on one hand and the “Janjaweed” and government forces on the other. The war has been portrayed as being between the African local population and the Arab Janjaweed.⁴⁴ However, a number of interviewees emphasized the fact that, in reality, people are divided along tribal lines and alliances so the Janjaweed are not all Arabs. A

local staff member of an INGO pointed out that he had lived in Darfur all his life and he did not know what the term “Janjaweed” meant or exactly who comprised the Janjaweed.

This lack of clear distinctions was highlighted by several IDP interviewees. When describing how women leaving camps to collect firewood are intimidated, one interviewee pointed out that women from the same tribe as the armed men are allowed to collect grass and wood, so only some women are targeted. Another interviewee described how someone from the camp had returned to his village to give some money to his family. He had been kidnapped and held to ransom by the SLA because he had been resettled by the government and so was regarded as “belonging to the government.” However, another person returning to his village to harvest okra was later captured by government forces and held for two months. Several men had gone back to the village for the harvest (leaving their families behind at the IDP camps) so the government had reported this as a voluntary return of IDPs. On this man’s return to the IDP camp, an NGO had asked him whether people had indeed returned to the village so that they could provide assistance if necessary. He explained the real situation. Government forces were

angry with him for contradicting their story, which was why he was detained and questioned.⁴⁵ Therefore, local people are victimized by both sides, “like an egg between two rocks,” as one IDP expressed it.

The security officer of an INGO explained that the reasons for a lot of security incidents and local killings varied from goat-stealing to a young man from one tribe raping a girl from another tribe. In one incident, a camel herder was grazing his animals on someone’s land. The landowner asked the camel herder to pay for use of his land, but when the camel herder refused, he killed him. In retaliation, Arab militia came and killed 200 people from his tribe (ranging from children to old people).

So the conflict between the rebels and government of Sudan is intermingled with banditry, retaliatory killings, and conflicts between farmers and nomads. This was highlighted by an incident reported at a security briefing for NGOs in Nyala. At one IDP camp, sheikhs (leaders) had met with the leaders of Arab nomads near the camp and expressed their security concerns. They asked the nomad leaders to speak to their armed tribesmen to stop their intimidation. The leaders agreed to convey the message in return for access to water. The sheikhs agreed to this demand as long as the nomads did not bring their camels into the camp.⁴⁶

An INGO security officer in Darfur believed that developing good relations with the local community contributes to security. This is not easy to accomplish in the Darfur context. A couple of INGOs that worked in both government-held and SLA areas in Darfur explained that getting to the SLA areas was often problematic because they had to travel on roads over which no faction had control. To minimize the security risk, they contacted the local population in the area, introduced the organization, and explained what they were doing. Even in areas where there was a military commander with whom to negotiate access, this could be difficult due to rapid changes in leadership. Also, sometimes, even when NGOs have letters of authority from military commanders to work in a town or area, officials of lower rank can make their work difficult. This, combined with the complex nature of the conflict in Darfur and the resulting unpredictability of violent incidents, meant that an INGO with excellent relationships with the community in a rebel-held area had to be evacuated. In another case, reported at a security briefing, an NGO ambulance in West Darfur was fired on by masked men in military uniform. The NGO had a good relationship with the local community so that people showed great concern over the incident but had not been able to prevent it or provide any warning.

Although the international community's focus on security tends to be on the security of aid workers, there is no doubt that the displaced in Darfur have suffered extreme violence so that the conflict has been widely acknowledged as a protection crisis.⁴⁷ Interviewees in one IDP camp described the reasons why they had left their homes and every story involved unprovoked attacks on villages, burning of homes, and indiscriminate killing. Even when the IDPs were in camps, they were not safe. When women leave camps to collect firewood, they are often intimidated by armed men and may be attacked and raped. Men who leave the camps have their donkeys and carts stolen and may be beaten.

Despite the clear need for the protection of civilians, the international community has responded with humanitarian aid rather than physical protection: AMIS' mandate does not extend to civilian protection. AMIS cannot intervene between warring factions without their permission, and it cannot take action against ceasefire violations, only record them. Nevertheless, AMIS had agreed to provide armed escorts for women from some of the camps. In one camp, though, this was limited to two hours—from 8-10am—once a week. The place from which the women collected firewood was far from the camp, and those women who had donkeys to carry the firewood needed more time because they could collect more wood (selling the extra wood could be a source of income). However, AMIS soldiers refused to extend the time to take account of the women's needs. Although the AMIS escorts made the women feel a little safer, they did not provide real protection. On one occasion, as the women were collecting wood, armed men approached. The AMIS soldiers simply advised the women to run away before making a hasty exit themselves! Therefore, it was not surprising that a male interviewee asked for advice on how male IDPs could protect their women better, given that they are unarmed.

INGO interviewees felt that the AU's willingness to provide firewood patrols or investigate crimes depended on individual commanders. In some areas, though, AMIS soldiers are afraid to leave their base after dark "and can't tell if there is any shooting because of the noise from their generators." Although some commanders are willing to extend the AU's range of activities, a senior official made it very clear that "our first priority is our own force protection. If Nyala was burning, we would have to protect our own personnel first and then go and help others."

In South Sudan, a senior UN official stated that security had improved. He measured this by the number of relocations undertaken by the UN. Two years ago, there were, on average, 4-5 relocations a week but now there is less than one. He explained that current relocations are due to

A UN official argued that, although it has taken time for the standards to gain acceptance, the UN has made considerable improvements in terms of preventive measures, equipment, norms on security, management and the establishment of UNDSS (UN Department for Safety and Security). However, working to these standards is expensive and the interviewee mentioned that 20-25% of one agency's budget in Darfur was spent on security. This provides an indication of the high cost of operating in insecure environments while trying to maintain a high level of security for staff.

the activities of some militia, not the armed forces of North or South Sudan, as they had been three years ago. The situation is helped by the fact that the UN security team spends a lot of time in the field and know all the military commanders. The main security problems in South Sudan are a general lack of law and order, inter-clan tensions related to cattle raiding, and attacks by the Lord's Resistance Army.⁴⁸ Aid workers are not targets but may be harmed simply because they are in the wrong place at the wrong time. A UN agency gave the example of staff members going to a village to launch a health campaign. The village had been peaceful for a long time. However, on the day of the launch, fighting broke out over a cattle raid and an expatriate staff member had a machete held to his neck. His life was spared, though, because a national staff member pleaded that he had had nothing to do with the conflict. In another incident, fighting broke about within a militia group⁴⁹ and eleven civilians caught in the crossfire were killed. These incidents highlight the unpredictable nature of violence in South Sudan.

In the case of tribal tensions, UN staff sometimes decide to pull out and return to an area when the security assessment team has verified that the situation has calmed down. Therefore, the UN has adopted a more flexible approach to relocations. Rather than waiting to relocate on the basis of decisions made in Khartoum or New York, local teams can call for their own relocation (by land or air). The UN official felt that this was an appropriate approach because it enabled UN agencies to maintain a good presence on the ground and operate in ambiguous situations—since staff knew that they can be relocated quickly, they were more comfortable about working in such situations. The approach depends on information and alerts provided by the Sudanese Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Commission (SRRC).⁵⁰ It was in the SRRC's interest to ensure that UN staff were safe because, if they were hurt, the government would lose assistance.⁵¹

The collaboration between humanitarian aid agencies and the SRRC on security dates back to around 1989, when OLS was established. An SRRC official noted that, as a result, in over 15 years, there has been only one major incident in which one aid worker and one journalist were killed. This was in 1992 and occurred because the SRRC did not want to admit that there had been a split within the SPLA and that the army was going to ambush the rebels. It only gave the aid agencies a general warning not to go to the area, which they ignored and, as a result, got caught in the ambush. The SRRC explained that it was in the interests of the SPLA and SRRC to ensure that aid workers were protected because the SPLA needed the political and financial support

of the local population and humanitarian assistance helped the local population to stay, rather than flee the fighting.

Although the security situation in South Sudan has improved since the end of the conflict, local people still had a range of concerns. They were mainly afraid of LRA attacks, which target the local population. However, they were also worried about the potential threat from government soldiers. Local staff of an INGO cited a case when a government battalion was supposed to hand over its barracks in Juba to the SPLA but had not done so. Local people were speculating that this was because the government had weapons stored there and would use these if war broke out again. An INGO interviewee mentioned that the North Sudanese army had been retraining militias (that were not supposed to exist) in Juba, not for incorporation into the regular army but as militias.⁵² This suggests that the local population's fear of the North Sudanese army may have some basis.

Despite this, IDPs in South Sudan and Darfur had contrasting views of protection provided by Government of Sudan police. In Juba, IDPs at a camp on their way back to Bor were grateful for the protection since they had been looted on the way to the camp. At the camp itself, though, they felt that they were relatively safe (one interviewee mentioned people in the camp getting violent because they were drunk). In Darfur, as noted earlier, the police were not trusted because they were seen as allied to the government.

The UN has various measures to ensure staff security. One step that it has taken is to introduce Minimum Operational Security Standards (MOSS). A UN official argued that, although it has taken time for the standards to gain acceptance, the UN has made considerable improvements in terms of preventive measures, equipment, norms on security, management and the establishment of UNDSS (UN Department for Safety and Security). However, working to these standards is expensive and the interviewee mentioned that 20-25% of one agency's budget in Darfur was spent on security. This provides an indication of the high cost of operating in insecure environments while trying to maintain a high level of security for staff. An UNMIS official felt that the role of the UNDSS had evolved in a positive way in the last ten years. This is because it had "gone from a culture of being a security guard (saying to people, stop, you can't go there) to that of being a risk manager (saying to people, you can go there but these are the risks)." He believed that since humanitarian principles and the flags of agencies like the ICRC and the UN were not as respected by belligerents as they used to be, "humanitarian organizations have realized that they need more security, and DSS has a better

understanding of what the humanitarians are doing so it can act as a buffer between humanitarian organizations and the military. DSS manages security so the military is in the background as a mitigating measure.”

UN agencies coordinate security amongst themselves through the SMT (Security Management Team). In Sudan, there are Area SMTs in South Sudan and each of the Darfurs (North, South & West). It is up to the Designated Official [DO]⁵³ to decide whether NGOs and the ICRC are invited to participate or not but they are encouraged to include NGOs. In South Darfur, NGOs did not participate in the Area SMT but there were two security briefings a week specifically for them. A UN official found NGOs contradictory in their attitudes. “They see the UN’s security analysis, reports and intelligence but don’t want to sit on the Area Security Management Team. They want to be evacuated in a crisis but they don’t want to coordinate with the UN. They don’t want to mix with the AU military forces,⁵⁴ but they call on the AU forces when they are in trouble and need protection.”

The NGOs’ unwillingness to be coordinated by the UN has created a practical security problem in West Darfur. Due to the security situation, NGOs agree with the UN that staff numbers have to be kept to a minimum so that they can be relocated if necessary. The UN and NGOs agreed on a ceiling of ninety UN staff and ninety NGO staff that would be eligible for relocation. The UN has reduced its staff numbers, but the NGOs still had about 140. The UN had discussed the issue with them, and the SRSG had written to them, but at the time of the field visit the problem was on-going. An UNMIS interviewee explained that the situation is extremely frustrating because the UN has no direct authority over NGOs but is expected to help them out when they get into trouble. He claimed that, in the previous week, the UN had relocated over 100 NGO staff members. He believed that both UN agencies and NGOs were reluctant to reduce staff numbers because “people want to wave their own flags.” In his view, “If everyone sat down as one big organization and prioritized their staffing and work, they could get rid of 50% of the staff. But then agencies would lose their profile. So there is a lot of wastage.”

According to one interviewee, NGOs had also failed to coordinate security amongst themselves. Donors have agreed to fund an NGO “safety office” to coordinate security, similar to the Afghanistan NGO Safety Office (ANSO). This would be a single point of contact for receiving and disseminating information and would enable NGOs to speak with one voice in negotiations on security with the UN and military. However, the NGOs had not been able to organize themselves.

One INGO found that, although there was panic and a move towards cooperation on security every time there was a security incident, agencies returned to a state of complacency and inaction once the incident was over.

This section has described the complex security situation in Darfur particularly, although security is also a concern in South Sudan. Local populations in both South Sudan and Darfur are targeted far more than aid workers. Despite the acceptance of the Darfur crisis as one of protection, the international community has responded with humanitarian assistance rather than physical protection. The study found that, in Sudan, foreign aid workers enjoy an unusual level of respect. However, due to the unpredictable nature of violence in Sudan, they may be in the wrong place at the wrong time. In Darfur, particularly, national staff, who are far greater in number than expatriates, also face a much higher degree of risk because all sides doubt their motives and their neutrality. Nevertheless, INGOs do not seem to provide for their security outside of working hours in a systematic way. Finally, the study found that INGO security has been hampered by the reluctance of the organizations to cooperate with the UN or with each other to improve security measures.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This section highlights some of the links between and among the “petals” in the Sudan study and outlines some specific recommendations. The overview report, available at fic.tufts.edu and in printed form, references these and contains the main conclusions and recommendations emerging from the HA2015 study as a whole.

- **Universality and terrorism:** Even in a country like Sudan, where people generally felt that GWOT was something distant, media coverage of GWOT has made people suspicious of Western values and agendas. This makes it more difficult for humanitarian aid agencies to achieve widespread acceptance of their core values. For example, four interviewees in Khartoum of persons not receiving any assistance felt that the war in Iraq and the killings in Palestine are the real terror, not Al Qaeda. One argued that “the West has been asking for democracy in Palestine, but when the Palestinians elected Hamas, the West turned against them. What is democracy, then?” Another felt that if the West fought Hamas this would affect Muslims in general. These interviewees felt that British or American aid workers in Darfur are collecting information for a UN force just as aid workers in Iraq assisted the military in identifying targets. One believed that Western nations don’t give help unless there is a benefit for them, like natural resources, and cited Iraq as an example.

- Universality and security: Though aid workers are targeted in countries like Afghanistan and Iraq because there is a lack of acceptance of “Western” humanitarian assistance, this was not a problem in Sudan. In fact, Western aid workers enjoy a remarkably high degree of respect. Most interviewees were positive about the humanitarian enterprise in Sudan and believed that aid workers were there purely to help, even preferring “Western” aid to assistance available through Sudanese government channels. Some people in Khartoum, though, seem to have bought into the government’s propaganda that INGOs are spies or trying to exploit the country’s natural resources. This is because they did not see aid agencies doing anything for the “ordinary” people who were suffering high levels of unemployment.

Recommendation 1

INGOs should provide more extensive and ongoing information to local communities in North Sudan about the work that they are doing.

Recommendation 2

Since local staff outnumber expatriates by 4:1 in Darfur and are at far greater risk of being attacked, kidnapped or killed, INGOs should plan better—and implement more measures—for their protection and evacuation.

Peacekeeping operations cannot provide protection for civilians if their mandates preclude them from doing so. Due to their mandates, both AMIS and UNMIS are prevented from proactively protecting local civilians, who are at far greater risk than aid workers because they are targeted specifically by the LRA, Janjaweed, or other armed groups.

Recommendation 3

The UN Security Council needs to ensure that any UN force sent to Darfur to replace AMIS is armed with an adequate mandate. A better mandate may also help reduce the blurring of lines caused by peacekeeping forces providing humanitarian assistance because this is regarded as a good use of peacekeeping budgets. If UN forces can carry out their tasks and protect civilians, they will have less time (and feel less need) to engage in relief activities.

In South Sudan, the UN could also be more proactive in advocating for greater protection for civilians by government forces. This may help establish a sense of responsibility for providing for their own citizens.

Recommendation 4

The UN should also make an explicit effort to protect humanitarian action within the context of integrated or unified missions so e.g.,

humanitarian advocacy or the highlighting of human rights violations is not subordinated to political objectives. This will require a shift in organizational culture.

In addition to the above recommendations, which relate to the links between the petals, findings from this study point to the following recommendations:

Recommendation 5

Since donors have already offered funding, INGOs should work together to establish an NGO security office in Darfur. This could collate and share security information, undertake analysis of security information and incidents, and act as a focal point for interactions with the UN and peacekeeping forces.

Recommendation 6

Despite the efforts of most expatriates to be culturally sensitive, there was still considerable criticism of expatriate lifestyles and the insufficient experience in the country, which meant that many expatriates did not fully appreciate the complexities of the conflicts in the Sudan. There were also clear calls for more training for local staff in humanitarian principles and the values of INGOs. Therefore, UN agencies and INGOs should invest in proper training/sensitization for all staff on humanitarian principles, a better, more anthropological understanding of conflict dynamics and appropriate lifestyles (some of which could be easily achieved by simply listening more to the views and opinions of local staff).

Recommendation 7

Taking coherence in its broadest sense of coherence between political and humanitarian action, rather than its manifestation as UN integrated missions, the international community's response to Darfur has been incoherent. So while NGOs and UN agencies continue to provide humanitarian assistance, there has been a failure to protect civilians. The signing of the peace agreement in early May actually led to an increase rather than a decrease in violence. Therefore, the international community must ensure that political action supports humanitarian assistance and protection.

Notes

¹ Based on <http://www.oxfam.org.uk/coolplanet/kidsweb/world/sudan/sudhist.htm>

² From www.bbc.co.uk

³ The SRSG, Jan Pronk, prefers the term “unified” to “integrated” though few people in the UN could explain the difference clearly. According to an OCHA official, the HC has described the unified mission as the wrist of a hand, with the agencies as the fingers, each with its own mandate.

⁴ AU Situation Room Daily News Highlights, 15 May 2006.

⁵ For a brief analysis of the reasons for the conflict in Darfur, see Power, Samantha. “Dying in Darfur: Can the ethnic cleansing in Sudan be stopped?” *The New Yorker*, 23 August 2004. Available from http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?040830fa_fact1; see also Flint, J. and de Waal, A. (August 2005). *Darfur: A short history of a long war*. Zed Books, London.

⁶ “Sudan militia is targeting Chad,” AU Situation Room Daily News Highlights, 6 February 2006; AU Situation Room Daily News Highlights, 18 May 2006.

⁷ There are few landlines in Juba and mobile phones, if they work at all, do so sporadically. Thuraya phones work but they are extremely expensive so the NGO’s interviewed did not have them. E-mail does work but, again, not all organizations have access to it. Therefore, the most practical option was to drive to organizations and interview people as and when they were available.

⁸ The HAC is the Humanitarian Aid Commission, the government body responsible for coordinating humanitarian assistance and regulating the work of NGO’s.

⁹ The more general sensitivity of the Sudan authorities to the presence of international personnel performing functions that the government considered its own responsibility was evident in the earlier international relief interventions. See Larry Minear et al., *Humanitarianism Under Siege: A Critical Review of Operation Lifeline Sudan* (Trenton, NJ: Red Sea Press, 1991).

¹⁰ This is supported by findings reported in Minear, Larry (2004). “Lessons learned: The Darfur experience” in *ALNAP Review of Humanitarian Action in 2004*. Available from: <http://www.odi.org.uk/ALNAP/RHA2004/contents.html>

¹¹ Despite this, some interviewees showed greater resilience and a desire to be able to support themselves. A particular example of this was a widow who had gone to Khartoum during the war but returned to Juba after 12 years. She had borrowed money to set up a tea shop on the banks of the Nile so that she could provide for her family. She felt that interest-free loans would be the best help that aid agencies could provide. Also, UN agencies were helping the Dinka people, displaced by the conflict, to return to their homeland near Bor. These people felt that it would be useful to have some UN assistance continue when they first reached home but, after that, the UN should leave.

¹² This was supported by an NGO interviewee who also pointed out that OLS was one of the most expensive humanitarian operations in history and that a review in 1994 was “scathing”

¹³ This perception is supported by findings for the RedR-IHE (2006) “Pre-Training Survey Report.” Available from Ellie Selina Salkeld, RedR-IHE Project Manager, Safety Training and Support for Humanitarian Agencies, Darfur at ellie@redr.org.

¹⁴ McDoom, Opheera. “U.N. Aid Chief Retreats from Troubled Sudan Camp” (8 May 2006). Reuters. Reported on <http://www.tiscali.co.uk/news/>

¹⁵ Power, Samantha, cit.

¹⁶ “US backs away from genocide charge in Darfur,” AU Situation Room Daily News Highlights, 4 February 2006.

¹⁷ “Sudan refutes U.S. claim of ongoing Darfur genocide,” AU Situation Room Daily News Highlights, 19 February 2006.

¹⁸ For descriptions of the violence in Darfur, the implication of government forces in this and evidence of genocide, see Justice Africa (February 2005) “Prospects for Peace in the Sudan: Briefing.” Available from <http://www.justiceafrica.org/Feb05.htm>; Loewenstein, Andrew B. “Words Fail.” *The New Republic*, 15 May 2006. Available from <http://www.tnr.com/darfur/>; Power, Samantha. “Dying in Darfur,” cit.

¹⁹ During the war in South Sudan, as noted below, UN operations were based in Nairobi. The UN’s Somalia program is still operated from Nairobi.

²⁰ It has not been possible to verify the extent to which this is a view simply within the UN or whether it is accepted by belligerents as well.

²¹ As described by Minear, Larry (2004). “Lessons Learned: The Darfur experience,” cit.

²² Article titled “Youths torn from camps, forced to fight” in AU Situation Room Daily News Highlights, 18 May 2006.

²³ As reported in AU Situation Room Daily News Highlights, 29 April 2006. WFP’s food aid requirements for Sudan for 2006 amounted to \$900 million. In order to maintain supply during the rainy season, WFP required \$400 million by April 2006 but had only received \$238 million, which led to the cut in rations. It then received a further \$110 million in May so the problem has not been with donor response to its appeal but with the timing of the response. However, there were other demands on donors as well, particularly due to the drought in the Horn of Africa.

²⁴ This may have been partly due to food distribution mechanisms. In one camp, people from surrounding areas were coming to the camp on days when food was being distributed in order to benefit. WFP had tried several times to conduct a head count in the camp. When it finally managed a reasonably accurate count, it found that there were about half the number of people that it had been feeding. However, interviewees argued that vulnerable people in the camp had been excluded from the head count because of the way in which it had been conducted.

²⁵ Referring to Scroggins, Deborah (2004). *Emma’s War*. Random House, London. This is a biography of a young English aid worker, Emma McCune, in South Sudan who married an SPLA rebel commander, Riek Macher. He went on to lead a coup against John Garang. Emma died in a car crash in Nairobi.

²⁶ So, for example, instead of clearing 15’ on either side of a road of mines and explosives, it clears up to 8’ so that it can open up roads faster.

²⁷ In the first year of OLS, programs for the North and South were managed from New York. This arrangement, which worked satisfactorily, was then changed so that programs for the North were administered from Khartoum and those for the South from Nairobi. At the time, a study of OLS recommended that in the interest of neutrality, impartiality, consistency, and transparency, aid program management take place from a single locus, whether New York, Geneva, or a country in the region, a recommendation that was not adopted. See Minear et al., *A Critical Review of Operation Lifeline Sudan: A Report to the Aid Agencies* (Providence, RI: Watson Institute, 1991).

²⁸ Control of the military is further complicated because the countries providing troops retain command and control. So, when the force commander orders a battalion to go to an area, the nation providing the soldiers can refuse to accept the order.

²⁹ Minear, Larry (2004). “Lessons Learned: The Darfur experience,” cit.

³⁰ UNMIS has about 40 Human Rights Officers reporting to the Political DSRSG, with a dual reporting line to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. There is also an UNMIS Protection Unit, with Protection and Child Protection Officers, under the DSRSG/Humanitarian Coordinator. OCHA used to have Protection Officers but has handed this role over to the UNMIS Protection Unit. The difference between Human Rights and Protection

officers is that the latter work to create a better all round protection environment while Human Rights officers become involved when a protection/human rights incident has actually occurred.

³¹ AU Situation Room Daily News Highlights, 14 January 2006.

³² “African Union extends peacekeeping mandate” in AU Situation Room Daily News Highlights, 14 January 2006.

³³ A Channel 4 documentary “Unreported World,” aired in the UK on 23rd June 2006, showed MONUC unwittingly supporting the Congolese army in attacks on villages with innocent civilians, resulting in deaths and displacement.

³⁴ See “Sudan cool on UN peace force plan,” AU Situation Room Daily News Highlights, 14 January 2006; “Sudan seeks more support for AU force in Darfur,” AU Situation Room Daily News Highlights, 23 January 2006; “Sudan tells U.S. congressional delegation it opposes proposal for U.N. troops in Darfur,” AU Situation Room Daily News Highlights, 21 February 2006.

³⁵ “Sudan welcomes peacekeepers,” AU Situation Room Daily News Highlights, 7 May 2006; “US, UN intervention in Darfur not justified: Sudanese adviser,” AU Situation Room Daily News Highlights, 10 May 2006.

³⁶ As reported in AU Situation Room Daily News Highlights, 24 April 2006.

³⁷ See “Sudan: Interview with Bob Turner, UNMIS head of Returns, Reintegration and Recovery,” 12 January 2006, Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN). Available from:

<http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=51064>

³⁸ Of the approximately 14,000 aid workers in Darfur, probably 2-3,000 are expatriates, while the rest are local.

³⁹ This happened shortly after the INGO lost two staff members who were killed when their vehicle drove over an anti-tank mine (in an area in which government and rebel commanders had said that routes were clear of mines). Toby Porter, “The hardest call: why Save the Children withdrew from Darfur” in *Humanitarian Exchange*, Number 30, June 2005.

⁴⁰ As in other countries, the UN cannot relocate local staff, though in Darfur they have interpreted this rule more flexibly so that non-Darfuri Sudanese staff can be relocated.

⁴¹ “RedR-IHE Pre-Training Survey Report, December 2005–January 2006”, available from Ellie Selina Salkeld RedR-IHE Project Manager, Safety Training and Support for Humanitarian Agencies, Darfur. E-mail: ellie@redr.org.

⁴² Young, H., Osman, A.M., Aklilu, Y., Dale, R., Badri, B. and Fuddle, A.J.A. (June 2005) *Darfur—Livelihoods Under Siege*. Feinstein International Famine Center, Tufts University, Medford, MA USA. Available from:

http://nutrition.tufts.edu/pdf/research/famine/darfur_livelihoods_under_seige.pdf

⁴³ In Darfur, many of the attacks have been by nomadic ‘janjaweed’ on villagers and farmers so the government official is indirectly arguing for support to those causing the violence, though they are already financed and supported by the government to fight the Darfuri rebels.

⁴⁴ Some interviewees felt that the media was inaccurate in its reporting of the Darfur conflict. An INGO staff member felt that they were too quick to represent incidents as being between the rebels and the government or between the rebels and the Janjaweed. An AU official also found media reports “overly sensational.” In Mershing that week, there had been a spontaneous population movement due to a rumor about an impending attack on the town. The AU official said, “I was shocked by what I read on the wire services because it was not accurate in content or facts. There is lots of distortion. Someone sitting in Khartoum or Nyala is writing about Mershing. We do give journalists armed escorts but I tell my soldiers not to talk to them otherwise they will find themselves quoted. If they have any questions, they can come to me. We also let them use our interpreters to talk to local people. But if 5-6,000 people are displaced, they say it is 100,000. They should go to the camps and see for themselves.”

⁴⁵ Another example of the government's tight control on information in Darfur is the fact that no one is allowed to take photographs anywhere in Darfur without the government's permission.

⁴⁶ It was not possible to track whether this negotiation removed the threat from the nomads.

⁴⁷ See section 3.3 of Minear, Larry (2004). "Lessons Learned: The Darfur experience," cit.

⁴⁸ See the accompanying study on Northern Uganda for more information on the LRA.

⁴⁹ The fighting is between rival factions of a southern militia group called the South Sudan Defense Forces (SSDF), which fought alongside Sudanese government forces during the civil war. The CPA stipulates that militias must either integrate with the North Sudanese army or with the SPLA. The fighting within the SSDF was attributed to a difference of views about which army to join.

⁵⁰ This was formed in 2003 by the merger of the Relief Association of South Sudan (RASS), the relief arm of the forces led by Riek Machar (1991-2003), and the Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Association. (SRRA), relief wing of the SPLM/A.

⁵¹ Although there have also been earlier incidents in which aid was suspended but then reinstated without punishment of the guilty parties.

⁵² This was done "under UNMIS's nose" but UNMIS had not addressed the problem.

⁵³ The DO is the SRSG or the HC. But Sudan has Area Security Coordinators who are Deputy DO's appointed by the SRSG.

⁵⁴ Some NGO's had refused to attend a party at which AU personnel would be there in civilian clothes.