



FLICKR/UN

Perspectives from the Arab World

This bulletin is part of FRIDE's project "The gap between narratives and practices. Darfur: Responses from the Arab world", funded by the Ford Foundation.

Main issues during October 2009

- US Policy toward Sudan and its impact in Sudanese politics
- Arab countries and Sudan
- International efforts to bring peace to Darfur

Index

- ❑ Introduction
- ❑ Methodology
- ❑ October 2009 - Arabic Media Trends
- ❑ October 2009 - Arabic News Report
- ❑ Chronology
- ❑ Annex
- ❑ List of Sources

A monthly selection of Arab official, journalistic and academic sources is compiled to give an overview of the main events, opinions and documents from the perspective of the Arab world.

Introduction

As UN sources conclude, the situation in Darfur is 'relatively calm, but remains unpredictable'. This is the best way of saying that Darfur faces a chronic conflict that could very easily erupt again. In fact, October 2009 saw a continuation of clashes between rebel and government forces in the North of Darfur which resulted in 28 civil casualties. UNAMID also reported on a military build up in this area. A staff member from the International Committee for the Red Cross was kidnapped, and a member of the UNAMID ambushed and killed. Furthermore, it has been reported that members from the Ugandan Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) have been attacking Darfuri refugee camps. Under these circumstances, international and regional commitment is imperative if the national elections scheduled to take place in April 2010 are to take place, and the situation is still to be described as a low intensity conflict.

An important development during this month was the African Union Peace and Security Council meeting that took place in Nigeria, and studied the final report released at the beginning of this month by the African Union Panel on Darfur (AUPD) chaired by Thabo Mbeki. The report drew up recommendations regarding the formation of hybrid courts and changes to criminal law to deal with rights abuses in Darfur, and implicitly endorsed the International Criminal Court (ICC) prosecutions despite African leaders' negative feelings on the issue.

The United States and Russia have been taking steps to reaffirm their commitment to peace in the area: while Russia held an international conference in Moscow on the peace process at the start of the month, the US government released a document reflecting its new comprehensive policy towards the conflict in Sudan. Needless to say, the new US policy generated expectations from the main actors involved in the conflict, but the new 'Whole-of-Sudan' approach still has to prove that it will have a real impact on the ground. Some analysts affirm that it is not really a new approach, but rather a clarification of the sometimes contradictory US policy towards Sudan and its conflicts. Sudanese government and Darfur rebels nevertheless showed unity in welcoming the new US policy, while other reactions by some critics from Arab countries have critically commented on the great difference in the way Washington is facing the humanitarian crisis in Palestine as a contrast to the Darfuri one.



FLICKR/INTERNEWS NETWORK

On the international level, the clashes that spilled over into neighboring countries such as Chad did not help to calm the situation and jeopardised the conditions for the holding of national elections in April 2010. The Doha talks to be held at the end of the month were postponed, and the border dispute between Sudan and Egypt erupted again.

Methodology

The main objective of this newsletter is to bridge the language gap between the Arab media and Western audiences. In order to obtain a complete picture of the information published in Arabic, five different sources have been analysed: the web pages of regional organisations, Ministries of Foreign Affairs, official news agencies, Arab think tanks and Arabic newspapers¹.

Our intention was not to cover every article published regarding Sudan and the ongoing humanitarian crisis, but to consider news items, editorials and opinion articles that reflect the main trends in the Arab media's perception of the Sudanese issue.

(1) See the list of sources monitored at the end of this newsletter.

Trends

- The growing American interest in this conflict shows that the United States is the only power outside of Africa willing to develop a policy toward the conflict.
- The African Union's increasing role in the conflict is very welcome, but a more cohesive approach needs to be developed within the organization.

- Arab and Middle Eastern countries continue to support Sudan and its government, which undermines the credibility of ICC.
- The humanitarian situation will continue to be critical until the roots of the conflict are tackled.

October 2009 Arabic News Report

1. US Policy towards Sudan and its impact on Sudanese politics

Democratic Justice and Equality Movement statement

The Sudanese rebel movement released a press statement regarding the meeting held between different Sudanese parties, and the plans to continue such contacts. These talks were backed by the US representative to Sudan, following the American efforts to bring peace to the region.

Date: 25 October 2009

Source: To Understand Darfur (Arabic)

<http://www.ifhamdarfur.net/node/1242>

Israel and its presence at US-Iranian Negotiations

Raghida Dergham says that the dual track strategy of the Obama administration (incentives and threats) towards Iran, Israel and now Sudan has provoked debate and anger among those who had believed that there would be no compromise on justice in Darfur. They are disappointed by the dual strategy towards Sudan (the basic component of the new US strategy).

Date: 23 October 2009

Source: Al Hayat Newspaper (Arabic)

<http://www.daralhayat.com/internationalarticle/68727>

The Organization of the Islamic Conference welcomes the new US policy towards Sudan

The Secretary General of the OIC recognised as a positive development this new policy that represents a balanced approach towards Sudan. He added that the new strategy clearly reflects the commitment by President Obama to a fresh start in US relations with the Muslim world, established through dialogue and cooperation. The Secretary General reiterated the OIC position on Darfur that there is no evidence of Genocide.

Date: 20 October 2009

Source: Organization of the Islamic Conference Website (Arabic)

http://www.oic-oci.org/topic_detail.asp?t_id=2863

The screenshot shows the website of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). The header includes the OIC logo and the text "Organisation of The Islamic Conference" in English and Arabic. Below the header, there is a navigation menu with options like "Home", "About OIC", "Member States", "Secretary General", "OIC Organs", "Conventions", "Conferences & Meetings", "News", "Events", "Candidates", "Publications", "Cooperation", "Articles and Issues", "Media Library", "Vacancies", "Links", "Contact Us", and "Calendar of Meetings". The main content area features several news items:

- Announcement:** "The OIC Secretary General visits the IUT and attends its 23rd Convocation Ceremony". The article mentions Professor Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, Secretary General of the OIC, who visited the Islamic University of Technology (IUT) in Dhaka, Bangladesh, on 4th November 2009.
- COMCEC:** "COMCEC Holds its 25th Session on 5-9 November: The OIC Ten-Year Programme of Action Provides a Road Map for Strengthening Economic and Commercial Cooperation among its Members". The article states that the 25th session of the Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation (COMCEC) was held in Istanbul, Turkey, from 5-9 November 2009.
- Other News:** "Final Communiqué of The Meeting of The Expanded Extraordinary Executive Committee Meeting At The Level of Foreign Ministers On The Issue of Aggressions Against The Blessed Al Aqsa Mosque", "Final Communiqué of The Annual Coordination Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs NewYork- United Nation (25 SEPTEMBER 2009)", "The Thirty-Six Session of The Council of Foreign Ministers Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic (23-25 May 2009)", and "The Second Session of The Islamic Conference of Ministers of Health Tehran, the Islamic Republic of Iran".

Leader of the Sudan Liberation Army Revolutionary Forces Mahjoub Hussein talks to Ash Sharq Al Awsat

He referred to a US-Libyan initiative aimed at unifying all rebel factions in Darfur before signing a peace agreement in Doha. At the moment there are six groups under the title 'The Sudan Liberation Army – Revolutionary Forces'. The Libyan government, with US support, will organise a meeting which will be attended by eight Sudanese groups. Only two groups will not attend: the Sudan Liberation Movement, led by Abdul-Wahid Nur, and the Justice and Equality Movement, led by Ibrahim Khalil.

Date: 18 October 2009

Source: Ash Sharq Al Awsat Website (Arabic)

<http://www.aawsat.com/details.asp?section=4&issueno=11282&article=540510&search=&state=true>

2005 peace agreement with the aim of restricting the southerners' freedom to determine their future.

Date: 12 October 2009

Source: Ash Sharq Al Awsat Website (Arabic)

<http://www.aawsat.com/details.asp?section=1&issueno=11276&article=539622&search=&state=true>

2. Arab countries and Sudan

Qatari Minister of Foreign Affairs meets Sudanese Vice President

The Qatari Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ahmed Bin Abdullah Al Mahmoud, met with Sudanese Vice-President Ali Othman Taha on the sidelines of the AU Peace and Security Council Summit, which took place in Nigeria. Both officials declared that during the meeting they discussed bilateral relations and means of developing them.

Date: 29 October 2009

Source: Qatari Ministry of Foreign Affairs Website (Arabic)

<http://www.mofa.gov.qa/newsPage.cfm?newsid=11444>

Saudi Arabia and Sudan

The Saudi Ambassador to Sudan received the representative of the International Islamic Relief Commission (IIRC) the day before the organization opened an office in Juba. Saudi Arabia has allocated \$ 57 million to the World Food Program (WFP) to support its relief efforts in Sudan.

Date: 27 October 2009

Source: Saudi Arabia Ministry of Foreign Affairs Website (Arabic)

<http://www.spa.gov.sa/ListNewsInCat.php?pg=1&catid=4>

Amr Moussa and Sudanese Vice President

During the Sudanese Vice President's visit to Egypt, he met with the Secretary General of the Arab League, Amr Moussa, to discuss developments in the southern region of Sudan. The Arab League coordinates Arab initiatives to help that region and gives support to the ongoing peace process.

Date: 26 October 2009

Source: To Understand Darfur Website (Arabic)

<http://www.ifhamdarfur.net/node/1256>

First Vice President of Sudan visits Cairo

The Spokesman for the Foreign Ministry stated that the visit focused on bilateral relations, and analysing Egyptian efforts



Ezekiel Gatkuoth, representative of the Southern Sudan Government in Washington in Ash Sharq Al Awsat

The Sudanese leader said that he would welcome unity with the north 'if unity became attractive.' He added that it is the people of Southern Sudan who will decide their own future in the 2011 referendum. He criticised the National Congress Party, saying that it seeks to make amendments to the

to support development in Southern Sudan. Egypt funds many initiatives in that region, and is also building infrastructure and giving grants to Sudanese students.

Date: 25 October 2009

Source: Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Arabic)

[http://www.mfa.gov.eg/MFA_Portal/ar-](http://www.mfa.gov.eg/MFA_Portal/ar-EG/MFA_News/Press_Releases/soudan25102009.htm)

[EG/MFA_News/Press_Releases/soudan25102009.htm](http://www.mfa.gov.eg/MFA_Portal/ar-EG/MFA_News/Press_Releases/soudan25102009.htm)

Iran reiterates support for Sudan

The head of the Iranian parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Commission Alaeddin Boroujerdi reiterated Tehran's support for the African state in a meeting with Sudanese president Omar al-Bashir.

Date: 05 October 2009

Source: Fars News Agency (English)

<http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=8807131511>



3. International efforts to bring peace to Darfur

African Union Peace and Security Council Meeting in Nigeria

The final declaration reaffirms the commitment of the AU to combat impunity, in line with the relevant provisions of the AU Constitutive Act, and strongly condemns the violations of human rights in Darfur. Council urges, once again, the

UN Security Council to heed the AU's call for the deferral of the process initiated by the International Criminal Court (ICC) against President Omar Hassan Al Bashir, in the interest of peace, justice and reconciliation.

Date: 29 October 2009

Source: African Union Website (English, French, Arabic)

http://www.africa-union.org/root/ar/index/Communique%20on%20Darfur%20_eng..pdf

AU high-level panel on Darfur (AUDP)

Thabo Mbeki, Chairperson of the AUDP, released the panel's report to the African Union. It has recommended the creation of a hybrid court comprising Sudanese and foreign judges to try those suspected of committing crimes against humanity. It also suggested the establishment of a truth and reconciliation commission.

Date: 27 October 2009

Source: African Union Website (English, French, Arabic)

[http://www.africa-union.org/root/ar/index/AUDP%20Report%20on%20Darfur%20\(Eng%20\)%20Final.doc](http://www.africa-union.org/root/ar/index/AUDP%20Report%20on%20Darfur%20(Eng%20)%20Final.doc)

Layers of suspicion

The deal between the National Congress Party (NCP) and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) is unlikely to lead to long-term harmony. The deal gives two-thirds of southerners the right to vote on unity or secession. The outcome of the referendum will be decided by simple majority, or 50 per cent of the votes plus one. Southerners who live in Khartoum or abroad will be allowed to vote.

Date: 22 October 2009

Source: Al Ahram Weekly (English)

<http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2009/969/re72.htm>

Chad and Sudan: bilateral relations

The Secretary General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, Professor Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, has congratulated Sudanese and Chadian governments for their efforts aimed at normalising the relations between the two countries. According to the official, the recent visit to Chad by the High Level Sudanese Delegation and the expected continuation of the bilateral talks in Khartoum reflects the commitment of both countries to work towards settling all the differences.

Date: 14 October 2009

Source: Organization of the Islamic Conference Website (Arabic)

http://www.oic-oci.org/topic_detail.asp?t_id=2817&ref=1210&lan=ar

■ Chronology - October 2009

31 October

- AU panel on Darfur meeting in Nigeria.

28 October

- US Special Envoy begins a trip to Turkey, Nigeria and Sudan.

27 October

- President Obama formally renewed US economic sanctions against Sudan.

23 October

- South African Deputy President Kgalema Motlanthe visits Sudan.

22 October

- UNAMID Deputy Commander, Brigadier General Ahmed Moinuddin, killed in Pakistan.

21 October

- The Southern Sudan government rejected the deal signed regarding the next referendum on the fate of the region.

20 October

- Three aid workers who were abducted in Darfur three months ago were released.

19 October

- United States Department of State publishes the new American strategy towards Sudan, a five page document entitled: 'Sudan: A Critical Moment, A Comprehensive Approach'.

18 October

- New attacks on UNAMID troops.

08 October

- AU releases the report of the AUDP.

05 October

- Sudan's President al-Bashir invites opposition parties for talks.

03 October

- Sudan's ruling party nominated President al-Bashir for re-election

■ Annex

FRIDE - International Seminar in Tunis: 'The gap between narratives and practices. Darfur: the responses from the Arab world'

<http://www.fride.org/event/198/darfur-the-responses-from-the-arab-world>

The partners of the project 'The gap between narratives and practices. Darfur: the responses from the Arab world' (FRIDE, NOREF and the AIHR) held a meeting in Tunis on October 1 and 2.

The debate was focused on the role of the Arab world (in terms of perceptions and policies) in the conflict in Darfur, to examine the needs and opportunities for a more positive engagement by the Arab world in resolving

the crisis. Furthermore, the debate was orientated towards finding ways to engage Western countries and international organisations with the Arab world in redressing massive violations of human rights in Darfur. Relevant experts and members of the European Union, Arab League, United Nations, UNAMID, Egyptian and Sudanese Civil Society gathered for two days. The conclusions of the seminar will soon be published at www.fride.org

■ List of Sources

Regional organisations web pages

Arab League	http://www.arableagueonline.org/
African Union	http://www.africa-union.org/
Organization of the Islamic Conference	http://www.oic-oci.org/
Gulf Cooperation Council	http://www.gcc-sg.org/

Ministries of Foreign Affairs web pages

Qatari Ministry of Foreign Affairs	http://www.mofa.gov.qa
Saudi Arabia - Ministry of Foreign Affairs	http://www.mofa.gov.sa/
Libya - Ministry of Foreign Affairs	http://www.foreign.gov.ly/
Egypt - Ministry of Foreign Affairs	http://www.mfa.gov.eg/
Sudan - Ministry of Foreign Affairs	http://www.mfa.gov.sd/

News agencies

Al Jazeera	http://www.aljazeera.net/
Al Arabiya	http://www.alarabiya.net/
Qatar News Agency	http://www.qnaol.net/
Saudi Press Agency	http://www.spa.gov.sa/
Emirates News Agency-WAM	http://www.wam.org.ae/
Jamahiriya News Agency	http://www.jananews.ly/
Middle East News Agency (MENA)	http://www.mena.org.eg/
Sudan News Agency	http://www.sunas-sd.net/
Radio Dabanga	http://www.radiodabanga.org/

Arab think tanks and information web pages

To understand Darfur	http://ifhamdarfur.net/
Arab Program on Human Rights	http://www.aphra.org/pcd/
Arabic Network for Human Rights Information	http://www.anhri.net/
Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies	http://www.cihrs.org/
Al Academy for Graduate Studies	http://www.alacademia.edu.ly/

Newspapers

Ash sharq al awsat	http://www.asharqalawsat.com/
Al Hayat	http://www.alhayat.com/
As Sahafa	http://www.alsahafa.sd/
Sudan Tribune	http://www.sudantribune.com/
Al Ahram	http://www.ahram.org.eg/
Al Watan Al Libi	http://www.alwatan-libya.com/
Tripoli Post	http://www.tripolipost.com/