



DARFUR PEACE PROCESS CHRONOLOGY

2010

January: Government forces and militias attack JEM positions near the border with Chad.

9 February: Chadian president Idriss Déby visits Khartoum for talks with Bashir.

23 February: Squeezed by the rapprochement between N'Djaména and Khartoum, JEM moves its fighters out of Chad and into Darfur and signs a 'framework agreement' with Khartoum in Doha. The agreement has only two operative paragraphs—for a ceasefire and a prisoner release—but it sets an agenda for substantive talks, to include a permanent ceasefire, the future status of JEM combatants, compensation, and power-sharing at all levels of government. Qatar offers a sweetener: nearly USD 1 billion for development in Darfur. Darfur's Arabs, especially, are unhappy over a second emerging deal with a Zaghawa-based movement.

3 March: JEM threatens to leave Doha if there are 'multiple agreements'.

18 March: Disregarding JEM, the Liberation and Justice Movement (LJM) and the Sudanese government sign a framework agreement.

26 March: Khalil Ibrahim travels to Doha to demand the expulsion of the LJM. The state-run Sudan Media Centre accuses JEM of violating the ceasefire 23 times in one month.

April: The government intensifies its offensive against JEM, claiming it has moved out of four agreed locations. JEM scatters its forces. Fighting spreads.

2 May: JEM freezes its participation in Doha, citing 'continuous aerial and ground assaults'.

8 May: Meeting in Addis Ababa, the Sudan Consultative Forum¹ introduces a distinction between the peace process and the political process. The peace process is between the belligerents for a ceasefire and a political settlement; the political process is a wider initiative that would address all issues—including reconciliation and accountability. With Bassolé's term due to expire in June, African Union/United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) chief Ibrahim Gambari wants an All Darfur Conference under UNAMID auspices, with a continuing strong Qatari role to guarantee development money for Darfur.

10 May: Justice Minister Abdel Basit Sabderat says the Sudanese government has asked Interpol to arrest Khalil Ibrahim to face 14 charges, including murder and waging war against the state.

15 May: Government forces occupy Jebel Moon, JEM's stronghold in north-western Darfur. JEM claims it has already expanded into other parts of Darfur and Kordofan.

19 May: Khalil Ibrahim flies into Chad from Libya, aiming to travel overland to Darfur, but is detained at N'Djaména airport for 19 hours before being sent back to Libya. Sudan asks neighbouring states not to give him refuge. JEM and government forces fight in South Darfur, with heavy casualties on both sides.

25 May: In a letter to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, JEM says the government is seeking a military solution to the conflict. It alleges that the Doha process is only 'for public relations business and image improvement'. Demanding radical reform of the Doha forum, JEM says it will not negotiate under 'intimidation and menace'. Presidential adviser Ghazi Salahuddin Atabani, in charge of Darfur's political file for the government, says Khartoum is 'not concerned and not interested in the positions of the Justice and Equality Movement, especially as it has no real desire to negotiate for peace.'

27 May: JEM and SLA-AW clash with government forces around Deribat in eastern Jebel Marra. A JEM official says privately that 'JEM will do whatever possible to keep Jebel Marra free or in hands other than the government and the "janjaweed"'.

30 May: Bassolé tells Khalil Ibrahim that UNAMID cannot fly him from Libya to Darfur without Khartoum's permission. JEM makes its presence in Doha contingent upon its commanders' ability to return to Darfur, where, by UN count, 440 people died in May in fighting between government forces and JEM. UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs John Holmes says the humanitarian crisis in Darfur is hostage to the lack of progress in Doha.

5 June: President Bashir says that following the April elections, 'the current Doha round will be the last for any armed group. There will be no legitimacy through the gun—only through the ballot box.'

6 June: Talks between the government and the LJM resume in Doha, after a two-month break for elections. The backdrop is not auspicious: the February 2009 ceasefire has collapsed—with fresh government offensives against JEM and SLA-AW in May causing the largest number of recorded violent fatalities in Darfur since the arrival of UNAMID in January 2008—and JEM is refusing further negotiation. Four smaller factions also boycott the round: the original SLA-Unity, Democratic JEM, the United Revolutionary Front Forces (URFF), and a group of commanders including Ali Haroun Dud, Abdalla Khalil, and Babiker Abdalla, who left SLA-AW—in part over Abdul Wahid's rejection of negotiations. The commanders resent mediation pressure on them to join the LJM, which they consider an artificial creation that will not respond to the needs of Darfurians—and especially the Fur—and want to unite Fur dissidents under a separate umbrella. URFF leader Ibrahim al Zubaidi accuses the mediation of lacking neutrality.

14 June: Khalil Ibrahim says 'Doha is over' and warns that an agreement between the government and the LJM that excludes the two original movements, JEM and SLA-AW, will not bring peace. He cites the DPA as an example.



22 June: Government negotiators in Doha turn away delegates of the Heidelberg Committee²—Darfur academics, activists, and civil society organizations brought together in 2008 by the Max Planck Institute in Heidelberg, Germany, in tandem with the Peace Institute of Khartoum University. The delegates had travelled to Doha, at the invitation of the mediation, to present proposals for peace drawn up in nearly three years of discussions.³ The proposals, strongly supported by the LJM, include reuniting the three states of Darfur as one administrative territory, creating ways to allow IDPs to return to their homes and be compensated—both individually and collectively—and expelling settlers from neighbouring countries. The Sudanese government spokesman in Doha, Omer Adam Rahman, claims the Heidelberg group is biased towards the armed movements. The LJM warns that rejection of the Heidelberg proposals will mean a return to war.

24 June: The government and the LJM begin talks on wealth sharing. The mediation's timetable requires a number of protocols to be finalized by the end of July, despite the absence of the main movements and the breakdown of the ceasefire.

29 June: The government and movements meet with civil society representatives, for the first time, in the framework of discussions on compensation and the return of refugees and IDPs. The government bans leaders of Kalma IDP camp, one of the most militant in Darfur, from travelling to Doha. The LJM threatens to walk out.

30 June: Speaking in Port Sudan on the 21st anniversary of the coup that brought him to power, President Bashir says: 'Whoever wants peace should go to Doha. Whoever wants something else will be taught a lesson they will never forget.'

5 July: The United States and British special envoys are absent from a meeting for international envoys called by UNAMID chief Ibrahim Gambari in al Fasher to review 'the Darfur political process, including the way forward to help Darfurians and all the people of the Sudan achieve lasting peace'. The scheduling of the meeting so close to US Independence Day celebrations on 4 July, and only two weeks before special envoys meet in Khartoum under the auspices of the Consultative Forum, is widely criticized, with Mbeki suggesting a two-week postponement, which Gambari refuses. The divided and acrimonious international environment continues to contribute to the Darfurians' lack of confidence in any mediation process.

8 July: Under military pressure in Jebel Marra, Abdul Wahid meets Qatari officials in Paris but reiterates his refusal to go to Doha until security is restored in Darfur. Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner, who had reportedly been considering asking the rebel leader to leave France, says this marks an important step forward in the peace process. Others—including IDPs in their seventh year in camps—believe it is a sign of Abdul Wahid's growing weakness.

12 July: The second civil society forum opens in Doha, overshadowed by new tensions within civil society that complicate a proposal to hold 'broad-based and inclusive political consultations inside Darfur' to provide 'structured popular input into the Doha negotiations during June–August'. The consultations are necessary, the mediation says, to 'give particular focus to those communities whose support of any agreements is critical for their durability, in particular newly elected officials, IDPs,

and Arab communities’.

15 July: Civil society delegates, including IDP representatives, call for Darfur to be reorganized as a single administrative region. The chief government negotiator, Amin Hassan Omer, questions the delegates’ right to speak for Darfurians; delegates question the government’s commitment to peace and express concern over reports that it intends to launch a parallel initiative inside Darfur. They believe that any ‘domestic’ initiative will be subject to government manipulation, bribery, and coercion, and fear that Western nations seeking Khartoum’s cooperation in peaceful Southern secession after the referendum will be unwilling to exert pressure to rein in government abuses in Darfur. The talks adjourn until mid-September.

26 July: Bashir extends Atabani’s management of the Darfur file and announces a high-level ‘follow-up committee’ composed of the ministers of defence, interior, foreign affairs, finance, and media, Darfur’s three state governors (hardliners elected in the April 2010 elections, which were widely boycotted in Darfur), and a representative of the Transitional Darfur Regional Authority (TDRA) headed by SLA-MM. The announcement heralds a more aggressive, hands-on approach to the Darfur problem. The committee is charged not only with crafting a new peacemaking strategy, but also with monitoring and assessing international media reports on Darfur ‘in order to counteract hostile reports’.

27 July: Clashes break out in Hamadiya camp, near Zalingei, between supporters of SLA-AW and the Ahmed Abdel Shafi faction that joined the Doha talks. Three Abdel Shafi supporters are killed and homes are burned. A number of Fur elders claim that Abdul Wahid ordered the killings from Paris. Ibrahim Gambari tells the UN Security Council about encouraging signs of a deal to end the conflict, with ‘civil society [...] now more involved in peace talks than ever, the Government of Sudan [...] demonstrating renewed commitment to negotiations, and the leaders of most armed opposition movements [...] either participating in or [...] expressing an interest in participating in the talks’.

29 July: The clashes spread to Kalma camp, which houses almost 100,000 of Darfur’s 2.7 million displaced, leaving 35 dead and displacing 25,000, according to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. South Darfur Governor Abdul Hamid Musa Kasha accuses SLA-AW loyalists of attacking Kalma with heavy and light arms to sabotage the Doha talks; SLA-AW accuses the government of infiltrating agents and weapons into the camp. UNAMID refuses to surrender six IDPs who sought refuge in a UNAMID police post, and local authorities respond by closing Kalma to international relief organizations. President Bashir says anyone attempting to block or hinder the work of the authorities will be expelled ‘the same day’.

The NCP approves a new ‘domestication’ strategy that emphasizes recovery and development (rather than a negotiated political agreement in Doha) and is premised on the assertion that ‘the war is over’. The reality in Darfur suggests otherwise. While violent death is much reduced in comparison to 2002–04, intra-Arab fighting took some 700 lives in the first half of the year. Ghazi Atabani lists his top priorities as security and development. Secondary priorities include justice, through national mechanisms; a shift from relief to development aid; and the conclusion of a peace

agreement—to be signed before the end of the year with the movements in Doha and with other sectors of society in Darfur.

If Doha is neglected, ‘domestication’ risks making the movements into spoilers of any initiative—especially at a time when President Bashir, already risking the wrath of his powerful security services for giving Southerners the option of independence, may well be reluctant to offer new concessions to Darfurians. All the armed movements oppose the new strategy, which JEM calls a replay of the ‘peace from within’ policy implemented in the Nuba Mountains in the 1990s. That strategy sought to co-opt Nuba leaders and make them accomplices in their own oppression. It was accompanied, in the name of development, by the sale—to supporters of the regime—of large areas of land ‘cleansed’ of their original inhabitants.

4 August: President Bashir travels to Libya to defuse a diplomatic crisis caused by Col. Muammar Gaddafi’s refusal to expel Khalil Ibrahim. Reports circulating in Khartoum say Libya has rearmed JEM, with B-10 rifles, anti-aircraft guns, and AK-47s. The weapons are said to be stored at two locations—one close to Libya’s border with Chad and the other near Darfur. After two days of talks, Bashir says Gaddafi has pledged not to allow attacks on Sudan from Libyan territory.

9 August: South Darfur Governor Musa Kasha says the government will dismantle Kalma camp, a ‘military base and political platform’ for Abdul Wahid and ‘a hideout for criminals fleeing from justice’. Echoing the language of genocide used by Western activists, Abdul Wahid appeals to the international community to take a stand against this ‘Final Solution’.

23 August: Vice-President Ali Osman Taha announces USD 1.9 billion worth of recovery and development projects to support ‘domestication’. The projects include the completion of the Western Salvation Road linking Darfur to Khartoum, planned for the past two decades but bedeviled by conflict and corruption.

26 August: After meeting with Ghazi Atabani in Cairo, the AU, UNAMID, and the United States give unqualified support to Sudan’s new peace strategy. The Arab League follows five days later.

16 September: The Sudanese cabinet endorses the strategy, stressing the importance of collecting illegal arms and punishing law-breakers. Previous disarmament efforts have focused on non-Arabs.

8 October: Negotiations between the government and LJM resume in Doha, with the parties considering a draft agreement assembled by a third party (the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations). The deadline for agreement—19 October—recalls the failed ‘deadline diplomacy’ of the last days of Abuja. Bassolé meets with Abdul Wahid in Paris and Khalil Ibrahim in Libya, acknowledging that ‘without the participation of these movements beside the Sudanese government, LJM, and civil society, peace will remain fragile and unstable’.

19 October: With security and power-sharing issues resisting consensus, the first Doha deadline passes and is extended—by a week.

23 October: JEM announces it will send a delegation to meet Bassolé in Doha, but says it will return to the negotiating table only as part of a single ‘resistance’ group.

29 October: The Mbeki panel makes public a road map of its own for a ‘global political agreement’—a cessation of hostilities, rebel unity, and inclusive negotiations. The panel proposes a ‘hybrid’ court—envisaged as a chamber of the existing judicial system, hybridized through international staff—to bring to trial individuals with particular responsibility for the gravest crimes committed in Darfur. It supports the ICC as ‘a court of last resort’.

Ten factions in the Addis Ababa and Tripoli groups unite under the name Liberation and Justice Movement (LJM) for the purposes of negotiation. (Their military commands, such as they are, remain separate.) They choose as leader Tijani Sese, a widely respected Fur politician and former governor of Darfur who has lived abroad for 20 years. The mediation hopes Sese will win Fur support for the peace process, especially in the IDP camps. JEM snubs him, saying he has no history in the rebellion.

Government troops and planes attack SLA-AW positions in Jebel Marra in the wake of heavy intra-rebel fighting as part of which SLA-AW seeks help both from JEM and government-backed militias.

6 November: Bassolé presents a plan to conclude Doha by 19 December at the Sudan Consultative Forum meeting in Addis Ababa. At the same time he predicts that ‘the fighting will continue’.

7 November: President Bashir holds talks with the joint mediators in Doha. The LJM says it will not compromise on the issue of a single region and demands a vice-presidency for Darfur.

11 November: Bassolé asks for another extension of the process—into 2011—apparently believing there is a chance of convincing JEM to approve a final document alongside the LJM.

13–14 November: As Khartoum accuses the Sudan People’s Liberation Army of aiding JEM and launches air raids across Darfur’s southern border, just inside South Sudan, a JEM delegation holds two days of talks with mediators in Doha. The delegation is headed, for the first time, by a non-Darfurian—Mohamed Bahr Hamadein, JEM’s deputy chairman and a member of the Missiriya tribe from Kordofan. The appointment shows the new interest JEM has in areas bordering Darfur as government troops target JEM fighters in Darfur.

1 December: Angry students shouting ‘Bassolé is a foreign agent’ stone mediators during a tour of Darfur.

3 December: The army declares SLA-MM a legitimate military target two weeks after a senior NCP official accuses Minawi of moving to Juba to seek Southern support for a new rebellion. An army spokesman says ‘a large portion of Minawi’s forces [...] are moving towards the South’ with weapons and vehicles. The bank accounts of the TDRA, headed by Minawi, are frozen. One day later, Minawi cadres

are arrested in al Fasher and Nyala, and vehicles seized in Khartoum. Two days later, Minawi is removed from the TDRA by presidential decree and replaced with West Darfur Governor Al-Sharati Gaffar Abdul Hakam widely accused of having mobilized ‘janjaweed’ in 2002–03.

10 December: Government forces attack Khor Abeche, 80 km south of Nyala. Minawi says the DPA is dead.

12 December: In a meeting in London, seven small factions announce another coalition—the Charter of Sudanese Alliance Resistance Forces in Darfur—with JEM. The seven groups are the United Revolutionary Forces Front; the Sudan Liberation Movement faction led by Babiker Abdalla, who died in January 2011 after a long illness; a Libyan-supported LJM splinter led by Magoub Hussein; the United Resistance Front; the mainly Masalit Sudan Liberation Movement splinter led by Khamis Abaker; the Democratic Revolutionary Forces Front; and the Democratic Justice and Equality Movement of Idris Azraq, a splinter of JEM that has accused JEM of tribalism, nepotism, and corruption.

The alliance is seen as a Libyan-supported attempt to counter the LJM’s claim to represent a broad spread of Darfur opinion. With the exception of JEM, it has little military strength. It is not expected to have any political or military impact.

13 December: Dane Smith, a former US deputy chief of mission in Khartoum, is appointed to take the Darfur file for the US administration, working with Gration.

16 December: US National Security Council spokesman Mike Hammer says ‘the United States is deeply concerned about reports that the Sudanese Armed Forces attacked and burned’ Khor Abeche.

24 December: UN agencies say more than 18,000 people have been displaced in the new fighting and request urgent humanitarian assistance. An army spokesman accuses the rebels of having established a new base outside Darfur, in Bahr al Ghazal in South Sudan.

26 December: JEM meets mediators on the sidelines of the talks in Doha, returning to Doha for the first time in seven months.

29 December: Ghazi Atabani says Khartoum is withdrawing its delegation from Doha because ‘negotiating in the conventional manner’ is not helpful. JEM, which has boycotted most of the Doha process, calls the withdrawal ‘a declaration of war’.

30 December: The mediation hands the two parties proposals to end the deadlock, including over the administrative status of Darfur, participation in the institution of the presidency, compensation and justice. The package includes a regional authority and vice-presidency for Darfur. Khartoum rejects the proposals as being inconsistent with the constitution and the framework agreement signed in Doha.

31 December: Ghazi Atabani and his team leave Doha to prepare for a political process inside Darfur.



NOTES

¹ Co-chaired by the African Union (AU) and the UN, the forum brings together Sudan, the Inter-Governmental Authority for Development, the League of Arab States, AU partners, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the European Union, and other relevant bilateral partners to support implementation of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement that ended the North–South war.

² For a description of the Heidelberg Darfur Dialogue, see

<http://www.mpil.de/ww/en/pub/research/details/know_transfer/sudan_peace_project/die_projekte/heidelberg_darfur_dialog.cfm>.

³ See <http://www.mpil.de/shared/data/pdf/hdd_outcome_document.pdf>.