

Box 2 Darfurian armed rebel groups

Rebel groups in the Darfur conflict are in constant flux—and there is often a lack of consensus on the origins, leaders, and even names of particular groups. As of November 2006, the ones listed below had been identified. They are divided into their two parent groups, the Sudan Liberation Movement and the Justice and Equality Movement.

Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) factions and splinter groups

Abdel Shafi faction. Fur-led faction chaired since July 2006 by Ahmad Abdel Shafi Bassey, one of the earliest founders of the rebel movement and its most strategic thinker. The faction rejects the DPA and seeks more political power at the regional level, stronger guarantees for Janjaweed disarmament, and better compensation for victims.

Abdel Wahid faction. Fur-led faction led by former chairman Abdel Wahid al Nur, who was deposed by field commanders in July 2006 in favour of Abdul Shafi, one of his earliest collaborators. Abdul Shafi is endeavouring to mend fences with Abdul Wahid, who retains strong support and name recognition among Darfurians.

Minni Minawi faction. Zaghawa faction led by Minni Minawi, currently part of the Government of National Unity. Desertions among Minawi's commanders have picked up since he signed the DPA; he has reportedly been given an ultimatum to break with the GoS or lose his field support.

SLM-Unity. A North Darfur-based faction previously drawn from the so-called Group of 19, including commanders who cooperated with Abdul Wahid's faction until the final stages of the Abuja peace process when they came to fear (wrongly) that the SLM chairman was going to 'sell out' to the government. SLM-Unity has inflicted serious reverses on the Sudanese army in recent months and attracted commanders from other factions. Despite a broad tribal base and considerable popular support, it has an uneasy relationship with the NRF, the Asmara-based, anti-DPA alliance launched by JEM with support from Chad (see below).

Free Will (I). Composed largely of ethnic Birgid members of the SLM in South Darfur, alienated by the abusive behaviour of Minni Minawi's faction. Its leader, Commander Adam Salih, split from Minawi before the Haskanita conference in November 2005. Fighting between Free Will I and SLM-Minawi in October 2006 took dozens of lives. Free Will I has signed a political and military protocol with the JEM Peace Wing (see below) and supports the DPA.

Free Will (II). Headed by Abdel Rahman Musa, a Tunjur academic who was Abdul Wahid's chief negotiator in Abuja. Abdel Rahman has signed a declaration of commitment to the DPA.

The National Movement for the Elimination of Marginalization. This is not a distinct group but an alias used by the SLM when conducting attacks on economic targets. It was headed by Ali Abdul Rahim, an Arab killed in a car crash in February 2005. Many blame his death on Minawi.

Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) factions and splinter groups

Justice and Equality Movement (JEM). Led by Khalil Ibrahim and former middle-ranking colleagues in the National Islamic Front. Equal parts tribal-Zaghawa/Kobe—and Islamist in outlook, JEM opposes the DPA.

National Movement for Reform and Development (NMRD). The first JEM splinter group formed in April 2004 by JEM's chief of staff, Colonel Jibril Abdul Karim 'Tek', a former member of Chadian President Idriss Deby's presidential guard. It is dominated by the small Kapka clan of the Zaghawa tribe.

The Field Revolutionary Command (FRC). The second JEM splinter was formed early in 2005 by Mohamed Saleh, JEM's chief representative on the Joint Ceasefire Commission in N'Djamena. FRC merged with the NMRD in late 2005.

JEM Peace Wing. A post-Abuja splinter that supports the DPA.

National Redemption Front (NRF). Established as an anti-DPA bloc in June 2006 by Khalil Ibrahim, together with veteran Darfurian opposition leaders and breakaway SLM commanders. Based in Asmara, NRF was created with support from Eritrea and Chad and enjoys a military alliance with SLM-Unity. The NRF has engaged in a series of armed offensive actions in the post-DPA period, defeating Sudanese army forces on a number of occasions. It is now the primary rebel army in Darfur.