



## DARFUR PEACE PROCESS CHRONOLOGY

### 2009

**February:** The government and JEM sit down together, in Doha, for the first time since June 2007. On 17 February, they sign a goodwill agreement that combines a ceasefire with a commitment to exchange prisoners and facilitate the delivery of aid. The agreement stalls over the sequencing of the ceasefire and prisoner releases.

**15 March:** Libya, chair of the AU for the coming year, convinces five factions—SLA-Unity, SLA-Khamis Abaker, the United Resistance Front, Democratic JEM, and SLA-Juba—to join the Doha process.

**18 March:** US President Barack Obama names Scott Gration, a retired Air Force general, as his special envoy to Sudan. Reflecting concern over the lack of Fur representation in Doha, Gration prioritizes unifying Fur commanders, who are critical of SLA-AW and its refusal to negotiate until security is restored and the government-supported militias, popularly known as ‘janjaweed’, are disarmed.

**20 March:** JEM suspends talks with the government, citing Khartoum’s expulsion of 13 international relief agencies in response to the ICC’s decision to issue an arrest warrant for President Bashir on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

**June:** Mandate Darfur, a civil society conference planned by the Mo Ibrahim Foundation to draw up ‘an authoritative mandate’ for rebel negotiators, collapses when the government arrests the Darfur coordinator and threatens to charge with treason anyone attempting to attend the meeting in Addis Ababa.

**13 July:** JEM Chairman Khalil Ibrahim threatens to pull out of the Doha talks if mediators invite other insurgents.

**August:** Almost a dozen rebel factions coalesce into two groups—the ‘Addis Ababa Group’ (otherwise known as the ‘road map group’) formed by Gration, and the ‘Tripoli group’ formed by Libya. JEM dismisses most as ‘Internet groups’, insists that they join JEM if they want representation in Doha, and regrets that ‘some birds are trying to move away from the flock’. The talks stall.

**7 November:** The ‘Tripoli group’, renamed SLA-Revolutionary Forces, declines an invitation to Doha, prioritizing rebel unity. The Doha talks, due to begin on 16 November after an eight-month hiatus, are postponed indefinitely.

**6–19 November:** With other tracks stalled, civil society representatives are invited to Doha—for the first time since the peace process began in Abuja in 2004. JEM and SLA-AW condemn the meeting, alleging that most of the representatives are NCP sympathizers. The ‘Doha Declaration’ issued at the end of the meeting does not bear out this claim: it calls for an immediate ceasefire and negotiations; justice and an end to impunity; settlement of land disputes, including the return of all IDPs to their villages; and the evacuation of settlers. Follow-up talks with civil society and the armed movements are scheduled for January 2010. JEM rejects them.



**26 December:** Sudan and Chad agree to enforce border controls on each other's armed opposition movements. Within days, Darfur-based Chadian rebels move back from the border.

## 2008

**30 June:** Ending the experiment in joint mediation, Djibril Bassolé of Burkina Faso is appointed chief mediator for the peace process, representing both the AU and UN.

**21 July:** The AU Peace and Security Council authorizes a High-Level Panel on Darfur—since October 2009, the AU High-Level Implementation Panel for Sudan, or AUHIP—headed by former South African president Thabo Mbeki, to focus on peace, reconciliation, and justice.

**9 September:** A League of Arab States resolution proposes that Qatar should host new peace talks. The UN acquiesces, needing a sponsor for the talks, and Bassolé begins working alongside Qatar's minister for foreign affairs, Sheikh Ahmed bin Abdalla al-Mahmoud.

**16 October:** With the International Criminal Court (ICC) demanding that President Omar al Bashir stand trial for genocide, the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) organizes the Sudan People's Initiative to provide 'national' solutions to the Darfur conflict. The conference, in Khartoum, is attended by most main political parties and, unusually, civil society, but internally displaced persons (IDPs) are not represented. The government agrees to incorporate the movements' demands for compensation and a single Darfur region into its negotiating position at future talks. But the initiative stalls as efforts to defer the prosecution of the president fail, and the mediation and Western nations show no interest.

**10 November:** Chad and Sudan restore diplomatic relations and exchange ambassadors.

## 2007

**8 June:** The mediators announce a three-phase 'road map' that consists of aligning regional initiatives; uniting the rebel movements; and holding new talks. In July, Chad, Eritrea, and Libya agree to coordinate with the 'hybrid' mediation and phase one is declared a success. But SLA-AW stays away from a meeting of the armed movements in Arusha, Tanzania, in early August and talks between the movements and the government in Sirte, Libya, in October are boycotted by the three most significant movements—SLA-AW, JEM, and SLA-Unity. The hybrid mission ends in failure: it does not create a genuine consensus among neighbouring states, does not bring all the armed movements on board, and does not restrain the parties on the battlefield.

## 2006

**5 May:** The predominantly Zaghawa Sudan Liberation Army-Minni Minawi (SLA-MM) and the Sudanese government sign the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) in

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Abuja; SLA-Abdul Wahid Mohamed al Nur (SLA-AW) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) do not. Limited support for the agreement and a failure to sell (or even explain) it to civil society, Darfur's Arabs, and the masses in the displaced camps, plus scant attention to implementation as insecurity deepens, condemn it to irrelevance. A decision to seek wider support by allowing splinter groups to sign Declarations of Commitment backfires, encouraging factional splits and divide-and-rule tactics. In September, United Nations (UN) special envoy Jan Pronk told the UN Security Council: 'In hindsight, maybe we should have taken more time. Not to get a better agreement, but in order to bring on board all parties.'

**30 June:** Non-signatories, including JEM, form the National Redemption Front in Eritrea, creating a military alliance that inflicts a number of crushing defeats on the army before it breaks apart at year-end.

**16 November:** The African Union (AU) and UN decide to 're-energize' the peace process by organizing talks between the government and non-signatories. Tanzania's Salim Ahmed Salim, chief mediator in Abuja, and Jan Eliasson, a former Swedish foreign minister, are appointed joint mediators for the AU and UN, respectively.