

# The Other War: Inter-Arab Conflict in Darfur

*By Julie Flint*

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# Acronyms and abbreviations

<b>CPA</b>	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
<b>DPA</b>	Darfur Peace Agreement
<b>ICC</b>	International Criminal Court
<b>IDP</b>	Internally displaced person
<b>JEM</b>	Justice and Equality Movement
<b>NCP</b>	National Congress Party
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental organization
<b>PCP</b>	Popular Congress Party
<b>PDF</b>	Popular Defence Forces
<b>SAF</b>	Sudan Armed Forces
<b>SDG</b>	Sudanese pound
<b>SLA</b>	Sudan Liberation Army
<b>SPLM/A</b>	Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army
<b>UNAMID</b>	African Union/UN Hybrid operation in Darfur
<b>USD</b>	US dollar

# I. Executive summary

For almost four years, the largest single cause of violent death in Darfur, Sudan's western region, has not been the government–rebel war that erupted in 2003, but fighting among Arab tribes armed by the government to fight the insurgency. Although the inter-Arab conflict claimed about 1,000 lives in the first ten months of 2010, displaced thousands of civilians, and left tens of thousands unprotected, very little is understood about it, or its protagonists, despite a large international presence spearheaded by the 30,000-person African Union/UN Hybrid operation in Darfur (UNAMID). Like the insurgency in its early years, the killing of Arab by Arab is unfolding almost completely unremarked outside Sudan. Unlike the insurgency, the deaths are at least partially recorded, including by UNAMID, and well reported by some Sudanese journalists.<sup>1</sup>

The protagonists, and most of the victims, are Arab pastoralists from tribes that supported the government's counter-insurgency. They were offered loot, land, and sometimes salaries after years of marginalization during which their traditional rights of access to pasture and water were eroded and the most basic services denied them. The fighting is, at one level, a struggle for the spoils of the counter-insurgency—use of, and access across, the land from which government-backed militias, or 'janjaweed', drove farming tribes perceived to be aligned with the armed movements. Unaddressed in any serious, sustainable way, either by international mediators or by federal and state governments and institutions, it is an explosive blend of ethnic, political, and economic grievances, heavily intermixed with organized crime and livestock rustling.

What began as separate conflicts between tribes has evolved into running battles between tribal groupings, reinforced, on both sides, by kinsmen from Chad. With little attention to the concerns or recommendations of the pastoralists, reconciliation agreements overseen by government officials (including security officers involved with the militias) have been short-lived. Tribal leaders on both sides of the divide say Khartoum is encouraging the fighting, if only by failing to intervene vigorously to stop it, in an attempt to weaken the power

# Map 1 Darfur, Sudan



- International boundary
- - - - - State boundary
- ==== Main road
- National capital
- State capital
- Highlands

0 km 100

of the ‘janjaweed’ as relations with them sour. The year 2007 saw a major rebellion against the government by some of the militias; others have struck a variety of deals with the armed movements—including, most recently, and most worryingly for Khartoum, enlistment in the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) led by Khalil Ibrahim.

The implications of the fighting are far-reaching. Arabs, considered together, constitute the largest fighting force in Darfur, with a military capability and spirit that the government itself fears. Their quarrel—and their conviction that the government is attempting to ‘divide and destroy’ them<sup>2</sup>—threatens a realignment of forces in Darfur that could breathe new life into a tired rebellion as it ‘re-strategizes’ for the expected partition of the country in 2011.

This *Working Paper* examines the background to and the development of the fighting between camel-herding Abbala and cattle-herding Baggara,<sup>3</sup> the main players, and some of the possible repercussions.<sup>4</sup> Key findings include the following:

- Inter-Arab fighting has been the single largest cause of violent death in Darfur since the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) of May 2006. The fighting attained new dimensions in 2010 as clashes between pastoralist tribes grew into pitched battles between camel-herding Abbala and cattle-herding Baggara—specifically, sections of the Northern Rizeigat Abbala and a loose grouping of Baggara tribes aligned with the Missiriya. Both sides use government-supplied weapons with impunity. Both say the government is not moving, in any serious way, to separate or restrain them.
- Tensions are so high that relatively minor events can lead to waves of high mortality. Behind the immediate triggers, however, is a complex web of causality including competition over vacant land; imbalances and jealousies arising from government manipulation and militarization; and a rising tide of banditry and common criminality against a backdrop of weak governance and weakening traditional authority.
- Traditional leaders involved in efforts to end the fighting prioritize government action to control arms and ammunition and improve security and governance, as well as poverty-mitigation projects for nomads and freedom of movement along their *marahil* (stock routes). For many Abbala, the conflict

is not only a resource war; it is an identity war, fought to preserve a nomadic culture that conflict and government policies are destroying.

- The marginalization of the Abbala continues, making them vulnerable to mobilization by elements of the National Congress Party (NCP), the dominant party in government.
- Arabs now form a substantial part of JEM's soldiery, strengthening the insurgency and further accentuating Arab militarization and separation from tribal control.
- Arab leaders believe that the agencies that armed their tribes want to see them weakened—including by killing each other—but will not attempt to disarm them while there is a chance of a new north–south war, especially one that may be sparked by disputes in Abyei or along the north–south border.
- Darfur's Arabs believe the NCP has outmanoeuvred the international community tactically and exhausted it diplomatically. They do not believe the government wants peace in Darfur, but rather simmering insecurity that will deny an independent Southern Sudan strategic depth on its northern border.
- Despite lip service to the need to involve Arabs in the peace process for Darfur, they remain on the sidelines, still not seen as strategic partners in the search for peace. Continued failure to engage them in a meaningful way will guarantee increasingly complex conflict.

Many Arab leaders, including tribal leaders who initially supported the counter-insurgency, fear that they are becoming trapped in a vicious circle of militarization and lawlessness. They know that in the long run their survival is linked to their neighbours'. But for the moment, the government is the only party supporting them—albeit, they acknowledge, opportunistically. Without a strategy to break this link, and to engage with these groups to break the cycle, Darfur will become ungovernable, with armed conflict—a hybrid of political and criminal activities, and local and national issues—as its defining feature. 🗨️



## II. Background to the conflict

### The Arabs of Darfur

The conflict in Darfur is the product of a complex set of factors, including disputes over access to and control of natural resources; the inequitable distribution of economic and political power; the absence of strong, just governance; militarization; and the proliferation of small arms. Conflict between Arab groups or groups that identify themselves as Arabs is not new. Rizeigat and Ma'alia fought in south-eastern Darfur in the 1960s over administrative and judicial rights; Rizeigat and Beni Halba clashed over grazing and water for their herds in south-western Darfur in the 1970s. In the mid-1980s, however, a lethal combination of the great drought of 1984–85, spillover of war from Chad, and a new political ideology of Arab supremacism imported from Libya (and encouraged by Khartoum) brought pastoralist and farmer, Arab and non-Arab, into sustained confrontation.

As Libya armed Darfur's Arabs, and non-Arabs including the Fur tribe made contacts with Chad, the government of Prime Minister Sadeq al Mahdi, needing Libyan money, ignored the rising tensions. In the 1987–89 war between Fur and Arabs in and around the central Jebel Marra massif, the Fur heartland, non-Arabs were collectively identified, for the first time, as *zurga* (blacks). By the time non-Arab groups led by the Fur, Zaghawa, and Masalit declared themselves in rebellion against the government in 2003, Darfur's complex identities had been simplified to an 'African' versus 'Arab' dichotomy that itself became a driver of conflict.

Due in large part to the weapons supplied by the Government of Sudan to combat the insurgency, armed groups from Arab communities would, if united, constitute the greatest fighting force in Darfur, with the strongest military capability.<sup>5</sup> Since 2006, the largest single cause of violent death in Darfur has not been 'ongoing genocide'<sup>6</sup> of non-Arabs, but fighting among former government collaborators<sup>7</sup>—the so-called 'janjaweed'. The heaviest, and most recent, fighting has pitted camel-herding Abbala pastoralists from the Northern

Rizeigat group of tribes against cattle-herding Baggara associated with the Missiriya tribe. It has taken place on and around the fringes of Jebel Marra and is underlaid, paradoxically, by some of the same racial stereotypes that fuelled the counter-insurgency.<sup>8</sup>

The focus of the fighting has been South Darfur state, the only one of Darfur's three states where Arabs are in the majority. South Darfur is also the site of the most serious rebellion against the government by some of the Northern Rizeigat paramilitaries it armed in 2003—the followers of Mohamed Hamdan Dogolo, nicknamed 'Hemeti',<sup>9</sup> of the Awlad Mansour branch of the Mahariya section of the Northern Rizeigat, resident in South Darfur since the late 1980s.

UNAMID officials say 80–90 per cent of the violent deaths registered in South Darfur between 2006 and 2008 were occasioned by fighting between Arabs. After a significant drop in violent death across all Darfur in 2008, inter-Arab fighting erupted again on a large scale early in 2010, taking approximately 1,000 lives in the first nine months of the year.<sup>10</sup> Arab informants say the figure is significantly higher, especially among Abbala, who seldom reveal their casualties. Yet the impact on unprotected Arab communities has received little international attention, and almost none among the human rights organizations that, along with the international humanitarian community, broke the silence about the mass killings of 2003–04.<sup>11</sup> Arabs have been severely under-represented at peace talks to resolve the Darfur crisis in Doha and their internecine fighting has not figured on the agenda of the talks. The idea of mediating *between* Arab belligerents has not even appeared on the horizon of the mediation efforts.

For an understanding of the current conflict, Darfur's Arabs can be separated into three main groups, with a caution that no generalization is absolute and the distinction between Abbala and Baggara communities is often blurred—especially in South Darfur, where they can be both herders and farmers (Tubiana, 2009, p. 82):

- The landless Northern Rizeigat Abbala of North Darfur, the backbone of the proxy forces armed by the government. Two decades after suffering catastrophic losses in the drought of the mid-1980s, the Northern Rizeigat are more deprived of services and more militarized than any other sector of Darfur society. The blocking of their *marahil*—by the Zaghawa of North Darfur

even before the insurgency and more recently in parts of West and South Darfur, including by other Arabs—has restricted their pastoralist way of life and forced diversification into ‘maladaptive’ strategies, including militarization, as a means of controlling resources or restricting others’ access to them (Young, 2009).

- Recent migrants to West and South Darfur—particularly the fertile wadis (valleys) west and south of Jebel Marra. Many of these migrants, most of them

### Box 1 **Land tenure in Darfur**

The system of land tenure in Darfur—or Dar Fur, as it was then—dates back to the Fur sultanate (c. 1650–1916), when the Fur sultan granted *hawakiir* (landholdings, plural of *hakura*) to both tribal groups and individuals. The British, who sought to rule Darfur through a ‘Native Administration’ of tribal leaders, introduced a system of tribal *dars* that gave *nazirs* (paramount chiefs) clearly demarcated authority over ethnic groups and jurisdiction over civil affairs within their territory.<sup>12</sup> The chiefs’ most important tasks were the allocation of land and the settlement of civil disputes.

The British assigned almost all the larger sedentarized groups in the region a *dar*, sometimes moving entire communities so as to create ethnically contiguous blocks. Most pastoralists in Darfur were awarded a combination of a *dar* and access to pasture on a pre-ordained annual calendar.<sup>13</sup> However, some nomadic groups in northern Darfur, including the Northern Rizeigat, were not given land,<sup>14</sup> fuelling a cycle of tribal conflicts and economic grievances that culminated half a century later with the emergence of the government-supported militias now known as ‘janjaweed’. Without land of their own, the Northern Rizeigat relied on customary rights to graze and water their animals in areas dominated by farmers. Although it was a flexible system that balanced the interests of landholders and land users, the reliance on customary rights within the *hawakiir* and *dars* of others became increasingly problematic as desertification spread southwards, farms expanded, and a new current of Arab supremacism turned neighbours into enemies. In the aftermath of the great drought and famine of 1984–85, sedentary farming groups tried to exclude nomads from their land, refusing traditional hospitality for fear that the migrants might change the ethnic balance of their areas and affect the customary rights of the host groups.

Land is not only an economic resource. Crucially, it has been a mark of political power, especially for marginalized Abbala. Tribes that are in control of a *dar* have had a distinct political advantage: as the majority group, they have dominated political representation and, by implication, control over and access to resources. The denial of land rights deprived Darfur’s Abbala of political power and, by extension, access to broader rights and services (Young, 2009, pp. 49–50). Their current demands, which are only just beginning to be acknowledged internationally, are articulated in terms of equity and access to basic services—especially education.

Baggara, were driven out of neighbouring Chad by civil war and drought beginning in the 1970s; others were encouraged to boost the numbers and political influence of their tribes in Darfur.<sup>15</sup> These small groups have no land but through customary practices have had access to land and water along their *marahil* and in their *damrat* (nomadic and semi-nomadic settlements, plural of *damra*) (see Box 1). Unsure of their identity in Darfur, and without the administrative and political power that comes with land, the acquisition of land titles is a priority.

- The cattle-herding Baggara of South Darfur—Beni Halba, Habbaniya, Rizeigat, and Ta'aisha—who have their own tribal land, or *dars*, supported by strong traditional leaderships, or Native Administrations. With the exception of small political elites who joined the government, the large Baggara tribes generally oppose government policies towards Darfur—including the use of tribes as military proxies.

## Conflict among the pastoralists

The areas where Arabs are now fighting each other have witnessed three waves of migration and conflict that have contributed to the steady breakdown of the formerly separate habitats of Abbala and Baggara. Each wave has been less 'tribal', and more destructive, than the last.

The Sahelian droughts of 1970–84 and the damage to the ecology of the northern deserts forced a change in the nomadism of the Abbala of Darfur, who by the 1980s were directing their annual migrations towards the Baggara homelands in South Darfur. The Abbala believed that the Baggara, being Arabs and pastoralists themselves, would accommodate them and their herds hospitably. But the Baggara were also under pressure—from sedentary tribes pushed south by drought and acquiring large areas, for both subsistence and commercial farming, and from wealthy Baggara who were expanding into farming. The changes blocked the *marahil* of the Baggara and deprived them of pastures—including around the veterinary centres where they concentrated their herds.<sup>16</sup> They began the practice of enclosing pastureland with thorn fences in order to prevent their camel-herding cousins from grazing there.

In 1974, more than 200 people died when Mahariya clashed with Beni Halba in Dar Beni Halba. The Abbala used 'modern' weapons including AK-47s; the Beni Halba were armed only with 'traditional' weapons—swords, spears, and occasional old guns—and turned the tide of battle only when they targeted Abbala camels.<sup>17</sup> At a reconciliation conference held in December 1976, the Baggara agreed on *diyya* (blood money) but demanded that the grazing behaviour of the Abbala be controlled and regulated. A decade later, in 1986, the Habbaniya registered a formal protest in Khartoum against the uncontrolled cutting of trees and killing of wildlife by Mahariya. The Mahariya were barred from Dar Habbaniya after the *nazir*, Salah Ali al Ghali, said they would be shot on entering the *dar* and the government held responsible.

Around the same time, Arab pastoralists driven out of Chad by drought, insecurity, and political instability were moving into West and South Darfur. By the time the movements peaked at the apex of the drought in the mid-1980s, the emergence of the Arab supremacist Arab Alliance was polarizing ethnic identities and armed Arabs were burning non-Arab villages (Flint and de Waal, 2008, pp. 49–52). Migrants from Chad with no history of coexistence with Darfur's non-Arab groups are remembered as being the most violent of all the armed groups: in South Darfur, Missiriya from Chad burned ten villages west of Kass in a single night in October 1987. North-west of Kass, Beni Hussein, Missiriya, and Salamat from Chad burned more. New villages sprang up and were inhabited by migrants—among them N'Djamena, south-west of Kass.<sup>18</sup>

By the mid-1990s, the Abbala were no longer looking only for water and grazing rights. As a result of pressures on livelihoods, particularly conflict and the blocking of seasonal migration, some were contemplating settlement, often believing that only settlement would bring development, services, and education for their children. Their political leaders, too weak a force to register their needs, were realizing that land could bring political power. As the government of President Bashir recruited Arabs to the paramilitary 'Peace Brigades' in response to an invasion of Darfur from Southern Sudan in December 1991, it became clear that political and military support could be bartered for land. (Fur leaders of the period claim that the fertile lands west of Jebel Marra were promised to the Mahamid section of the Northern Rizeigat, led by Musa Hilal.<sup>19</sup>) South-west of Jebel Marra, Beni Hussein from North Darfur and Salamat from

## Box 2 **Abbala participation in the fighting**

The Rizeigat are the largest and most powerful of the Arab tribes of Darfur, composed of two groups—the predominantly camel-herding Northern Rizeigat, based mainly in North Darfur state but with branches in West and South Darfur, and the mainly cattle-herding Southern Rizeigat, most of whom live in south-east Darfur under the authority of their *nazir*, Saeed Mahmoud Ibrahim Musa Madibo. The Southern Rizeigat did not respond to the government’s mobilization call to fight the insurgency in 2003.

Three branches of the Rizeigat tribe—the Mahamid, Mahariya, and Nuwaiba—are common to both groups and reportedly fought together against the Baggara. Table 1 lists the Northern Rizeigat most involved in the fighting.

Table 1 **Abbala most involved in the fighting**<sup>20</sup>

Section	Sub-section	Prominent figures	Key locations
Mahamid	Um Jalul	<i>Sheikh</i> <sup>21</sup> Musa Hilal, paramount chief of the Mahamid of North Darfur since 1984 and the pre-eminent leader of the Northern Rizeigat paramilitaries, awarded the rank of general in the regular army. Elected a member of the National Assembly in Khartoum in April 2010	Headquarters in Misteriha near Kabkabiya  In the 1990s, the NCP gave the Um Jalul an administrative locality in the Ban Jadeed area east of Kass, with authority over Baggara, including Missiriya and Saada
	Awlad Rashid	Border Guard commander Ishaq Qarsha Zaffa	Mainly North Darfur, fully nomadic
	Awlad Zeid	Al Obeid Ahmad, Border Guard commander in West Darfur  Mustafa Jmeil, Border Guard commander in Misteriha	West Darfur, where they are the largest Mahamid section
Nuwaiba		Abdalla Masar, adviser to President Omar al Bashir  <i>Omda</i> Saif Ma’adi, strongly identified with Musa Hilal  Ali Andalla and Hussein Manzoul, Border Guard commanders in West and South Darfur	Mainly West Darfur

Mahariya	Awlad Mansour	Mohamed Hamdan Dogolo ('Hemeti'), Border Guard 'coordinator' between government and tribes in South Darfur <sup>22</sup>  Ali Yaacoub, Border Guard commander	Um al Qora, said to be a headquarters for some 700 Awlad Mansour paramilitaries with light and heavy weapons and 100 Land Cruisers
Eregat/Irayqat		Nazir Hamad Abdalla Jibril  Saeed Sarkoul, Border Guard commander in Misteriha  Musa Iskot, Border Guard commander	Tribal administration in Masri in North Darfur, but more numerous in West Darfur
Awlad Gayed		Abdul Hamid Musa Kasha, governor of South Darfur since April 2010	Initially from North Darfur, but migrated south
Mahadi (Abbala, but not Rizeigat)		Mohamed Zakaria Saeed and Hamed Basher, Border Guard commanders	The Kutum and Dawa areas, north-east of Kabkabiya
Terjem Rakhasa (not Rizeigat)			The product of marriages between Terjem and Abbala, this group considered themselves Terjem until the 2007 war, when they were accused of acting as spies for the Rizeigat and left the Terjem area around Wadi Bulbul

Chad occupied parts of Wadi Azum. Missiriya and Salamat Baggara from Chad, along with Awlad Rashid, Mahadi, and Um Jalul from North Darfur, moved into the Abata area north of Zalingei, occupying the best farming areas near the main transport routes.

The third wave came as word of the rebellion being organized in Darfur spread, and Khartoum mobilized proxies.<sup>23</sup> In West Darfur, Rizeigat Abbala burned and settled villages from Kabkabiya to Guldo. Farther south, east of Zalingei, Missiriya and Salamat from Chad occupied villages that had been

burned in the 1980s but that the Fur had resettled. They claimed the government told them to 'clear the Fur and take the villages'.<sup>24</sup> Lacking access to the northern parts of their *marahil*, which were cut off by the armed movements, Abbala and their camels concentrated south of Jebel Marra, especially in the areas around Zalingei in West Darfur and Nyala in South Darfur. Box 2 reviews Abbala participation in inter-Arab conflict. 📄



### III. 'A coalition of tribes against the Rizeigat'<sup>25</sup>

#### Only one enemy

On 18 October 2007, representatives of 33 small Baggara groups living around Jebel Marra met in the village of Limo, north of Kass, at the invitation of the Hotiya tribe.<sup>26</sup> The Hotiya, a small tribe originally from Chad, had clashed repeatedly with Rizeigat Abbala over water and pastureland from which Fur farmers they associated with the insurgents of the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) had been driven. With the new availability of land, the Hotiya had diversified from cattle into crops, expanded the size of their farms, and then, according to the Rizeigat, had denied them access to grazing land and water sources (Satti, 2009).

While they may not have had a *hakura* or a *dar*, some of those present in Limo had well-established traditional rights to land. The majority did not.<sup>27</sup>

Two immensely destructive mini-wars between Baggara and Rizeigat Abbala south of Jebel Marra triggered the Limo meeting. The first was a bloody confrontation between the Hotiya and the Nuwaiba branch of the Rizeigat in the Zalingei area; the second was a six-month battle in Wadi Bulbul between the Terjem, semi-nomadic pastoralists and farmers, and Rizeigat Abbala led by Hemeti. The first war left an estimated 250 people dead; the second, twice that number.<sup>28</sup> Seeing the destruction and casualties suffered first by the Hotiya and then the Terjem, the small Baggara groups of South Darfur feared they would be picked off one by one unless they united.<sup>29</sup>

According to an account of the Limo meeting sent to the Rizeigat by one participant, the Baggara agreed that 'our only enemy is the Rizeigat tribe'. A representative of the Borgo tribe, a section of the non-Arab Maba people of eastern Chad, said opposition to the Rizeigat would continue 'until Judgement Day'. The representative of the Taalba tribe, a close ally of the Hotiya and deputy leader of the administration of Kass, the major financial and urban centre for these small Baggara groups, asked each tribe to contribute 50 men to a military camp to be established between the villages of Korolay, between

Kass and Zalingei, and Jabra, on the fringes of Jebel Marra. He reportedly said the Taalba were 'prepared for war with all our might'.<sup>30</sup>

The Baggara agreed to put themselves under the umbrella of the Missiriya.<sup>31</sup> More numerous in Kordofan than Darfur, the Missiriya were armed by Military Intelligence in the 1980s to fight the Sudan People's Liberation Army. When the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) ended the North–South war in 2005,<sup>32</sup> the Missiriya were neither disarmed nor helped to reintegrate into civilian life; few were compensated for the years they fought in Southern Sudan. Mostly illiterate and unemployed, many resorted to rent-seeking behaviour, including occupying by force of arms land belonging to non-Arab groups.

Only two of the groups present in Limo refused to join the coalition: the Mahadi, pastoralists of Chadian origin who have close relations with some Northern Rizeigat,<sup>33</sup> and the Terjem, who had not received any support from their Baggara neighbours in their conflict with Hemeti's Border Guards.

### 'The land is there, and it's empty'<sup>34</sup>

The conflict that erupted in October 2005 between Nuwaiba and Hotiya was punishing. It highlighted both the destructive power of the government weapons being employed and the competition for the land from which the Fur, the original owners of the land, had been driven.<sup>35</sup> Its immediate trigger was the rape of a Nuwaiba girl in Serif Omra. By the time a reconciliation agreement was signed in March 2006, an estimated 250 Hotiya were dead, twice that number wounded, and thousands displaced (Satti, 2009, p. 268).<sup>36</sup>

With the authority of traditional leaders undermined by a new culture of aggression, and the line between traditional and military leadership blurred, customary conflict resolution failed. In talks mediated by Musa Hilal, paramount chief of the North Darfur Mahamid, the Hotiya paid the amount demanded of them by the tribes' law of conflict resolution not once, but three times (Satti, 2009, pp. 267–68). Eventually insults were exchanged and the reconciliation collapsed. Although accounts of the rupture differ, most sources say the war was reignited after a seven-man Nuwaiba delegation went to the Hotiya area to collect the agreed payment, only to learn that half was missing. The Nuwaiba reportedly insulted the Hotiya, telling them: 'We too can rape!

So pay!’ The Hotiya responded by killing all seven Nuwaiba, prompting a massive counter-attack by Northern Rizeigat.<sup>37</sup>

Despite the gravity of the fighting, it received almost no international attention as the negotiations that led to the DPA neared their conclusion in Abuja, Nigeria, in May 2006.<sup>38</sup>

The second Abbala–Baggara war erupted 18 months later, in February 2007, when Rizeigat attacked the Terjem in Wadi Bulbul, a fertile valley south of Jebel Marra from which the Fur had been driven in 2004. Although present in the Wadi Bulbul area for many decades, and given a chiefdom in the 1990s,<sup>39</sup> the Terjem had no *dar*. In the hopes of acquiring land, which they knew had already been promised to the Abbala, they were the first Baggara tribe to join the counter-insurgency and accept arms from the government.<sup>40</sup> But they had local rivals in the search for land: Hemeti’s Awlad Mansour, who had left North Darfur at the end of the 1980s and were attempting to carve out a domain of their own in South Darfur (Flint, 2009, pp. 35–39).

The trigger for the Rizeigat–Terjem conflict has variously been ascribed to the Terjem’s failure to pay *diya* owed since 2005<sup>41</sup> and to the murder in January 2007 of seven Abbala in a village of the Awlad Gayed in the Wadi Bulbul area.<sup>42</sup> After the killings, both Abbala and Terjem summoned fellow tribesmen from Chad. Hemeti reportedly mobilized almost 3,000 Abbala—including Mahamid from North and West Darfur equipped with heavy machine guns, rocket-propelled grenades, and Land Cruisers registered to the Border Intelligence Brigade, the branch of the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) into which Abbala fighters were incorporated in response to demands that government-backed militias be dismantled.

The Abbala inflicted heavy losses on the Terjem. In four major attacks in the first three months of 2007, thousands of heads of cattle were looted and more than 170 people killed. More than 50,000 Terjem were displaced from 52 villages, four of which were burned to the ground.<sup>43</sup> In July 2007, the Terjem faced a new wave of attacks. In the bloodiest of them, on 30 July, at least 172 people were killed and buried in one place in Bulbul Abu Jazu, a truck station on the Nyala–Kass road. More cattle were looted and the harvest lost.<sup>44</sup> On 31 July, in the last major battle of the war, more than 60 Terjem died when Border Guards opened fire on a funeral with rocket-propelled grenades and belt-fed machine guns (Gettleman, 2007).

### Box 3 **Baggara participation in the fighting**

On the Baggara side, the 2010 fighting involved a loose confederation of tribes whose single most powerful component was the Missiriya (see Table 2). Some of these tribes—including the Hotiya, Saada, and Taalba—had been chased out of the area during the 1987–89 Fur–Arab war but had returned and now surrounded Jebel Marra. Other Baggara, including the Terjem, participated in the fighting as individuals, but not as tribes.<sup>45</sup>

Table 2 **Baggara tribes prominent in the conflict with Abbala**

Section	Sub-section	Prominent figures	Location
Missiriya	Kass	Deputy <i>Nazir</i> Haroun Imam, a prime mover of opposition to Abbala in South Darfur	Mainly west and south of Kass
	Jebel	Although Haroun Imam is a resident of Kass, his roots are among the Missiriya of Jebel Mun, a stronghold of JEM insurgents until a government offensive drove them south in April 2010	Jebel Mun in West Darfur
	Nitega	<i>Nazir</i> Tijani Abdel Gadir, reportedly seeking to expand his nazirate west from Nitega through Kass	Nitega
Saada		<i>Omdas</i> including Mohamed Harin, said by Fur elders to have distributed government weapons to the tribe during the counter-insurgency	Around Gardud, with some groups in Kass locality
Taalba		<i>Omda</i> Mohamed Abu Shamaa Shatta, deputy head of the Kass administration	Kirwe, north-west of Kass
Hotiya		<i>Omda</i> Suliman Bakhit	Limo, north of Kass, and Um Liona, east of Kass, up to the lowlands of Jebel Marra

The coalition formed in Limo was not immediately put to the test. The threat of further confrontation with the Abbala receded as Hemeti rebelled against the government and threatened to storm Nyala, the capital of South Darfur state, unless Khartoum paid back salaries owed to his men. For the next several months, Hemeti's supply line from SAF was cut and his energies were focused on attempting to build an alliance with the SLA in Jebel Marra. The Baggara, for their part, learned that information on their preparations for war had been passed to Abbala leaders by two of those present at the meeting. Box 3 summarizes the roles of the main Baggara sections and sub-sections in the conflict, and their respective leaders. 📄

## IV. The Missiriya–Rizeigat war

### Asymmetric warfare

In February 2010, a single act of banditry in South Darfur set in motion a chain of events that led to the widest and bloodiest fighting between Abbala and Baggara witnessed in Darfur. By the time of the first, short-lived ‘reconciliation agreement’ four months later, more than 700 people were believed dead across two states.<sup>46</sup> The contrast between the enormity of the conflict and the commonplace nature of the incident that sparked it—a vehicle theft resulting in death—highlighted the high level of tension between the communities.

When a group of bandits ambushed a vehicle belonging to the Water, Environment and Sanitation Department of the local government between Kass and Zalingei on 18 February,<sup>47</sup> tensions between Missiriya and Rizeigat were already running high as a result of clashes nine months earlier that had left more than 300 people dead in the Meiram area of South Kordofan, across Darfur’s eastern border.<sup>48</sup> In attempting to seize the vehicle, the bandits shot dead one of its occupants, who happened to be Missiriya, before escaping to a Nuwaiba settlement in the Khor Ramla area. The Missiriya mobilized a large force and rode on Khor Ramla, where the Nuwaiba agreed to tribal mediation by a committee of tribes considered neutral in the conflict, including Beni Halba and Salamat.<sup>49</sup>

At a *judiya*<sup>50</sup> mediation in Khor Ramla on 26 February, the Nuwaiba agreed to pay *diya* of 100 cows and a total cash payment of SDG 80,000 (USD 33,900).<sup>51</sup> The Missiriya refused to accept staggered payment and said they would remain mobilized until the compensation was paid in full.<sup>52</sup> The Rizeigat delivered 71 cows and part of the payment, promising the remainder by the evening of 3 March. The Missiriya reportedly refused to compromise. Rizeigat sources say the Missiriya insulted them, calling them ‘sons of prostitutes’, and demanded an additional payment of SDG 2.5 million (USD 1,000) for each hour of delay. The Missiriya charge that the Rizeigat were merely playing for time—and once they had assembled Land Cruisers packed with Border Guards, and

armed with anti-aircraft guns, they attacked the Missiriya as they left the meeting place to water their horses.

Six members of the *judiya* were killed, by admission of the Rizeigat, including a Missiriya *omda*, Abdalla al Sanussi al Habo. The Missiriya say 11 of their tribe died in the chaos that ensued. Both sides agree that it quickly became a war of tribal coalitions. The Missiriya rallied their kinsmen from Chad and the small Baggara tribes around Jebel Marra and began attacking the camps of 'the Arabs'—the Abbala. The Abbala, for their part, 'called relatives from different areas'—including Beni Hussein from Serif Omra in West Darfur and Mahadi from the Kutum area of North Darfur—after 19 Um Jalul, including children, were killed in an attack on a settlement near Zalingei.<sup>53</sup> The commissioner of Kass locality, Ali Mahmoud al Tayyib, said the Abbala came with Land Cruisers, camels, and horses and attacked on three axes—including Limo.<sup>54</sup> Missiriya elders identified four different Northern Rizeigat sections fighting alongside the Nuwaiba—Awlad Rashid, Eregat, Mahariya, and Um Jalul, all led by Border Guard officers.<sup>55</sup>

War exploded, spreading first to areas north and east of Kass, where Missiriya had settled on Fur land, and later to Wadi Saleh in West Darfur.<sup>56</sup> The Rizeigat reportedly mobilized *hakamas*, female singers who praise courageous fighters and heap scorn on those found wanting. In one battle, the Missiriya say they killed and mutilated, by cutting off her head and hands, a *hakama* who had been urging the Rizeigat to fight 'like lions'.<sup>57</sup>

The reconciliation agreement finally reached in June 2010 set *diya* for 423 Missiriya killed at SDG 6,345,000 (USD 2.7 million) and for 272 Rizeigat at SDG 4,080,000 (USD 1.7 million). Total costs awarded to the Missiriya amounted to SDG 9,164,035 (USD 3.9 million); the Rizeigat received SDG 7,189,431 (USD 3 million). The agreement stressed the role of paramilitary forces in the conflict and the importance of 'controlling and monitoring them'; it demanded that all fighters surrender their weapons and Thuraya satellite telephones. An accompanying set of recommendations made clear the anxiety, on both sides, over the decline of traditional customs and conflict resolution mechanisms, and the impact of the war, alcohol, and drugs on the social and moral fabric of Arab communities. They stressed the importance of taking measures to stop trafficking in arms and ammunition, to control unlicensed weapons, and to eliminate all weapons from urban areas (see Box 4).

With senior government and military figures in attendance, including a representative of the National Intelligence and Security Services, the question of exactly how that would be managed was not addressed.

**Box 4 The recommendations of the Rizeigat–Missiriya reconciliation conference of 28 June 2010**

The 24 recommendations approved by Rizeigat and Missiriya, in the presence of senior military and security officers, stopped short of echoing popular demands for the disarmament of paramilitary forces such as the Border Guards. With this exception—an illustration of the limitations of any peacemaking effort under NCP supervision—they comprised an agenda for peace-building and recovery drawn up from the heart of the affected communities. They made clear the overwhelming concern of Arabs not only over the proliferation of small arms and soaring criminality, but over the government’s failure to provide security for its citizens, its disregard for the nomadic communities whose sons it mobilized in 2003, and the weakness of Native Administrations co-opted and politicized by the NCP. The recommendations included:

On the control of irregular forces:

- Establish special courts to try those carrying unlicensed arms and ammunition.
- Ban weapons in markets, towns, and public places.
- Establish protocols with neighbouring countries to track criminals and control the movement of ‘foreigners’.
- Enforce controls over the vehicles used by Border Guards, including by implementing decrees already issued by the minister of defence.
- Remove irregular checkpoints and replace them with official forces.

On strengthening customary control:

- Organize an all-tribes conference to address the issue of armed robbery.
- Hold accountable Native Administrations that give asylum to bandits and criminals.
- Preserve traditions and customs concerning *diya*.
- Form joint committees of imams, preachers, youths, and women to advocate a culture of peace and peaceful social coexistence.
- Speed up the establishment of Native Administration courts to strengthen justice at the grassroots.
- Hold annual Native Administration conferences to exchange ideas and points of view.

On easing pressures on nomadic and semi-nomadic groups:

- Organize the movement of herding groups in the administrations of other tribes.
- Give more consideration to developmental schemes and poverty mitigation projects, particularly regarding the development and settlement of nomads.



## Arming the tribes

Since the insurgency erupted in 2003, old quarrels between Abbala and Baggara over pastures and resources have been exacerbated by Khartoum's dissimilar treatment of its Arab proxies and the emergence of what the Missiriya have called 'asymmetric warfare'.<sup>58</sup> Abbala have generally been incorporated into the Border Intelligence Brigade, or Border Guards, and Baggara into the Central Reserve Police. Both groups have received armaments, including heavy machine guns, but the Border Guards, who come under the army rather than the police, have received more and heavier weapons, as well as 4 x 4 Toyota trucks. The disparity has created jealousies between the two groups and exacerbated tensions at a time when many Abbala feel that new Missiriya militancy threatens their already restricted mobility along their *marahil*.<sup>59</sup>

The militancy in the Kass area has been spearheaded by the deputy *nazir* of the Darfur Missiriya, Haroun Imam, who has been promoting the Missiriya as the most important Arab group in Darfur, more numerous even than the Rizeigat. Imam played a role in mobilizing the Baggara against the Fur at the start of the insurgency; since then, he has been attempting to unite the small Baggara tribes south of Jebel Marra behind the Missiriya, to form a solid block against the Abbala (Tubiana, 2009).<sup>60</sup> UNAMID officials say Imam appears to have had the backing of the *nazir* of the Darfur Missiriya, Tijani Abdel Gadir, from his base in Nitega, 130 km to the east. They believe that Tijani is seeking to expand his nazirate outside Nitega, westwards through Kass.<sup>61</sup>

Abbala fear that the Missiriya will, if given the chance, occupy the highly coveted land around Dogodussa, Garsila, Kass, Kailek, and Zalingei,<sup>62</sup> cutting their *marahil* and denying them any chance of settlement in that area.<sup>63</sup> They felt these fears were confirmed when Missiriya fighters blocked their *marahil* in a second round of fighting in August 2010.<sup>64</sup>

Although Abbala leaders deny receiving new supplies from the government, eyewitnesses to the initial fighting around Khor Ramla report having seen helicopters carrying ammunition to Hemeti's men in Khor Ramla and north of Kass. Unconfirmed reports say the Missiriya were supported by an Arab break-away faction of the Union of the Forces for Change and Democracy, a Chadian armed opposition group led by Abdul Wahid Makaye, himself Missiriya.<sup>65</sup> Under an agreement with Chad late in 2009 that ended powerful Chadian support for

JEM, President Bashir agreed to expel from Darfur all armed groups committed to the overthrow of President Idriss Déby.

Usually reliable Abbala sources in Nyala say that ammunition, fuel, and money were supplied by elements within the military and security services—not only to drive the Chadian insurgents from the area, but also to ‘divide and destroy’ Arabs.<sup>66</sup> The claims cannot be confirmed. But what is beyond question is that the Border Guards use their government assets without checks or controls and are heavily armed, with huge hidden stocks. Elders from the Saada tribe, who accuse Hemeti’s Awlad Mansour of killing and wounding almost 100 Saada in an attack on a single village, Ban Jadeed, on 20 April 2010, say Hemeti has 1,500 men in three military camps ‘with full military equipment’, including anti-aircraft guns, Katyusha rocket launchers, rocket-propelled grenades, B-10 recoilless rifles, and more than 150 Land Cruisers.<sup>67</sup> They allege that the Border Guards were resupplied during the fighting by two helicopters that lowered ammunition in nets (Shura Council of the Saada, 2010).

UNAMID officials believe that government backing for the Abbala—whether through active support or the turning of a blind eye—reflects concern over the possible emergence of a Baggara–SLA alliance in and around Jebel Marra. In a sustained campaign in the national media during the fighting, Abbala spokesmen consistently depicted the Baggara as SLA collaborators.<sup>68</sup> During intra-SLA fighting in Jebel Marra in early 2010, commanders loyal to SLA Chairman Abdul Wahid Mohamed al Nur forged an alliance with Abbala militias; their opponents reportedly shared arms and ammunition with Baggara tribes, including the Saada and Taalba.

Adding to government anxiety over a realignment of forces in the historic pre-referendum period, the Habbaniya and Southern Rizeigat, big Baggara tribes that have a common border with Southern Sudan, have been attempting to strengthen cross-border relations with the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) for fear that Khartoum will attempt to destabilize an independent South through their territory—even in the event of consensual partition. Habbaniya elders say that *Nazir* Salah Ali al Ghali received a letter of strong rebuke from Khartoum after he contacted the SPLM/A to propose a conference in Raja, in Bahr al Ghazal state, which borders South Darfur. The deputy *nazir* of the Rizeigat, Mahmoud Musa Madibo, was reportedly

convinced to end a prolonged visit to the Southern capital, Juba, with the offer of incentives, including vehicles.<sup>69</sup>

On the Baggara side of the divide, the Missiriya retain strong links with the Popular Defence Forces (PDF), which are still supplied by the SAF leadership in Khartoum. Documents obtained and authenticated by the Small Arms Survey reveal that on 31 January 2009, for example, the PDF accepted a delivery of 100,000 AK-47s, 50,000 G-3 rifles, and 30,000 heavy machine guns. The weapons had been requested three days earlier, 'to prepare the fighters' because of an 'urgent need for weapons taking into consideration the current situation in Darfur', a possible reference to fighting with Zaghawa insurgents in South Darfur.<sup>70</sup>

Northern Rizeigat paramilitary leaders claim that the Baggara around Jebel Marra also have links to the Popular Congress Party (PCP) of Hassan Turabi, defeated by President Bashir's wing of Sudan's Islamist movement in a power struggle in 1999, and to JEM, many of whose leaders cut their political teeth in the PCP and still retain links to Islamist personalities close to Turabi. They accuse the PCP of aiding, including with arms channelled through JEM, the small Baggara tribes around Jebel Marra.

Although there is no hard evidence to support these assertions, independent observers say that PCP support among Baggara around Jebel Marra is not insignificant—including, according to some sources, from Haroun Imam himself—not least because of the NCP's patronage of the bigger and more powerful tribes.<sup>71</sup> They note, too, that the first surge of Abbala-Baggara fighting coincided with competition between Musa Kasha and the PCP candidate, al Haj Adam Yusuf, a Baggara from the Beni Halba tribe, for the governorship of South Darfur. After losing to Musa Kasha, Adam Yusuf accused the government of fraud and said the PCP would not accept the election results. He warned that 'the security situation in Darfur might be aggravated in the near future'.<sup>72</sup>

Since losing its Chadian support, JEM has been actively recruiting Arabs, both in Darfur and among Missiriya in Kordofan. A South Darfur Baggara, Ali al Wafi Bashar, is the movement's military spokesman.<sup>73</sup> At the time of the Missiriya-Rizeigat fighting, JEM was on the run from a government offensive against its main base in Jebel Mun in West Darfur. Scattering its commanders and forces across South Darfur, it needed freedom of movement across territory controlled by Arab militias.

Arabs who have liaised with the armed movements in South Darfur say there is a precedent for JEM support to the Baggara.<sup>74</sup> In 2007, at a time when it was seeking to establish a strong foothold in South Darfur, JEM supported the Terjem in their war with the Abbala (*Al Hayat*, 2007). 📄

## V. Conclusion

On 16 September 2010, 38 Baggara tribes in Kass signed, under oath, a reconciliation agreement with the Rizeigat.<sup>75</sup> The Missiriya and Saada refused to sign and further heavy fighting is expected in the coming months despite the arrest of Haroun Imam, who stands accused of obstructing the peace by rejecting the Kass agreement of 16 September. Highlighting the inadequacy of state-wide agreements between tribes that are not constrained by state borders, Imam argued that he did not need to approve the agreement in Kass (in South Darfur) since he had already endorsed its predecessor in Zalingei (in West Darfur).<sup>76</sup>

The Abbala–Baggara conflict has highlighted the divide within Arab communities between elders who fear the consequences of continued militarization and a younger generation characterized by the fluidity of its allegiances, with individuals frequently changing allegiances and fighting on different sides for cash rather than out of conviction. While militia leaders are able to raise huge armies in a relatively short time, traditional leaders who until recently prioritized the regularization of the ‘janjaweed’, demanding their full incorporation into SAF, now say their main concerns are development and services. They are bitterly critical of the government, charging that it did nothing to stop the fighting when it first erupted and subsequently failed to act vigorously to halt it.<sup>77</sup> Northern Rizeigat leaders say that although Defence Minister Abdel Rahim Hussein assured them the government would send troops to separate the belligerents, the troops were slow in coming, insufficient in number and, once in place, ‘did nothing’. When challenged, they said they were inadequately armed.<sup>78</sup> The Saada, for their part, say that although they alerted the security authorities, army command, and police to the imminence of a ‘major’ attack on Ban Jadeed, and asked for the dispatch of troops ‘as soon as possible to secure the region’, troops were not sent. A full four days after the attack, a fact-finding committee that visited the area found heavily armed Abbala still ‘roaming freely’ (Shura Council of the Saada, 2010).<sup>79</sup>

The general perception of Arabs involved in the conflict, whatever their allegiance, is that 'the government sees but does nothing. It does not stop the Border Guards using army trucks without permission. It arms both sides and moves when it is too late.'<sup>80</sup> A senior figure in the Council for the Development of Nomads in Khartoum challenged a senior NCP official, Ghazi Salahuddin, at the peace talks in Doha, telling him: 'You had so many means to stop the fighting in its early stages. You want to weaken the Arabs!'<sup>81</sup>

Although the fighting is inflicting extreme suffering on already neglected communities, it has failed to elicit more than a minimal reaction from international organizations that have stripped back their commentary and reporting about humanitarian needs and protection in the wake of the expulsions of 13 international NGOs in March 2009.<sup>82</sup> As anger builds among young men offered little alternative to arms, shifting allegiances, determined by money, threaten an extension of a conflict that has resisted six years of international effort to find a negotiated settlement. Darfur's Arabs are already fighting on two fronts—against each other, and on both sides of the government–rebel war. Without strong leadership to present a united front to a government that exploits them and international players who scarcely notice them, except as 'janjaweed', many fear they risk falling into the trap of a third front—as a proxy force, yet again, to support what many believe will be an attempt by government hardliners to prevent nation-building in Southern Sudan if Southerners vote for separation in January 2011.

In the eighth year of the insurgency, Darfur's Arab pastoralists have multiple fault lines. The Rizeigat–Missiriya divide is only the most obvious. The organizations that represent pastoralists in Khartoum, most importantly the Council for the Development of Nomads, have lost the lustre they once had as the only organizations representing nomads and are perceived by some as vehicles, above all, for the tribes that supported the counter-insurgency—'the agents of the Arabs in the government who took the Arabs to war'. Prominent Northern Rizeigat figures who supported the counter-insurgency in 2003 are themselves divided, with Musa Hilal now accused by many, even among the Um Jalul, of 'not being concerned with the well-being of his people'. Vehicles and salaries are not enough, they argue. Without education and services, Arab youths will continue 'to stand in the street and loot and kill'.<sup>83</sup>

In 2007, the government was threatened with an Arab rebellion in Darfur. It contained it, with concessions rather than controls. The inter-Arab fighting in Darfur in 2010 is not an insurgency against the government; it is the result of the breakdown of governance, magnified by the highly competitive, and increasingly violent, play between different groups seeking land, access to land, and the basic services that are perceived to flow from land. It is striking how every single trigger for the violence seen in recent years has led to the filing of a police complaint, often followed by an appeal to state or even central authorities. Responses have either been missing, or wholly inadequate. Meanwhile, the Arabs remain at the far edge of the international radar screen, deprived of attention, humanitarian relief, and even basic contact with the international NGOs that are still in Darfur.

As long as the Arabs who fought alongside the government and are now fighting each other remain without exit strategies of any sort, those who do not want peace in Darfur will continue to be in a position to exert influence over them. Arab leaders say they are fighting for survival today: the government is their only supporter and it listens only to the powerful. Address their predicament—by giving Arab youths an alternative to fighting others' battles, with tangible development and investment in livelihoods, and with education and employment opportunities—and the problem of Darfur will begin to be resolved. Ignore it, and expect continued, more complex, and more intractable conflict. 📌

# Endnotes

- 1 In the English-language media, Radio Dabanga, which also broadcasts in Arabic, has given detailed, tightly sourced accounts of the fighting, which other news outlets seldom cite, even when casualty tolls are in three figures.
- 2 Author interview with Walid Madibo, civil society activist and head of the Governance Bureau, Khartoum, July 2010.
- 3 This *Working Paper* does not examine other inter-Arab conflicts, focusing instead on the Abbala-Baggara fighting that accounts for the lion's share of the death and destruction. It notes that no generalization is wholly correct—for example, the Abbala and Baggara sections of the Nuwaiba tribe fought together in 2010. Another characterization of the conflict as being between Rizeigat and Missiriya overlooks the fact that the Southern Rizeigat did not respond to the call to fight the insurgency in 2003 and the Missiriya were only the largest of the Baggara tribes involved.
- 4 There was no access to Darfur during the period of research for this *Working Paper*. Several informants stated that 'the government does not want the international community to see our suffering'. As a result, this report is based largely on interviews conducted in Khartoum.
- 5 The number of 'janjaweed' in Darfur is a matter of pure speculation, as is the size of Darfur's Arab population. Although the most recent census, conducted in 2008, puts Darfur's population at 7.5 million, the NCP of President Omar al Bashir insisted that tribe and religion be omitted from the database, reportedly for fear that Sudan would no longer be defined as an Arab, Islamic state. Estimates of the Arab population of Darfur range from 30 per cent, based on the census of 1956, to the 70 per cent claimed by Arab tribal leaders in a letter to United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in September 2007. Given that many Arabs from Chad have settled in Darfur in the last several decades, and that the rate of migration to Sudan's more developed centre is higher among non-Arabs, who are less dependent on pastoralism, a figure of 40 per cent is probably closer to the mark.
- 6 This is the phrase repeatedly used by 'save Darfur' activists, especially in the United States, and the chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), Luis Moreno Ocampo.
- 7 See, for example, de Waal (2010) and AU (2009, app. B).
- 8 Many Baggara around Jebel Marra have married into Fur families, becoming as dark in complexion as the Fur and speaking the Fur language. In the fighting with the Abbala, they were targeted with some of the same racial epithets as were employed in the wars against the Fur—including *abid* (slave).
- 9 For more on Hemeti, see Flint (2009, pp. 30–39).
- 10 Author interview with Abdullah Fadil, UNAMID head of office in West Darfur, Geneina, September 2010.
- 11 A six-page report by Human Rights Watch in July 2010, entitled 'UN: Strengthen Civilian Protection in Darfur', features one paragraph on the inter-Arab fighting, then estimated by UNAMID to have taken more than 700 lives. See HRW (2010).



- 12 *Nazir* was a title given to Arab paramount chiefs by the British rulers of Sudan before independence. They are followed by *wakils*, deputy chiefs; *omdas*, sub-district administrative chiefs; and *sheikhs*, village leaders. For more details on the development of boundaries and land rights in Sudan, see Johnson (2010).
- 13 Darfur's pastoralists are semi-nomadic. They have permanent villages and use grazing lands on a seasonal basis.
- 14 The grant of tribal *dars* favoured larger tribes. At the time, this was not a cause for concern: there was no shortage of land, and the prosperity of Arab tribes depended on nomadic pastoralism and livestock trade rather than land titles.
- 15 The Baggara are not nomadic in the strictest sense; they are semi-mobile pastoralists. Most live in villages and their young men herd most of their cattle on a seasonal basis.
- 16 Unpublished report by conflict resolution consultant Yousif Takana, November 2007.
- 17 E-mail from Dr. Mohamed Ahmed Abdalla, head of the now-closed Amel Centre for Treatment and Rehabilitation of Victims of Torture, June 2010.
- 18 Author interview with Gaafar Monro, former member of the National Assembly, Hilversum, Netherlands, March 2010.
- 19 At a meeting in Guldo, in Jebel Marra, the then commissioner of Jebel Marra, Abaker Ibrahim, accused Abdalla Safi an Nur, governor of North Darfur in 2000–01 and now head of the Khartoum-based Council for the Development of Nomads, of being behind the attacks.
- 20 The sections of the Mahamid are listed in order of size, not importance in the fighting, based on a 2005 interview with Musa Hilal, paramount chief of the Mahamid of North Darfur and the pre-eminent leader of all Northern Rizeigat paramilitaries.
- 21 *Sheikh* is the title the Mahamid give to their paramount chief. In most other tribes, it refers to the position of village leader.
- 22 Author interview with Hemeti, Nyala, March 2009.
- 23 Government involvement in the conflict was proven early on, in 2002, by a Ministry of Interior delegation that visited the area and found bullets made in the Yarmouk Industrial Complex, a government munitions factory in Khartoum established in the mid-1990s. Days before the fighting, delegation member Gaafar Monro saw bullets that had been made in Yarmouk.
- 24 Author interview with Gaafar Monro, former member of the National Assembly, Hilversum, Netherlands, March 2010.
- 25 This is the title of an eyewitness account of the Limo meeting held in October 2007, made available to the Small Arms Survey by one of the participants.
- 26 Details of the meeting are drawn from the eyewitness report. The report makes reference to another meeting held on 17 August 2007 and reportedly attended by representatives of 47 Baggara groups. UN officials in South Darfur have identified a third meeting, also held in Limo, on 1 August 2007.
- 27 The tribes named in the document as 'leading' the meeting are the Borgo, Hotiya, Neemat, and Taalba.
- 28 These estimates are the consensus of UN reports from the period, published and unpublished.
- 29 Author interviews with Baggara representatives and UNMID officers, Khartoum, July 2010.
- 30 The Taalba and the Hotiya are the two principal Arab groups north of Kass, estimated to account for approximately 6 per cent and 4 per cent of the population, respectively, in that area. Both claim to have obtained a *hakura* within the Fur *dar* before independence in 1956.

31 Author interview with UNAMID officials, Khartoum, July 2010.  
32 For the full text of the CPA, see GoS and SPLM/A (2005).  
33 Author interview with Gassim Mohamed, human rights activist, Khartoum, August 2010.  
34 Author interview with a senior UNAMID official, Khartoum, July 2010.  
35 Hotiya farms and herd sizes had increased as the Hotiya adopted settled farming alongside cattle-rearing. The Nuwaiba accused the Hotiya of denying them access to pastures and other resources.  
36 The wave of displaced Hotiya led to the establishment of a new camp for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Zalingei. Named Taiba, the IDP camp initially housed more than 5,000 people.  
37 Author interview with Gassim Mohamed, human rights activist, Khartoum, August 2010.  
38 For the full text of the DPA, see DPA (2006).  
39 The Terjem *nazir*, Mohamed Yaacoub Ibrahim, is based in Timbisko, 60 km south-west of Nyala.  
40 Author interview with Taj al Banna, Justice Africa, Khartoum, July 2010.  
41 According to UN officials in South Darfur, speaking in 2007, the Terjem killed a group of Rizeigat Abbala they accused of looting a vehicle loaded with goods. The Rizeigat denied involvement in the crime and demanded blood money. In the settlement, it was agreed that the government and the Terjem would pay the compensation between them.  
42 Author interview with Gassim Mohamed, human rights activist, Khartoum, August 2010.  
43 Internal report by a medical non-governmental organization (NGO) working in the area at the time, January 2008.  
44 Confidential report by a Western NGO working in the area at the time.  
45 Author interviews with UNAMID officials, August 2010.  
46 Author interviews with a range of Arab sources and UNAMID officials, August 2010.  
47 This is the Missiriya version of events. UNAMID reports place the ambush one day later.  
48 The fighting was between the Rizeigat Baggara and Missiriya Humr of South Kordofan, both groups cousins of those in Kass and Zalingei. It began on 26 May 2009, when 2,000 Rizeigat on horses and in Land Cruisers attacked a group of Missiriya near Meiram, close to the border with Darfur. Police who attempted to intervene and establish a buffer zone between the tribes were themselves attacked. The fighting killed several hundred people. The highest number of casualties was among the Missiriya.  
49 The Beni Halba, a large Baggara tribe, have a long-established *dar* of their own, south of the present conflict zone. The Salamat, a smaller Baggara tribe with Chadian roots, live far from the conflict area, in the border region of Forobaranga.  
50 *Judiya* is a centuries-old system of citizen-based customary mediation in northern Sudan. It was traditionally led by elders or *ajaweed*, respected figures who do not necessarily hold any office. In the first stages, the mediation was conducted by imams and *sheikhs*, local religious and village leaders. Only if they failed did it pass to *omdas*, local administrative chiefs. In pre-war years, agreements reached through *judiya* mediation usually included a reduction in the arms carried by the belligerents.  
51 This sum included SDG 70,000 (USD 30,000) for 'physical losses' and SDG 10,000 (USD 4,250) for 'moral harm', according to a Missiriya speaker at the reconciliation.  
52 Author interview with Ahmad Suliman Ballah, Council of Nomads, Khartoum, July 2010.  
53 Author interview with Ahmad Suliman Ballah, Council of Nomads, Khartoum, July 2010.

- 54 Confidential UN report, April 2010.
- 55 An undated statement from the ‘Committee of the Missiriya tribe’, cited extensively in addresses to the *judiya* in Khor Ramla.
- 56 Author interview with Ahmad Suliman Ballah, Council of Nomads, Khartoum, July 2010.
- 57 Author interview with Ghadaja Adam, Missiriya activist, Khartoum, August 2010.
- 58 Statements made during the reconciliation conference in Khor Ramla, June 2010, and recorded by Missiriya participants.
- 59 Author interview with Abdul Rahman Hassan, lawyer and Um Jalul delegate to the Doha peace talks, Nyala, September 2010.
- 60 Thanks to their strong participation and organization, the Baggara group in Kass and Zalingei increased their political influence in the elections of April 2010—and exacerbated the imbalance between Baggara and Abbala—by winning most of the seats in the region.
- 61 Author interviews with UNAMID officials, Khartoum and South Darfur, August and September 2010.
- 62 In 2004, Kailek was the scene of some of the most brutal atrocities of the counter-insurgency. A UN Commission of Inquiry found that government forces and militiamen summarily shot men and gang-raped women before confining about 30,000 villagers for 50 days in a small area where they endured ‘the most abhorrent treatment’, according to the then UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Louise Arbour. UN agencies later accused the government of a deliberate policy of starvation of Kailek IDPs.
- 63 Persistent claims that Mahamid from countries including Niger have relocated to Darfur, settling in some areas, remain largely uninvestigated. Rizeigat Abbala say the issue is non-negotiable: the tribe is one, undivided by national borders.
- 64 Author interview with Abdul Rahman Hassan, lawyer and Um Jalul delegate to the Doha peace talks, Nyala, September 2010.
- 65 Confidential author interview with Arab activists, Nyala, September 2010.
- 66 Confidential author interviews, Khartoum, August 2010, and Nyala, September 2010.
- 67 The camps are said to be at Amar Jedeed, Tabaldi, and Um al Qora, all under the ‘supervision’ of Hemeti.
- 68 Author interviews with UNAMID officials, Khartoum, August 2010, and Nyala and Geneina, September 2010.
- 69 Confidential author interviews with Habbaniya and Southern Rizeigat elders, Nyala, September 2010.
- 70 The request for weapons was made by Col. Mohamed Ibrahim Othman, ‘on behalf of the general commander of the PDF’. The weapons were authorized by Col. Bakri Saleh, ‘on behalf of the deputy chief of the Joint Staff’.
- 71 Author interview with Youssif el Tayeb, Darfur Development and Reconstruction Agency, Khartoum, July 2010. In the general elections of April 2010, the PCP made the single strongest showing of any opposition party in Darfur, taking three of the seven seats won by opposition groups. All three seats were in South Darfur.
- 72 Radio Miraya, 20 April 2010. Adam Yusuf got 128,552 votes, coming second to Musa Kasha’s 301,767. In 2004, government authorities alleged that Adam Yusuf was the leader of a coup attempt by the PCP. Some 70 members of the PCP were detained. Adam Yusuf reportedly left the country.

- 73 JEM has also been recruiting among the Missiriya (Humr section) of Kordofan, who feel an acute sense of betrayal by the NCP because of what they see as a succession of unreciprocated concessions—from losing West Kordofan state (incorporated into South Kordofan under the CPA) to the July 2009 ruling on the boundaries of Abyei, by the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague, that they say favours the Ngok Dinka.
- 74 UNAMID interview with Salah Abu Sura, leader of the Popular Democratic Front, the first all-Arab armed movement, and a Southern Rizeigat, undisclosed location, August 2007.
- 75 Author interview with Abdul Rahman al Masri, leader of the Southern Rizeigat in Nyala city, Nyala, September 2010.
- 76 Author interview with Ahmed Adam Yousif, manager of Ajaweed, a conflict resolution NGO, Fasher, September 2010.
- 77 Author interviews with Ahmad Suliman Ballah, Council of Nomads, Khartoum, July 2010, and Abdul Rahman Hassan, lawyer and Um Jalul delegate to the Doha peace talks, Nyala, September 2010.
- 78 Author interviews with senior Rizeigat, Khartoum, July 2010.
- 79 Abbala informants say the Abbala attacked Ban Jadeed in 40 Land Cruisers after the Saada ambushed and killed a prominent Border Guard officer, Gen. Hijazi al Amin Kadada, in Um al Qora. They say Ban Jadeed was only one of three villages burned, claiming a total of 176 dead, including 151 Saada.
- 80 Confidential author interview, Khartoum, July 2010.
- 81 Author interview with Ahmad Suliman Ballah, Council of Nomads, Khartoum, July 2010.
- 82 The expulsions were Khartoum’s immediate reaction to the ICC’s indictment of President Bashir on charges of genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity.
- 83 Confidential author interview, Khartoum, July 2010.

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Julie Flint is a journalist and Sudan researcher. She has co-authored two books on Darfur with Alex de Waal—most recently, *Darfur: A New History of a Long War*. She acted as a consultant for a range of international organizations and human rights groups on the Darfur conflict and the Inter-Sudanese Peace Talks in Abuja, attending four sessions of the talks over two years.

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The Small Arms Survey is an independent research project located at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva, Switzerland. Established in 1999, the project is supported by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, and by sustained contributions from the Governments of Canada, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. The Survey is also grateful for past and current project support received from the Governments of Australia, Belgium, Denmark, France, New Zealand, Spain, and the United States, as well as from various United Nations agencies, programmes, and institutes.

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The Sudan Human Security Baseline Assessment (HSBA) is a multi-year project administered by the Small Arms Survey. It has been developed in cooperation with the Canadian government, the UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS), the UN Development Programme (UNDP), and a wide array of international and Sudanese NGO partners. Through the active generation and dissemination of timely, empirical research, the project supports violence reduction initiatives, including disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration programmes; incentive schemes for civilian arms collection; and security sector reform and arms control interventions across Sudan. The HSBA also offers policy-relevant advice on redressing insecurity.

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