



Sudan Liberation Army-Juba (1) [SLA-Juba (1)]

In August 2006, Ahmed Abdel Shafi, a former close associate of Abdul Wahid, broke with him and claimed the leadership of a SLA that was united only in name. In doing so, he lost much support in the Fur community and among SLA commanders who opposed Abdul Wahid but wanted him removed by popular vote at a unity conference. In November 2007, Abdel Shafi received a boost when he was appointed to chair a group of SLA commanders formed in Juba, capital of Southern Sudan, under the auspices of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA). A few hundred Fur loyal to him received training—but no cars or weapons—from the SPLA in Southern Sudan. Another 100 men are estimated to be in Darfur, with small arms only. Even some close associates resent his lengthy absence from Darfur and what they feel is his over-identification with the SPLA.

With the approach of Southern Sudan's self-determination referendum in January 2011 and the expected partition of Sudan, the divided, directionless SLA is making a new effort to reunite its ranks. Three SLA factions—led by Abdel Shafi, Minni Minawi, and Abdel Gassim Imam, who like Minawi signed an agreement with the Sudan government in 2006—reportedly met in Juba in late August–early September and agreed that unity would take on new importance with the likely division of Sudan following the referendum. A source close to Abdul Wahid, the original chairman of the SLA and still the leader of the strongest SLA faction, said the three spoke with Abdul Wahid in Paris by telephone, but declined to say whether they had reached even a meeting of minds. Differences between the predominantly Zaghawa wing of the SLA led by Minawi and the mainly Fur wing led by Abdul Wahid caused deep divisions within the movement as early as 2002 and were at the root of its subsequent fragmentation.

SLA-Juba (2)

A splinter of the original SLA-Juba led by Mohamed Saleh 'Harba' (Zaghawa-Kobe), originally JEM's chief representative on the first ceasefire commission, in N'Djaména. Saleh split from JEM early in 2005 and formed the Chadian-supported Field Revolutionary Command before joining SLA-Juba.

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