

Darfur Peace Process & Chronology

After more than a decade of turmoil, resolution of the Darfur conflict remains a distant prospect. Successive mediation efforts—in Abuja (2006), Tripoli (2007), and Doha (2009–present), among other initiatives—have not bridged the gaps between Khartoum and the many armed opposition groups of Darfur.

Current hopes remain mainly invested in the [Doha Document for Peace in Darfur \(DDPD\)](#), signed by the [Liberation and Justice Movement \(LJM\)](#) and the Government of Sudan (GoS) in July 2011, in talks hosted by Qatar. Like the [2006 Darfur Peace Agreement \(DPA\)](#) before it, the DDPD has only a minority of the rebel movements as signatories—the LJM and a splinter group from the [Justice and Equality Movement \(JEM\)](#), [JEM-Bashar](#) (or ‘JEM-Sudan’), which signed on to the DDPD in April 2013. The faction’s founder, Mohammed Bashar, was assassinated on his return to Sudan, only six weeks after he signed. In a tacit recognition that the DDPD is increasingly irrelevant, the LJM and the GoS signed a security agreement entirely outside of the DDPD in late 2013.

The parties aligned in the [Sudan Revolutionary Front \(SRF\)](#) continue to refuse to enter into the Doha process and the DDPD. The SRF seeks, among other things, the removal and replacement of the current National Congress Party (NCP)-led regime. Along with the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N), the Darfur movements in the SRF include the Sudan Liberation Army-Minni Minawi (SLA-MM), which signed the 2006 DPA, the Sudan Liberation Army-Abdul Wahid SLA-AW), as well as mainstream JEM. Despite their rejection of a Darfur-only peace track, SLA-MM and JEM have agreed to participate in principle in formal consultation and workshop meetings with the UN-AU mediator. SLA-AW has consistently refused to take part in any talks that do not address all of the SRF’s national demands. All three movements advocate a “holistic and comprehensive resolution to all the crises in the Sudan” as an alternative to the DDPD. The NCP seeks to negotiate an agreement on Darfur alone, to the exclusion of the SPLM-N and the conflicts in South Kordofan and Blue Nile.

The DDPD is also beset by weak implementation, a lack of inclusivity, and limited technical capacity. Promised GoS and donor funds have been very slow to arrive, which has further delayed the activities of the Darfur Regional Authority (DRA), established in December 2011 as the lead implementing agency for the agreement. The UN Secretary-General’s most recent [report](#) on the United Nations-African Union Hybrid operation in Darfur (UNAMID) issued on 15 April 2014 reiterated the lack of engagement from both the signatories and the international community on the agreement’s implementation.

Security continues to deteriorate throughout Darfur due to inter-tribal violence, and this has also been a factor in slow implementation. Violent fighting in Jebel Amir (North Darfur) between Abbala/Reizegat and Beni Hussein tribes over control of gold mining areas have displaced more than 100,000 and left hundreds dead since January 2013. The deployment, in February 2014, of 5,000–6,000 militia from the Rapid Support Force (RSF) has exacerbated tensions in an already volatile and insecure region. RSF deployment corresponds to a sequence of large-scale attacks on armed groups and villages in South and North Darfur. As of July 2014, the RSF has conducted more than 40 attacks, mainly against civilian, villages, and IDP camps, forcing the displacement



of at least 122,500 people. Other government-supported forces, such as the Border Guards (Haras-el-Hodud), are implicated in reprisal attacks on the Beni Hussein for control of the lucrative trade, which has boomed since commercially viable amounts of gold were discovered in Darfur in March 2012.

Other tribal conflicts over land and local political issues include clashes between Misseriya, Ta'isha, and Salamat communities in Central Darfur, which began in April 2013 and quickly spread to South Darfur and displaced tens of thousands. Meanwhile, localized insecurity in South Darfur's state capital, Nyala, including the assassination of several prominent businessmen, has further destabilized the state. Elsewhere in South Darfur, Gimir and Beni Halba have clashed over the harvesting of gum arabic. East Darfur and South Kordofan have also been affected by ongoing violent clashes between the Rezeiqat and Ma'alia tribes, both from Arab lineage, which broke up in mid-2013. Grievances between the two tribes dated back to colonial time and they are mainly over land issues. This expansion of these conflicts is worrying as it suggests that local means of resolving disputes, already severely stressed by the years of war, can still collapse further. Conflict dynamics in Darfur continue to evolve, shifting between tribal, racial, and resource-based fighting, while actors are increasing in numbers and motives.

Jebel Marra remains one of Darfur's most troubled regions. Significant violence continues in the area and humanitarian access remains highly restricted. Non-signatory forces, including SLM-AW and SLM-MM, maintain rear bases there. Offensive SAF overflights and indiscriminate bombardments continue. Violations of the arms embargo on Darfur are so common that the UN Panel of Experts now terms them "routine".

The African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), under the leadership of Mohamed ibn Chambas of Ghana, continues to struggle with the implementation of its peacekeeping mandate and routinely suffers casualties. 16 UNAMID peacekeepers were killed in 2013, and 200 since UNAMID replaced the Africa Union Mission in Sudan in 2008. UNAMID's mandate continues until 31 August 2014.

For more analysis on the Darfur conflict, including on specific armed groups as well as arms flows to the region, use the left-hand navigation bar.

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