

Liberation and Justice Movement (LJM)

Origins/composition

The LJM was created in February 2010 as a negotiating umbrella for two coalitions formed at international urging—the Libyan-backed Sudan Liberation Revolutionary Forces (SLRF, popularly known as the Tripoli Group) and the Addis Ababa Group that is identified with former US special envoy to Sudan Scott Gration. The LJM has no unified military command; its component parts are relatively insignificant militarily.

The SLRF or Tripoli Group

The SLRF initially included six factions, five of which signed a ‘common ground agreement’ in Libya in March 2009. Only one, the United Revolutionary Forces Front (URFF), is militarily significant:

1. Sudan Liberation Army (SLA)-Field Leadership;
2. SLA-Unity (2);
3. SLA-Juba (2);
4. SLA-Khamis Abaker;
5. SLA-Mainstream; and
6. URFF.

The Addis Ababa Group

The Addis Ababa Group initially included four factions, brought together by Gration in August 2009:

1. SLA-Unity (1). Joined the SLRF in April 2010 after initially opposing the leadership of Tijani Sese;
2. SLA-Juba (1). Joined the LJM in April 2010 after initially opposing Sese’s leadership. The decision caused a split between Ahmed Abdel Shafi and his close associate, Babiker Abdalla;
3. United Resistance Front (URF). The best-armed faction in the Addis Ababa Group, the URF has reportedly received small arms from SLA-Minni Minawi (SLA-MM) in return for fighting alongside SLA-MM and Darfur-based Chadian armed opposition groups against the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM); and
4. SLA-Abdul Wahid (SLA-AW) dissidents, including Ali Haroun, a former humanitarian coordinator of SLA-AW who hails from the Ain Siro mountains north of Jebel Marra; Abdalla Khalil, formerly deputy head of the political bureau of SLA-AW; and Ismail Rifa Jara, a popular commander and former military chief of SLA-Unity from the Meidop tribe. In April 2010, Babiker Abdalla was appointed leader of this group; he died in Uganda in December 2010 and was replaced by Ali Haroun.

Leadership

Tijani Sese, a member of the Fur tribe whose involvement satisfies the mediation’s urgent desire for Fur representation in Doha, leads the LJM. Some groups initially contested his leadership because he played no part in the uprising, having lived outside Sudan for 20 years. Yet Sese, a former member of the Umma Party of Sadiq al Mahdi and a former economics professor at Khartoum University, has experience rarely found in the armed movements—as both state minister of finance and governor



of Darfur in the Mahdi government (1986–89). Sese’s brother, Fadul Sese, is the second-highest-ranking Fur in the Native Administration, the hierarchy of local chiefs and parallel courts established by the British before independence. The LJM structure announced in March 2010 included five deputy chairmen—two Masalit, one Zaghawa, one Fur, and one Arab—with Bahr Abu Garda as secretary-general; Ali Kerubino as commander-in-chief; and Tajuddin Bashir Nyam, JEM’s deputy chief negotiator in Abuja, as secretary for peace negotiations.

Areas of control/activity

There is at best limited coordination among the factions represented in the LJM. Their total strength is estimated at 2,000 fighters with fewer than 40 vehicles. At the outset, only four groups were considered militarily significant:

1. SLA-Justice (also known as ‘SLA-Kerubino’ and now called the Democratic Sudan Liberation Movement), in the Tukumare and Khazan Tunjur areas of North Darfur;
2. URF of Bahr Abu Garda, in the Daba Tuga and Abu Gamra areas of North Darfur;
3. SLA-Field Leadership of Ali Mukhtar, in the Um Marahik, Liil, and Um Berro areas of North Darfur; and
4. URFF of Yassin Yousif, around Malam in South Darfur.

Sources of financing/support

The LJM, an artificial alliance brought into being through outside pressure, enjoyed the political backing of the mediation, the United States, and Libya. Early support from Libya waned as the LJM took on a life of its own in Doha and a Libyan intelligence officer in Doha, Mohammed Garsala, encouraged defections to JEM.

Status

The LJM is the chief interlocutor of the international community and its main partner in peacemaking efforts. It is fiercely opposed by the other non-signatory Darfur movements. Its test will be whether it can sustain a tenuous cohesion through the implementation of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD) peace agreement, and manage to strike a balance between loyalty to the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) and credibility with the Darfur population.

Many of the SLA commanders who initially joined the LJM, but grew disenchanted, continue to support reunification efforts. Saleh Mahmoud, a leading Fur MP and relative of Abdul Wahid, led efforts to reunite the rebels from Doha during the summer of 2011. These efforts were supported by the United States and, to a lesser extent, Qatar, but did not achieve conclusive results. A more successful unification effort was that of the Fur *Shura*. This civilian body, linked to the Fur Traditional Authority structure, had been divided into three branches, variously aligned with the government or against it.

Defections and desertions have affected LJM since its inception. SLM-AW dissidents Abdalla Khalil and Ali Haroun never formally joined the LJM. Both SLA-Kerubino and SLA-Field Leadership, two militarily significant Zaghawa groups, peeled away from LJM before the signing of the DDPD. SLA-Field Leadership joined SLA-MM when the latter left the government, while SLA-Kerubino became an independent movement called the Democratic Sudan Liberation Movement. SLA-Unity has

entered into coordination (though not full unity) with JEM and the SRF and is no longer part of the LJM.

On 5 January 2012, LJM Deputy Chairman Shafi said he was leaving the movement and the DDPD. Two major differences with Sese appear responsible: Shafi's disagreement over certain appointments to the Darfur Regional Authority (DRA) and LJM's interaction with the NCP. Apparently, Shafi sought the governorship of the new state of Central Darfur but was rebuffed. Shafi had also advocated a more distant working partnership with the NCP, a position shared by other LJM members. Shafi's departure weakens the LJM in Darfur. He was the main liaison with the LJM's armed forces (whom Sese has never visited) and with the IDP camps.

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