



FLICKR/HOISAEFER

## 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 August 2009

- International diplomatic efforts
- Humanitarian situation
- International cooperation

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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 of 1 September, the UNAMID mission has a new commander, at a moment when the United States is developing its new 'comprehensive' policy toward Sudan. Meanwhile, the Egyptian diplomacy and Libya's leader and President of the Africa Union (AU), Qaddafi – amid celebrations of the 40th anniversary of the Libyan Revolution – are backing the main efforts to bring peace to the region. Washington is trying to include Cairo and Tripoli into the Doha framework. However, several problems remain and it will be interesting to see if there will be collaboration or competition between these Arab initiatives in the near future.

During the month of August several meetings were held in an attempt to improve the ongoing situation. This is the primary shared objective of the Sudanese government and international organisations working in the country.

While diplomacy works, the humanitarian situation is still problematic and the international community has not been able to find a solution to the difficulties faced by the Sudanese population. On the other hand, according to an International Media Support research report (see Annex), the Arab media do not reflect a deeper interest in the Darfur conflict beyond the political situation,

leaving uncovered humanitarian issues that will not disappear once the conflict is solved in a diplomatic summit.

The recent kidnapping of two humanitarian workers shows that the conflict has not finished and that the population in Darfur is still suffering it.



FLICKR/UN PHOTO/ OLIVIER CHASSOT

## Methodology

The main objective of this newsletter is to fill 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, finally, Arabic newspapers.<sup>1</sup>

Our intention was not to cover all the news published about Sudan and the ongoing humanitarian crisis but to take those pieces of news, 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

- Egypt is beginning to accept the Qatari importance in the Sudanese peace process, mainly due to increasing US diplomatic efforts to end competition between Cairo and Doha.
- Libya is another important Arab partner, especially due to Qaddafi's position within the African Union. It is expected that the AU summit held in Tripoli on 30-31 August will represent a step towards a common African position on the main conflicts in the region.
- The United States is developing a comprehensive strategy towards Sudan, based on the Arab efforts and which will complement ongoing diplomatic efforts.
- The media (at the regional and international levels) do not pay much attention to the humanitarian situation in Darfur. They focus mainly on diplomatic initiatives and the political implications of such developments.

## August 2009 Arabic News Report

### 1. International efforts to solve the Darfur conflict

#### African summit in Tripoli concludes

The emergency summit of the African Union on disputes in Africa concluded its sittings while issuing the Tripoli Declaration, which states that the state of war in Darfur has ended, indicating that only a few criminal acts by some outlaws are taking place there. The declaration reiterates African leaders' refusal to deal with the International Criminal Court (ICC).

Date: 31/AUGUST/2009

Source: Sudan News Agency website

<http://www.suna-sd.net/>

#### AU summit on the resolution of conflicts in Africa kicks off in Tripoli

Chaired by the Leader of the Revolution and Chairman of the African Union, Muammar Qaddafi, the summit on the resolution of conflicts in Africa kicked off in Tripoli amidst celebrations of the 40th anniversary of al-Fatah Revolution. The Leader of the Revolution opened the session with a statement in which he stressed that the conflicts of the continent are the unnecessary legacy of the colonial era.

Date: 31/AUGUST/2009

Source: Jamahiriya News Agency (Arabic)

<http://www.jananews.ly/>

#### US envoy praises Libya for efforts to bring peace to Darfur

US envoy Scott Gration praised Libya's role in resolving the conflict in the Darfur region of Sudan at a meeting with Egyptian, Libyan and Sudanese officials in Cairo. Gration also praised Egypt's role, after what he said were four-party talks involving Egypt, Libya, Sudan and the United States, hosted by Egypt's Foreign Minister Ahmed Abul Gheit and intelligence chief General Omar Suleiman.

Date: 30/AUGUST/2009

Source: Tripoli Post (English)

<http://www.tripolipost.com/article/detail.asp?c=1&i=3528>

The screenshot shows the website 'THE TRIPOLI POST' with a navigation menu on the left and a main article. The article title is 'US Envoy Praises Libya for Efforts to Bring Peace to Darfur, Saying: 'Very Proud to be Partners with the Libyans''. The article includes a photo of US Envoy Scott Gration and text stating that he praised Libya's role in resolving the conflict in Darfur. The website also features a sidebar with 'Tenders & Job Opportunities', 'Training...', and 'Afriqiyah Airways'.

## Commander Agwai says Darfur is no longer at war

The commander of the joint UN/African Union peacekeeping force (UNAMID), Martin Luther Agwai, told reporters the conflict had now descended into banditry and 'very low intensity' engagements. 'Apart from JEM, I do not see any other group that can launch an attack on the ground', he said referring to the Justice and Equality Movement.

Date: 30/AUGUST/2009

Source: Tripoli Post (English)

<http://www.tripolipost.com/articledetail.asp?c=1&i=3529>

## Darfur, Juba and beyond

Egypt has promised the US it will end its opposition to a Qatari attempt to mediate a peace deal between Khartoum and Darfur rebels, a US diplomatic source told Al-Ahram Weekly Sunday. Egyptian diplomats confirmed the move, 'If this would help bring peace to Sudan'. Egypt is removing its unwritten veto on Qatari mediation

in Darfur, but this does not mean it is stepping out of the Sudan issue.

Date: 27/AUGUST/2009

Source: Al-Ahram Weekly (English)

<http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2009/962/eg1.htm>

## Egyptian foreign minister receives Gabriel Bassole, the UN and AU joint mediator for Darfur

Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit received the UN and AU Joint Mediator for Darfur, Gabriel Bassole, within the context of the contacts held by Egypt in order to reach a common vision regarding the various axes to settle the Darfur crisis. The foreign minister also referred to the importance of supporting the role of the civil society in Darfur and continuing the Arab-African joint work to solve the issue.

Date: 27/AUGUST/2009

Source: Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs website

[http://www.mfa.gov.eg/MFA\\_Portal/ar-EG/MFA\\_News/Press\\_Releases/darfur2782009](http://www.mfa.gov.eg/MFA_Portal/ar-EG/MFA_News/Press_Releases/darfur2782009)

The screenshot shows the Al-Ahram Weekly website interface. At the top, it displays the date '27 August - 2 September 2009', issue number '962', and the word 'Egypt'. There are links for 'Current issue', 'Previous issue', and 'Site map'. Below this is a search bar with a 'Google Search' button and social media icons for 'Recommend', 'Comment', and 'Printer-friendly'. The main article title is 'Darfur, Juba and beyond'. The text of the article is visible, starting with 'Egypt is removing its unwritten veto on Qatari mediation in Darfur, but this does not mean it is stepping out of the Sudan issue, Dina Ezzat reports'. A sidebar on the right contains a navigation menu with categories like 'Front Page', 'Egypt', 'Region', 'Focus', 'Economy', 'International', 'Interview', 'Opinion', 'Press review', 'Reader's corner', 'Interview', 'Encounter', 'Features', 'Special', 'Heritage', 'Living', 'Sports', 'Cartoons', 'People', 'Listings', 'BOOKS', 'TRAVEL', and 'Site map'.

## Egyptian initiatives to the Special African Summit

The Special African Summit that will be held on 31 August to discuss and settle the disputes in Africa is an initiative of the Leader of the Libyan Revolution and current Chairman of the African Union. The summit will focus on the three severest disputes in Africa: in Darfur, Somalia and the Great Lakes. The Egyptian visions to settle the African conflicts are not based on narrow national interests, but on an Egyptian responsibility towards the African region.

Date: 26/AUGUST/2009

Source: Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs website (Arabic)

[http://www.mfa.gov.eg/MFA\\_Portal/ar-EG/MFA\\_News/Press\\_Releases/2682009Africansummit.htm](http://www.mfa.gov.eg/MFA_Portal/ar-EG/MFA_News/Press_Releases/2682009Africansummit.htm)

## Amr Mussa: The problems in Sudan are moving toward a solution

The secretary-general of the Arab League said that thanks to the efforts of several regional and international organisations, as well as some important countries as the United States, the situation in Sudan and the different conflicts in the region will be solved. He added that the fact

that the United States has set the Sudan issue in its political agenda was beneficial to the situation since there is an interest in solving this conflict.

Date: 25/AUGUST/2009

Source: Al Quds Al Arabi (Arabic)

<http://www.alquds.co.uk/index.asp?fname=2009\08\08-25\24x75.htm&storytitle=ff%E3%E6%D3%EC:%20%C7%E1%C3%E3%E6%D1%20%DD%ED%20%C7%E1%D3%E6%CF%C7%E4%20%CA%CA%CD%D1%DF%20%E4%CD%E6%20%C7%E1%CA%DE%CF%E3%20%E6%C7%E1%CD%E1fff&storytitleb=&storytitlec=>

### Consultation meeting among Egypt, Sudan, Libya and the US

The meeting, the first of its kind, was an opportunity to discuss the current talks among the Sudanese parties in all dossiers that would achieve stability in Sudan, including the situation in Darfur and the relationship between North and South. The meeting also witnessed an agreement on forming a unified negotiating team representing Darfur that would present a comprehensive political view to solve the issue as a whole.

Date: 23/AUGUST/2009

Source: Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs website (Arabic)

[http://www.mfa.gov.eg/MFA\\_Portal/ar-EG/MFA\\_News/Press\\_Releases/consultation2382009.htm](http://www.mfa.gov.eg/MFA_Portal/ar-EG/MFA_News/Press_Releases/consultation2382009.htm)

### Worried over Sudan

A senior Egyptian diplomat arrived in Khartoum to promote Egypt as the most obvious peace broker. Assistant Foreign Minister Mohamed Qassem's mission is getting the Sudanese government and Darfur's rebels to negotiate a peace deal. Egypt is blaming the rebels and its inflexibility as the main problem. It has been calling on key players, as Libya and France, to put pressure on the rebel groups they communicate with in order to get them to show flexibility.

Date: 13/AUGUST/2009

Source: Al-Ahram Weekly (English)

<http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2009/960/eg1.htm>

### Meeting on Darfur in Libya

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Qatar participated in a consultation meeting to discuss a means of pushing forward the peace process in the Darfur region. The meeting was attended by Moussa Koussa, Secretary of the General Popular Committee for External Relations and International Cooperation in Libya; Dr. Ghazi Salah

al-Din, adviser to the President of the Republic of Sudan, in charge of the Darfur file; Ambassador Mohammed Abdel Hamid Qassim, Special Envoy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Egypt; and Djbril Bassole, AU -UN Joint Chief Mediator for Darfur. They also discussed the date for holding the next round of negotiations in Doha by the end of September.

Date: 11/AUGUST/2009

Source: Qatari Ministry of Foreign Affairs website (Arabic)

<http://www.mofa.gov.qa/newsPage.cfm?newsid=10504>

### Farewell of Sudan's Ambassador to Egypt

Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit held a farewell meeting with Ambassador Abdel Moneam Mabrouk, who finished his mandate as Sudan's Ambassador in Cairo. During the meeting, the foreign minister affirmed that achieving stability all over Sudan is a strategic priority to Egypt, and that Egypt's efforts are aimed at achieving peace and supporting prosperity for the Sudanese people.

Date: 02/AUGUST/2009

Source: Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs website (Arabic)

[http://www.mfa.gov.eg/MFA\\_Portal/ar-EG/MFA\\_News/Press\\_Releases/282009sudanambassador.htm](http://www.mfa.gov.eg/MFA_Portal/ar-EG/MFA_News/Press_Releases/282009sudanambassador.htm)

The screenshot shows the website of the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MAE). The header includes the ministry's name and a search bar. The main content area is titled 'L'intervention de la délégation égyptienne à la réunion...' and lists several news items under the heading 'Relations Arabes'. The items include reports on the intervention of the Egyptian delegation at the Arab ministerial committee meeting in Darfur, the importance of resolving the divergence between Iraq and Syria, the receipt of the President of the National Council of the Palestinian Authority, the expression of concern over the escalation of violence in the South of Sudan, a meeting with the UN envoy to Darfur, a consultation meeting with Sudan, Libya, and the USA, the condemnation of terrorist attacks in Baghdad, a statement by Aboul Gheit on Egypt's role in peace and prosperity in Sudan, the 57th anniversary of the July Revolution, the acceptance of the CPA decision, the appreciation of the Egyptian election in Mauritania, a meeting with Darfur faction leaders, a memorandum of understanding between Egypt and Iraq, and a political concertation between Egypt and the Arab League.

## 2. Humanitarian issues

### Report on the media coverage of the Darfur conflict

A study entitled 'A quantitative and qualitative analysis: Media coverage of the Darfur conflict in Sudanese and non-Sudanese media', released by International Media Support and the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies, shows that Arab media coverage has been limited between November 2007 and March 2008.

Date: 19/AUGUST/2009

Source: Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (Arabic)

<http://www.cihrs.org/Arabic/NewsSystem/Articles/2513>

The screenshot shows the website interface for the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies. The main content area features a report titled "Victims of Darfur crisis lose out in Media Coverage" dated 19/08/2009. The report's abstract states: "Report uncovering media coverage of the Darfur crisis shows that Sudanese and Arab media give little priority to the Darfur conflict and when covered, they mainly focus on the political aspects. According to the study: 'A quantitative and qualitative analysis: Media coverage of the Darfur conflict in Sudanese and non-Sudanese media', released today by International Media Support and the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies, the coverage has been very limited. Significantly, the study provides evidence that the Arab media does not give any significant priority to the crisis', was the conclusion based on accurate recordings of media coverage between November 2007 and March 2008. When covered, the findings show, 33,7 percent of the total time devoted by electronic news media to the Darfur conflict focused on the work of the diplomatic community, while conditions for refugees received only 4,7 percent of the air time. Results for the print media painted a similar picture in the report which was produced in a joint collaboration between International Media Support, Cairo Institute of Human Rights Studies, Osservatorio di Pavia, Amman Community Net and Khartoum Centre for Human Rights and Environmental Development. Portrayed as an international conflict The research also revealed that Sudanese and Arab media alike presented the Darfur stories as an international story, whereas the national dimension and root causes of the conflict received much less coverage in all media including Sudanese media. Interviews with News editors disclosed a wide range of details about the editorial choices, which the Darfur conflict was subjected including financial constraints in sending correspondents to the scene as well as red tape imposed by the Sudanese authorities on media attempting to cover the Darfur conflict on site. At a round table for news editors held in Amman, Jordan, participants agreed that the Arab media coverage of the crisis in Darfur is short of a number of aspects in the news coverage. A set of recommendations was presented in the closing statement from the meeting. Recommendations Based on the findings, the contributing organisations recommend that action be taken to: - Provide conflict sensitive journalism training to journalists as well as to editors and other gatekeepers so all involved in the process are on the same page; - Engage Sudanese authorities and parties involved in the conflict in dialogue regarding the media; in particular in relation to providing access to Darfur, ensuring the safety of journalists in Darfur; and resist from controlling and censoring media content; - Promote that the Sudanese and the Arab media adhere to objectivity, credibility, accuracy and balance in the coverage of Darfur conflict and upholding professional ethics. - Encourage that the Sudanese and the Arab media give more attention to the conflict in Darfur and to human rights issues with interest and concern for the coverage in the field. - Assist news outlets to ensure they have clear editorial policies regarding Darfur and conflict in general."

### Sudan postpones Lubna Ahmed al-Hussein trial

The trial of Sudanese journalist Lubna al-Hussein, indicted on indecency charges, was adjourned for a second time; the next court date is scheduled for 7 September. Lubna al-Hussein, who worked as a press officer for the UN, was arrested by the police along with

12 other women for wearing trousers (considered 'indecent clothing') in a Khartoum restaurant in July.

Date: 04/AUGUST/2009

Source: The Arabic Network for Human Rights Information website (Arabic)

<http://www.anhri.net/press/2009/pr0804.shtml>

## 3. International cooperation

### A Sudanese delegation visits Saudi Arabia

A Sudanese delegation comprising a number of businessmen and investors visited the Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Dammam. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is the biggest Arab investor in Sudan and the second international investor in the region after China. By the end of last year, trade exchange between Saudi Arabia and Sudan amounted to over \$ 850 million; and the number of Saudi investment projects in Sudan amounted to 79 projects in the industrial sphere and 20 projects in the agricultural field, in addition to 154 projects in the service sector.

Date: 26/AUGUST/2009

Source: Saudi Press Agency website (Arabic)

<http://www.spa.gov.sa/search.php?s=%C7%E1%D3%E6%CF%C7%E4&pg=2>

### Saudi Ambassador to Sudan hands over 30 ambulances to the Sudanese government

Saudi Red Crescent provided the Government of Sudan with 30 ambulances as part of its programme of assistance to hospitals in Darfur. The Saudi Ambassador to Sudan, Mohammed bin Abbas al-Kilabi, handed over the ambulances at a ceremony held in support of the Sudanese government.

Date: 20/AUGUST/2009

Source: Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs website (Arabic)

<http://www.mofa.gov.sa/Detail.asp?InNewsItemID=97967>

## ■ Chronology - August 2009

### 31 August

- The African Union Panel on Darfur (AUPD) submits a report to the African Union Commission.
- Rudolphe Adada, African Union-United Nations Joint Special Representative (JSR) in Darfur, finishes his mission.

### 29 August

- Two Darfur peacekeepers are abducted.

### 28 August

- UNAMID outgoing Commander Agwai says that the Darfur region should no longer be considered at a state of war.

### 27 August

- The situation at the border between Kenya and Sudan is improving.

### 25 August

- Force Commander General Martin Luther Agwai ends his mission.

### 24 August

- Four Darfur armed rebel factions agree to establish a unified front after a US-sponsored negotiation in Ethiopia.

### 23 August

- Quartet (US, Sudan, Egypt, Libya) consultation meeting in Cairo

### 22 August

- The African Union High Level Panel on Darfur arrives in Khartoum for its fourth mission to Sudan.

### 20 August

- UNAMID convenes a round table meeting of the parties and partners of the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) on the implementation of the DPA.

### 19 August

- US Special Envoy for Sudan Scott Gration travels to Southern Sudan to help complete an agreement between the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) and the National Congress Party (NCP).

### 18 August

- Lt. Gen. Patrick Nyamvumba, the new UNAMID commander, makes his first trip to Darfur as part of a familiarisation tour, before beginning his official duties on 1 September.

### 17 August

- UNAMID receives additional Egyptian peacekeepers.

### 14 August

- A new group of Tanzanian soldiers arrives in Darfur as part of the joint African Union-United Nations peacekeeping mission.

### 02 August

- The Government of Chad and three rebels groups sign a peace agreement in Tripoli.

## ■ Annex

'A quantitative and qualitative analysis: Media coverage of the Darfur conflict in Sudanese and non-Sudanese media'

<http://www.osservatorio.it/download/Darfur-report-PR-LD-14082009.pdf>

## List of Sources

### Regional organisations

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

### Ministries of Foreign Affairs

Qatar - Ministry of Foreign Affairs	<a href="http://www.mofa.gov.qa">http://www.mofa.gov.qa</a>
Saudi Arabia - Ministry of Foreign Affairs	<a href="http://www.mofa.gov.sa/">http://www.mofa.gov.sa/</a>
Libya - Ministry of Foreign Affairs	<a href="http://www.foreign.gov.ly/">http://www.foreign.gov.ly/</a>
Egypt - Ministry of Foreign Affairs	<a href="http://www.mfa.gov.eg/">http://www.mfa.gov.eg/</a>
Sudan - Ministry of Foreign Affairs	<a href="http://www.mfa.gov.sd/">http://www.mfa.gov.sd/</a>

### News agencies

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

### Arab think tanks and information

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

### Newspapers

Asharq Al-Awsat	<a href="http://www.asharqalawsat.com/">http://www.asharqalawsat.com/</a>
Al Hayat	<a href="http://www.alhayat.com/">http://www.alhayat.com/</a>
As Sahafa	<a href="http://www.alsahafa.sd/">http://www.alsahafa.sd/</a>
Sudan Tribune	<a href="http://www.sudantribune.com/">http://www.sudantribune.com/</a>
Al Ahram	<a href="http://www.ahram.org.eg/">http://www.ahram.org.eg/</a>
Al Watan Al Libi	<a href="http://www.alwatan-libya.com/">http://www.alwatan-libya.com/</a>
Tripoli Post	<a href="http://www.tripolipost.com/">http://www.tripolipost.com/</a>