

## **Africa: Moving the Boundaries**

Proceedings of the 39th African Studies Association of Australasia and the Pacific (AFSAAP) Annual Conference, 5-7 December 2016, The University of Western Australia.

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### **Nuba Mountains: Current Conflict and Implications**

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#### **Abstract**

Sudan was once the largest country in Africa and the first to gain independence from Britain on January 1<sup>st</sup> 1956. Fast-forward 60 years and the country has never enjoyed stability, tranquillity or permanent peace. It has been at war with itself in the south, east, the centre, the west and experiences constant political unrest in the north. The protracted violent conflicts bequeath destruction, devastation and multifaceted grievances to generation after generation. Various peace proposals have been concluded, and many agreements have been signed in an attempt to end the most perennial conflict African continent has witnessed. However, war persists. Territories such as the Nuba Mountains, Darfur and Blue Nile are regarded as killing fields associated with political violence and fragmentation that produce unprecedented civilian casualties (Beny and Halle 2015). The conflict has severely affected economic growth and threatens the disintegration of the social fabric of the entire Sudanese community. Peace agreements have, thus far, failed to address and historicise the root causes of the conflict. Instead, successive governments have tackled the side effects and symptoms the problem produces while preserving the status quo. The result has been a failed peace building project.

#### **Introduction**

The Sudan was popularly known as Africa's cosmopolis. This was due to its vast territory which was approximately one million square miles and about one quarter the size of Europe (Holt & Daly 2011). It was also known for its geographical and cultural diversity of its population. The first census results released on 17 January 1955 revealed the extent to which linguistic, religious and cultural diversity was deeply rooted in Sudanese society. It listed 752 tribal groupings that speak more than 110 languages (Census result report 1955)<sup>1</sup> published by the Office of Census, Ministry of Social Affairs. Post-independence authorities did very little to rectify pre-colonial and colonial development disparities. They preserved the status quo without much effort to redress the past injustices of the country's pre-colonial and colonial legacies. Failure to resolve these issues has caused recurring violent conflicts related to tensions surrounding: citizenship and national identity question; the disparities between the national wealth the country produces and its distribution; the discrepancies between political power and its distribution, and; political Islam. These tensions must be thoroughly addressed by the post-independence national elites if the country is to establish an enduring peace.

Discontented with the manner in which top national jobs were being distributed by northern political elites through the Sudanisation program that was triggered during an interim period

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<sup>1</sup> Prior to the historical voting in of the newly elected National Assembly on the political status of the Sudan (19 December 1955), in which session Sudanese across the political spectrum voted overwhelmingly for independence from both Britain and Egypt, Census results released by the Ministry of Social Affairs revealed that those who claim affiliation to Arab tribes constituted 39%. There were 752 registered tribal groupings, and the spoken languages amounted to 110.

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which preceded full independence, military units in Torit(southern region, comprised mainly of South Sudanese),rebelled against the newly established national central government in Khartoum(Ahmed2010).Thus, when people were joyfully celebrating independence in the northern part of the country in January 1956, South Sudan had already plunged into a bloody civil war. By February 1972, the social fabric of South Sudan was greatly damaged by 17 years of brutal violence. The then president, Jaafar El-Numeiry, reached a Peace Accord with Southern the rebel movement known as Anya-Nya 1 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The Accord, popularly known as Addis Ababa Agreement, brought relative peace and stability for eleven years only to flare up again in May 1983;this time, it engulfed the whole country.

Subsequently, many peace initiatives and agreements have been reached; however, none of them has been honoured (Aler Abel 1990)<sup>2</sup>. The lack of genuine political will and vision on the part of successive national governments to end the war by addressing the root causes of the conflict has rendered all peace agreements futile and worthless. Successive governments, while suppressing ethnic, cultural and religious diversity, have spared no effort to preserve the territorial integrity of the country at whatever cost. This has included the partitioning of the country in 2011.In 2005, the National Congress Party (NCP) government and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) signed a Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in which the two areas, Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile, were entitled the right to popular consultation under the protocol of resolution of the conflict in the two areas within the framework of the CPA. These areas were to:(a) evaluate the implementation of the CPA in their respective states by elected legislatures, and; (b) engage in negotiations with the national government to rectify any shortcoming in the constitutional, political and administrative arrangements of the CPA. Abyei area was assigned a separate protocol known as The Resolution of the Abyei Conflict. The protocol accorded Abyei area special administrative status under the presidency. Coinciding with the South Sudan referendum, Abyei residents were to cast a separate ballot with two options:(a) Abyei was to retain its administrative status in the North, or; (b) be part of the Bahr el Gazal state of South Sudan.

The above remained unresolved and contested issues between the government and the SPLM, which gradually eroded hard-earned trust between the two actors. The gradual erosion of trust between the two parties to the agreement had not only put CPA in to jeopardy, but it rendered constitutional governance created by the CPA dysfunctional. The latter eventually culminated in a full scale civil war in both areas and contributed to estranged relations between Sudan and South Sudan. Thus, the CPA was terminated. Despite the fact that the CPA brought a significant end to one of the most protracted and devastating bloody conflicts in that part of Africa, it also brought enormous challenges and responsibilities for the Government of National Unity (GNU)to deal with. For peace to hold within and between both Sudans, the following needed to be implemented –

1. National reconciliation and healing process;
2. Initiation of trust building process;
3. Rehabilitation of areas hit hard by the war;

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<sup>2</sup> Abel Aler is a prominent South Sudanese politician. As an insider who lived through the events leading up to the independence and post-independence precipitating the Anya-Nya 1 war, his book provides detailed information on Sudan's recurring violent conflicts.

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4. Setting up of a transparent, democratic and accountable government at all levels, responsible for honest and smooth implementation of the CPA.

The aim of this paper is to provide a historical overview and to critically examine the root causes of the country's intractable violent conflict, its impact on the Nuba region, the ripple effects it produces that impact on other aspects of socio-economic life for ordinary citizens, and the institutionalized machinations of northern political elites.

### **Historicising the Root Causes of the Conflict: Fault Lines**

To understand the historical causes of Sudan's complex problem, it is important to understand the socio-economic and political historiography of the country, and in particular the role of the Sudanese states (kingdoms) that existed before and after 1820 and successive colonial and post-colonial administrations played in applying biased development policies on different regions. It also requires an examination of the role those regimes played in producing specific interpretations of ethnicities and ethnic relations, and the cultural antagonisms – sometimes violent ethnic relations – that ensued as a quintessential product of such interpretations. Development of the Sudanese states before and after the eighteenth century was an important element if not the crucial one, that determined the kind of socio-economic and political relationships in general.

Two elements determined such relationships :(a)the slave trade, and;(b) the way peripheries were administered by the central authorities. From the peripheries came the slaves, labour force and surplus in food production (animal and agriculture)to enrich the centres .From the centre came policies, laws, administrators and other government officials. (Douglas 2003).<sup>3</sup>The history of Mohammed Ali Pasha in Sudan played an important role, not only in keeping those relations intact, but developing them further. As the need for slaves expanded, the Islamic state needed a strong standing army which in turn needed slaves to replenish the ever depleting army institution through which it engaged in constant fighting. The current violence against Nuba can be seen as a continuation of the institutionalized perpetuation of violent insecurity from pre-colonial kingdoms (McMichael 1922; Sprauling 1987), including Turco-Egyptian rule and its slave trade institutions (Pallme 1844; Llyod 1908; Trimmingham 1949). The Nuba Mountains, South Sudan region, Blue Nile and Darfur were the peripheries that bore the brunt of the violent conflicts associated with slave raids. From their hinterlands, the States' centres drew slaves, some of whom were used for international trade, others for domestic work (Holt & Daly 2011).

The current conflict is seen widely by the peripheries as Khartoum's deliberate policy not only to keep the old wounds bleeding, but to keep poking them time and again. The fact remains that, the very underlying factors that led to the secession of South Sudan remain intact today. President Omar El-Bashir in addressing a rally in Gadarif city – East of the country – on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2011 bluntly stated after the secession of South Sudan, that he does not want any Daghmasa, a mixture of bad things. El-Bashir was referring to those cultures and traditions that are not considered constitutive elements of Arabic nationalism. His remarks resulted in him being viewed as a demagogue who appeals to the passion and

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<sup>3</sup> Mohammed Ali Pasha was an Albanian officer in the Turco-Egyptian army whose forces, between 1820 - 1822, were able to conquer all of contemporary northern Sudan. During the decline of the Ottoman Empire, Mohammed sought to establish his own firm rule over Egypt and later over Sudan as well. His motivation for conquering Sudan, as he claimed, was men and gold to fuel his ever-expanding war making machinery.

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sentiment of the public through crude oration. His racial rhetoric represents a core and central theme on which NCP socio-economic policies rest, which again, represent the crux of the country's intractable political violence directed squarely against the peripheries. It allowed no hope for political and religious harmony, tolerance and co-existence. With such political ideology as a governing ideal, there will be no chance for national reconciliation, accommodation, and management of diversity. Furthermore, in such circumstances, the achievement of social integration is an unthinkable matter.

The conception of slave-master relations and the politics of segregation with which post-colonial elites were classifying people according to their ethnic affiliations and geographical locations, produced a specific socio-economic and political system directing the course of the country's history. It is the same system which is responsible for the marginalization of the peripheries and informing the behaviour of Omar El-Bashir towards the peripheries. Any solution that does not lead to the dismantling of such an anachronistic and corrupt socio-political system will not bring a lasting peace the country longs for. It will reproduce the same but multifaceted system. This is the situation the peoples of Darfur, Nuba Mountains, and Blue Nile, who have no claim to direct Arabic descent face. There is no intrinsic rationale for such a deliberate, resentful and rigorous segregation and rooted hatred towards African Sudanese, beyond an exclusionary ethno-racialist ethic on which the national identity of the Sudanese nation is constructed. That is to say, the government of Sudan segregates people along ethnic, religious, colour, linguistic and cultural lines. These lines represent fault-lines, each of which can become a full political cause and can explode at any time when politically manipulated. This is exactly what is happening in contemporary Sudan.

Despite the fact that Sudan has many Muslim populations within its borders, the government, which claims to promote Islamic traits and safeguard Muslims' interests, persecutes and kills Muslims and non-Muslims in the name of Allah or holy war(jihad) in Darfur, Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile, ([www.sudanreeve.org](http://www.sudanreeve.org), accessed: 2016). The religiosity of Muslims in Darfur, Nuba Mountains and the Blue Nile was never a blessing nor did it offer them a sanctuary from persecution. It never deterred the government of Khartoum from carrying out ethnic cleansing and genocidal crimes against them. The truth remains that, the ongoing war in Sudan is not a religious war, as the government continues to claim. It is an ethnic cleansing disguised by religious proclamations ([www.sudanreeve.org](http://www.sudanreeve.org), accessed: 2016). In order to elicit moral and material support to fuel their war machinery, the government persistently sells false allegations to the Arab and Islamic worlds, that they are fighting a sacred war on behalf of the entire Arab and Islamic nations to rid the country of all elements incongruent with Arabic and Islamic cultures. This is clear from the messages president Omar El-Bashir and his generals send when addressing military convoys and in the mobilization of militias.

Despite ethnic, religious, linguistic and cultural diversity manifest in the country, successive governments in Khartoum have used excessive coercive force to produce conformity to an unrepresentative and asymmetrical national identity created by Arabic-Islamic-based ruling elites. This identity is constructed on the qualifications of one particular ethnic group, leaving those who resist assimilation as second class citizens in their own country or facing total annihilation as enemies. The enemy has to be exterminated and spared no effort in trying to build constitutional legitimacy to such a controversial, unacceptable and unqualified ethnically based corporate national identity. If nationalism is believed to be a vehicle to nationhood, then it should have been all encompassing. As an ideology, nationalism in Sudan

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should have been understood as the political expression of a diverse community coming together to assert their collective and common sovereignty as a nation. Respect for diversity is a fundamental tenet both in Christianity and Islam. Sudan, by definition, is a heterogeneous society, and the imposition of homogeneity of whatever kind by coercive force will tear it further apart.

People experience a common sense of belonging and affiliation to the same nation, if and only if they recognize each other as being so. Nations are artefacts of people's convictions, loyalties and solidarities. A category of persons occupying a given territory or speakers of a given language can become a nation only if and when the members of the category firmly recognize certain mutual rights and duties to each other by virtue of their shared membership of it. It is their recognition of each other as fellows of this kind which turns them in to a nation (Ernest 1983). Despite achieving independence some 60 years back, Sudan has never enjoyed peace, stability and tranquillity and has never had a permanent constitution. The modern history of Sudan has been marked with military coups, starting from 1958, 1969 and 1989. At the heart of the root causes of Sudan's persistent violent conflicts is the political, economic, religious and cultural marginalization of the peripheries coupled with the failure by successive governments in Khartoum to recognize, accommodate and manage diversity. However, a nation built on the bond of ethnicity or blood and thus on ethno-cultural nationalism in a multi-religious, multi-cultural, multi-lingual and multi-ethnic country does not recognize others except as aliens or second class citizens living in a nation-state.

The particular ethnic group on whose credentials the national identity is constructed constitutes the "nation". Membership to such a nation is determined by genealogical descent not by choice. There is an ever-growing feeling among the Sudanese of African origin that God did not create all of them Arabs, so they will never become Arabs by default in order to be acceptable as first class citizens in their own country. As such, the peoples of Nuba Mountains, Blue Nile and Darfur find it hard to secure recognition and acceptance as members of the national community with equal civil, political, socio-economic and cultural rights. Central government has never conceded such recognition. However, it is the aspiration of the people of the Nuba Mountains, Blue Nile, Darfur and other marginalised areas to have equal recognition of their equally inalienable rights achieved. It is the ambition of the peoples of these areas that Sudan is transformed and re-structured in such a way that unity in diversity is attained and respected, and those constitutional provisions that guarantee mutual recognition to one another and acceptance of others as others are established and reinforced. In such a transformed nation, the key bond that would hold people together is citizenship, not blood or ethnicity.

There is nowhere in this contemporary world, even in South Africa during the Apartheid era, that people were subjected to double Apartheid – religious and racial – except in Sudan where, the people of Nuba, Blue Nile and Darfur have been undergoing such brutal policy since 1956. This prolonged dual apartheid system has produced untold suffering on these peoples. The systematic racial, religious and regional discrimination meted out against them and deliberate marginalization of the majority of the Sudanese of African origin in Nuba Mountains, Blue Nile, Darfur, far North and the East of the country are institutionalized policies successive governments in Khartoum pursue, based on nothing other than their skin colour, ethnicities and their religious beliefs.

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### **The Current War: Nuba Resilience**

On May 2011, the government organized elections in the Nuba Mountains, South Kordofan State, for the gubernatorial and state legislature. Elections, if conducted in a free, fair and transparent manner, were seen by many as a necessary mechanism prescribed by the CPA in the hope that finally it would precipitate democratic transformation. The elections held historical significance for both North and South Sudan, and would have offered a useful lesson for the unresolved issues remaining in the Nuba region and other areas of the country in the post-CPA era (Rift Valley Institute African Elections Project 2011). The official result gave the NCP ruling party's incumbent governor Ahmad Muhammed Harun – indicted by the ICC along with the president – the victory by slight margin. SPLM, having claimed election fraud, disputed the result outright.

The future of the Sudan's People Liberation Army (SPLA) combatants was ensured as part of the Security Arrangement Protocol of the CPA. The government, without regard to this provision, to the popular consultation protocol, and to the final political settlement of the conflict in the two areas, resorted to forcefully disarm and dissolve SPLA combatants in joint integrated units (JIU) (CPA 2005). Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) were inspired by the secession of the troubled South Sudan – as they put it – which they believed to be the God father that provides stalwart support to SPLM/N. Furthermore, according to the then Minister of Defence, Abdurrahim Mohammed Hussain, SAF could crash SPLA/N within 72 hours if they refused to lay down their arms. The disputed elections and the forceful disarmament attempt of SPLA combatants by SAF triggered the current war across the state in June 2011, with catastrophic humanitarian consequences and re-opening of old wounds (The Rift Valley Institute African Election Project 2011).

Nuba by tradition are agro-pastoralists dependent on subsistence agricultural farming and animal husbandry for their livelihood. They are popularly famous for their wrestling tournaments, tattooing and body painting. They are a conglomerate of linguistically diverse African ethnic groups bound by their distinct but common culture, united, again by their common history of oppression, geographical location and traditional religious beliefs (UNHCR 2008). The gradual occupation of their historical plain lands in greater Kordofan by Arabs resulted in Nuba being pushed southwards. The long periods of inhumane subjugation and violent slave raids carried out on them by Turco-Egyptian armies and the Mahdists aided by local Baggar tribes-men compelled Nubato move further southwards to the hills, the present day Nuba Mountains, seeking refuge. Various literatures that cover Nuba historiography conclude that, Nuba were the first to inhabit the plains of greater Kordofan before any other group. As such, they are the autochthonous peoples of the region (Lloyd 1908; McMichael 1912; Trimmingham 1949; Saavedra 1988). The involvement of power centres aided by local Baggarasin the enslavement of Nuba, the harsh oppression and policies of deliberate marginalisation successive governments applied on them, resulted in Nuba developing a centrifugal attitude towards central governments. For Nuba, the government principally attends to regime security and they, as Nuba, have nothing to do with it. The local Baggaras not only participated in the subjugation, enslavement, displacement and forced relocation of Nuba, but have persistently contested the land rights claims of Nuba land.

The more government intensified its brutal campaign of terror, the more it became detested and abhorred and the more Nuba people became increasingly determined to continue the struggle regardless of the consequences. For Nuba; giving up means total annihilation.

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South Sudan was entitled the right to self-determination to be executed at the end of the interim period to determine its collective future political status. The CPA purported to achieve unity or separation based on the voluntary and free choice of the South Sudanese. The NCP government has failed to live up to its responsibility. No national political program has been initiated as an endeavour to make unity attractive, and the South Sudanese people, united by frustration, grievances and anger, voted overwhelmingly for secession in a referendum held in January 2011 (Southern Sudan Referendum Final Result Report 2011).<sup>4</sup>

South Sudan seceded and was declared an independent State on July 9<sup>th</sup> 2011, after waging a bitter struggle for 56 years against the dominant political ideology created by northern political elites. This ideology divided the nation rather than unify it. Secession was a means for the attainment of the political transformation of the country, in which citizenship, recognition and accommodation of the diversity inherent in the country, which are the unifying factors of the Sudanese nation on a voluntary basis were to have been achieved. The ideals were enshrined in the New Sudan Vision promulgated in SPLM manifesto (SPLM Manifesto 2008).

### The Way Forward

The scourge earth policies and war by attrition the government systematically metes out against people of the Nuba Mountains, Blue Nile and Darfur, have produced deep seated resentment and protracted bloody civil wars the country has no capability of extricating itself from. It is widely believed that lasting and durable peace can only be attained if there is a vision and political will on the part of the NCP government to address the root causes of the problem. Unlike South Sudanese, people of the Nuba Mountains, Blue Nile and Darfur have a greater desire to remain in a united Sudan that respects and accommodates cultural, religious, ethnic and linguistic diversities and also respects universal values such as civil rights and the rule of law. They desire a united Sudan where all citizens are recognized as first class citizens and bearers of inalienable rights, provided that the NCP-led government holds the same political creed. It is the belief of the people in the Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile that, if the NCP and its president continue to hold views on peoples of the three areas- Nuba Mountains, Blue Nile and Darfur – as *daghmasas* and insects, the remaining Sudan will be torn further apart.

This paper argues that just and durable peace can be attained only through a comprehensive political settlement that contributes to the restructuring of the Sudanese State and that effects change in the perception of Sudanese nationhood. However, people in the Nuba Mountains, Blue Nile and Darfur espouse a strong believe that the time has not only come, but is overdue for –

1. A comprehensive political settlement that leads to restructuring of the Sudanese State along civic ideals, or;
2. Self-determination for the Nuba Mountains, Blue Nile and Darfur.

For more than 60 years of tragic civil conflicts, the people of the Nuba Mountains, Blue Nile and Darfur have endured untold hardships and horror, and were made to make huge sacrifices

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<sup>4</sup> South Sudanese frustrated by lack of goodwill on the part of NCP government voted overwhelmingly for separation with the following result: 98.93% cession and 1.17% unity.

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in order to survive. These sacrifices will be remembered by generations for years to come as meaningless if the terms of the settlement are less than the wholesale restructuring of the Sudanese state along civic national characteristics or self-determination for the three areas. As a matter of historical fact, successive governments in Khartoum have been slaughtering people of the Nuba Mountains, Blue Nile and Darfur for over 60 years in systematic campaigns of terror. This is because they refuse to acquiesce to the NCP conception of nationhood.

The mere thought of once again leaving the people of the Nuba Mountains, Blue Nile and Darfur under the tender mercies of NCP government under whatever terms of a peace agreement other than those outlined above, is untenable. People will never be prepared to accept any settlement that does not give meaning to the huge sacrifices they have made. Of course, the history of Sudan did not begin with the advent of Islam or Arabs; it predates both. However, without a political settlement that guarantees the dismantling of the current governing political ideology and the ethnic concept of nationhood— Arabism and Islamism – the Nuba Mountains, Darfur and the Blue Nile will eventually cease to be part of that nation.

### **IDPs and Refugees**

For the past five years of war in the Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile, the Sudanese army and its surrogate militias, known as people's defence forces (PDF) and Janjaweed Arab militias, have perpetuated egregious human rights violations on an innocent civilian population. People are shell-shocked, terrified and living in constant fear in caves and valleys ([www.sudanreeves.org](http://www.sudanreeves.org), accessed: 2016). The indiscriminate aerial bombardment of civic targets by the Khartoum Government in SPLM controlled parts of the region such as churches, schools, health care facilities, water points and populated areas, has caused massive casualties. It has destroyed basic life amenities such as water, shelter, and basic health care and rendered people helplessly vulnerable to ecological fluctuations such as drought, pests and diseases. It has also precipitated a humanitarian crisis; people affected are faced with prolonged and man-made difficult living conditions and hunger.

In the Nuba Mountains alone 612,000 people were internally displaced within the region during the first two years of the war. 100, 000 more fled to government-controlled parts of the country. A total of 93,000 persons crossed the border into Yida and Adjuong Thock refugee camps in neighbouring South Sudan. In Blue Nile, 83,000 were internally made homeless while a further 40, 000 crossed the border into neighbouring Ethiopia. 110,000 more crossed the border into refugee camps such as Doro, Khor Yabus and Yusuf Batil in neighbouring South Sudan. Between the period of 2011 to 2013 alone, more than 500 people inside the two states –Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile have died from starvation and other related diseases. People are being killed on daily basis by Soviet-made, high altitude Antinov bombers, jet fighters such as Megs, sokhoys, helicopter gunships and by medium range Iranian-made rockets such as shiraz and Shahab.

A total of 1,200,000 are currently living in SPLM-controlled parts of the Nuba region. These people are terribly affected physically and mentally by the war. They are innocent victims of NCP brutality. The IDPs population stranded inside the Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile is worse off. No relief assistance has ever been allowed to aid them. They are confined inside caves, because of insecurity most of the daytime and, therefore, are unable to attend to their farms. This couples with major annual government dry-season offensives in which

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government forces burn down villages, loot and/or destroy heaps of collected crops in order to create protracted man-made harsh living conditions for a people already vulnerable and struggling to survive. These figures are not constant; they are variables movements of people from one place to another, seeking physical security and refuge are largely controlled by war dynamics.

### **Humanitarian Crisis**

No humanitarian assistance has ever been allowed into war affected areas of the Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile; however, a negotiated humanitarian relief proposal was initiated on February 9, 2012 by the UN, AU and League of Arab States (LAS). It came to be known as the Tripartite Agreement and was met with an unwavering rebuff from the Khartoum government. The government continued to place a blanket denial of humanitarian access to the silently suffering people of the Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile. This, coupled with its systematic use of food as a weapon of war, led to an ever deteriorating humanitarian crisis. There is a strong growing feeling of desperation, hopelessness, helplessness and frustration among the people affected by the conflict in the two areas as they continue to suffer silently and to live in dire need of urgent humanitarian intervention.

During the first period of war, 1985 to 2005, no information was coming in or going out of the Nuba region and most of the atrocities committed by SAF and its surrogate militias went unreported. In such circumstances, barter became major economic activity in a situation of little or no money economy. Use of wild fruits as food supplements, communal support to destitute families, and strict self-reliance are coping mechanisms Nuba developed that made them resilient and hardened. The NCP government in Khartoum should not be allowed to use food as punishment to people fighting for their political rights. Saving the lives of desperate people should not be the precondition of a political settlement of the conflict, nor should people's lives be held hostage by a national sovereignty claim. Humanitarian access must be allowed to save lives of a civilian population caught in the middle of the conflict. The African Union (AU) should initiate a move to invoke Article 4 of its Constitutive Act to intervene in order to save lives of people of the Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile.<sup>5</sup> It is the responsibility of the international community to assert more pressure on the Khartoum government to unconditionally acquiesce and allow humanitarian access to affected people in the Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile.

### **Education Program**

Education is a human right for every child regardless of race, gender, colour, religion or geographical location. Omar El- Bashir directed his war executing agents to destroy schools, mosques, churches and health facilities. This made a whole generation of Nuba youth miss opportunities for education. However, despite the challenges the education program faces, SPLM civil administration made education their top priority in liberated areas. The table below shows education statistics, and distribution of schools by counties –

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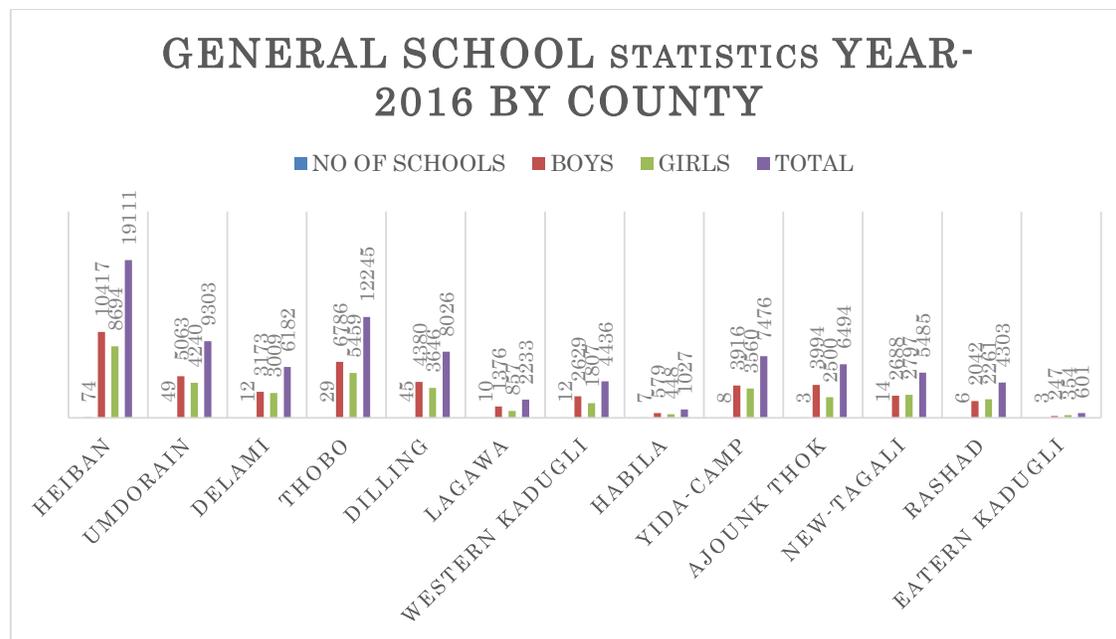
<sup>5</sup> The Article 4 (h) of African Union Constitutive Act states: The right of the Union to intervene in a member State pursuant to a decision of the Assembly in respect of grave circumstances, namely: war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity.

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N/NO	COUNTY	NO OF SCHOOLS	BOYS	GIRLS	TOTAL
1	HEIBAN	74	10417	8694	19111
2	UMDORAIN	49	5063	4240	9303
3	DELAMI	12	3173	3009	6182
4	THOBO	29	6786	5459	12245
5	DILLING	45	4380	3646	8026
6	LAGAWA	10	1376	857	2233
7	WESTERN KADUGLI	12	2629	1807	4436
8	HABILA	7	579	448	1027
9	YIDA-CAMP	8	3916	3560	7476
10	AJOUNK THOK	3	3994	2500	6494
11	NEW-TAGALI	14	2688	2797	5485
12	RASHAD	6	2042	2261	4303
13	EATERN KADUGLI	3	247	354	601
TOTAL ENROLMENT		272	47290	39632	86922



There is a lack of qualified teachers and the schools often stay closed for most of the dry-season, because of government military offensives and during the times of air bombardments. Schools are excessively targeted by war planes. No healthy learning environment exists, which is a threat to physical security. The whole education program lacks basic requirements such as scholastic materials and a school curriculum.

### Qualified Teachers

There are four mixed and functioning secondary schools, one of which is run by the Dioses of El-Obied, and two teacher training institutes. Senior leavers after completing form 4, do not know where to go next to pursue their education further.

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### **ICC Indictment**

The Sudan leader, Omar El-Bashir, was been indicted by the ICC in 2009 on account of crimes against humanity, war crimes and genocide he and his generals committed in Darfur. His forces continue to commit gross atrocities against people of the Nuba Mountains, South Kordofan. The crimes, according to the Office of UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR 2011), may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity. It is with the spirit of restoring permanent peace and national reconciliation that the ICC and the international community established mechanisms in order to bring Omar El-Bashir and all those who commit similar crimes against their own people to face justice.

### **Conclusion**

One of the contributing factors to ever-increasing social inequality in the Sudan is the fact that regional strategic development policies are planned and financially supported by the central government. When regional development policies are defined and planned from the central government, there is always a high possibility of preferential treatment of regions receiving development funds. Peripheries suffer most. The decision-makers in Khartoum target certain regions for development funds— mostly they favour the regions where the ruling elites hail from – leaving the rest to gradual underdevelopment (Imbalances of Power and Wealth Sharing 2003).

Although Sudan is an oil exporting country, the oil revenues have not been utilized to uplift the living standard of the ordinary citizen through provision of better social services such as education, health care services and safe water, among others. Given development projects are always carried out with violence, oil has become a curse even to residents of the areas in which oil is extracted. Development does not always lead to political stability. It can be a source of social unrest. Sudan is a typical example of this; oil revenues are not used to purchase weaponry not to fend off *external* threats, but to brutalize its own people in the name of protecting Islamic Sharia Law.

It is absurd and equally paradoxical to hold colonial administration squarely accountable for all the country's mounting upheavals 60 years after the achievement of independence. Post-independence elites and all preceding successive governments should be held accountable for all those ills which were the product of their own asymmetrical policies. The failure by successive regimes in Khartoum to demonstrate genuine political will to resolving the conflict once and for all, casts a gloomy image of the country's future. The practical secession of South Sudan offered an unprecedented incentive for parties to the conflict and those hostile to the centre to strongly entertain the idea of breaking away if conflict persists. The segregationist policies along ethno-racialist fault lines, not only jeopardize the stability of the country, but threaten its very existence as a functioning, vibrant and viable civic State.

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