



HDPTCAR/FICKR

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 July 2009

- The Hague's decision on the frontier in the Abyei region (North–South conflict)
- International dimensions of the conflict and the International Criminal Court (ICC) arrest warrant
- Darfur peace process
- Humanitarian situation in the region

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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

During this month the United Nations Security Council agreed to extend the work of the joint African Union-United Nations peacekeeping operation in Sudan for another year, thus showing the international community's basic commitment to this conflict. The UN effort is understandable, considering the continuing clashes between Sudan and Chad in the frontier region.

July was also an important month given the visit of the American president, Barack Obama, to Africa, where he reopened the discussion on whether the situation in Darfur should be called 'genocide' or not. The ongoing discussion in American diplomacy is part of the problem, while the North-South conflict seems to be increasingly important to the Sudanese political agenda. American officials recognised that the US lacks a 'comprehensive strategy in Sudan'.

Regarding the North–South conflict, the decision of the International Court of Arbitration in The Hague on the Abyei region establishes new boundaries without determining whether Abyei will belong to the North or the South (this will be determined in a later referendum in 2011). According to some experts, this new diplomatic front will decrease the possibility of reaching an agreement on Darfur. The Sudanese government wants to use talks between the National Congress Party (NCP) and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) on the North-South

conflict to increase contacts with American officials, but SPLM officials are refusing to play this role since the Sudanese government would use such contacts to its benefit in dealing with Darfur.

The 15th Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement in Egypt bore witness to Egypt's continuing diplomatic efforts to deal with Sudan's problems and limitations. The competition between Egypt and Qatar continued in this regard and was reflected in different initiatives.



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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.¹

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

- New clashes in the frontier region between Sudan and Chad show that the conflict is far from being solved.
- The kidnapping of foreign aid workers is still a security problem.
- The African Union (AU) and the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) do not have the resources to play the role of political partners in resolving the Darfur conflict.
- Qatar and Egypt, as the two main Arab brokers in the conflict, are much more centred on a bilateral solution.
- The new US Administration is developing a comprehensive approach to the Sudanese conflict that would be highly beneficial to both the conflict in Darfur and that between the North and South.
- There are differences among African countries regarding the ICC arrest warrant (South Africa's and Uganda's decisions are good examples).

July 2009 Arabic News Report

1 - Abyei Region

Russian reaction to the Abyei issue

Moscow welcomed the decision issued by the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague on the demarcation of the Sudanese Abyei area disputed between Northern and Southern Sudan. The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs said they expect this will be an important step towards a final settlement of the conflict.

Date: 27/JULY/2009

Source: Sudanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs website (Arabic)

<http://www.mfa.gov.sd/arabic/newsViewer.php?id= 3213>

Communiqué from the Sudanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The final and binding decision ends the three-year dispute over the region after the Sudanese presidency rejected the findings of the Abyei Boundary Commission in July 2005. The National Congress Party-led government and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement issued a joint communiqué saying that 'Abyei can be a model for peace, reconciliation and co-existence in Sudan'.



Date: 24/JULY/2009

Source: Sudanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs website (Arabic)

<http://www.mfa.gov.sd/arabic/newsViewer.php?id= 3211>

Aboul Gheit welcomes the acceptance of the parties to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement of the decision of the Permanent Court of Arbitration on Abyei

Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit welcomed the declaration of the parties to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement stating their acceptance of the decision issued by the Permanent Court of Arbitration on Abyei. He pointed out that the parties' commitment to implementing the

court's binding and final verdict is considered an important step towards implementing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

Date: 23/JULY/2009

Source: Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs website (Arabic)

http://www.mfa.gov.eg/MFA_Portal/ar-EG/MFA_News/Press_Releases/2372009sudanparties.htm

OIC Secretary-General welcomes the provision relating to the Abyei region

The Secretary-General of the OIC welcomed the decision of the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague. He expressed the hope that this step will contribute to the peace of the region. The Secretary-General gave his support to the efforts of the national government for peace and stability in Sudan and, at the same time, reaffirmed his organisation's commitment to this country.

Date: 22/JULY/2009

Source: OIC website (Arabic)

http://www.oic-oci.org/topic_detail.asp?t_id=2608&x_key

UN Secretary-General welcomes the decision of the Court of Arbitration on Abyei

The Secretary-General welcomed the decision of the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) on the final settlement of the Abyei dispute. The Secretary-General commended the intent of the parties to abide by and peacefully implement the PCA decision. The resolution of the Abyei dispute is a major step forward in the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA).

Date: 22/JULY/2009

Source: To Understand Darfur website (Arabic)

<http://ifhamdarfur.net/node/970>



2. International dimensions of the conflict and the ICC arrest warrant

US envoy says Sudan sanctions should be eased

General Scott Gration, the US Special Envoy for Sudan, told lawmakers he did not know of any intelligence to justify the placing of Sudan on the list of states that sponsor terrorism and suggested the sanctions were counterproductive to efforts to bring peace to Sudan. 'There is no evidence in our intelligence community that supports [Sudan] being on the state sponsors of terrorism list', Gration said. 'It's a political decision.'

Date: 30/JULY/2009

Source: Al Jazeera (English)

<http://english.aljazeera.net/news/africa/2009/07/200973153319914446.htm>

Saudi Ambassador to UN: fairer and stronger international court needed

The Saudi Ambassador to the UN said that a stronger and more equitable international court is needed, so states that commit war crimes will not go unpunished. 'Unfortunately ... as long as the Security Council has the power of veto, selective prosecution will continue to exist in this world no matter what kind of mechanism we create for Responsibility to Protect (R2P)', he added.

Date: 24/JULY/2009

Source: Saudi Arabian Ministry of Foreign Affairs website (in English - this new version was not on the Arabic website of the Ministry)

<http://www.mofa.gov.sa/Detail.asp?InNewsItemID=96886>

Keeping the ICC at bay

African leaders with weak human rights records are trying to undermine the credibility of the ICC and its prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo. In doing so, they are relying on the fact that three of the permanent member states of the UN Security Council that transferred the Darfur case to the ICC have not signed the Rome Statute establishing the ICC in the first place, namely, the United States, Russia and China.

Date: 9-15/JULY/2009

Source: Al-Ahram Weekly (English)

<http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2009/955/re3.htm>

Al-Bashir and Mubarak meet in Cairo

President Al-Bashir visited Cairo, where he participated in the Non-Aligned Movement Summit in Sharm el-Sheikh. During his visit he had a meeting with the Egyptian president

Hosni Mubarak, who declared Sudan to be 'a priority of Egyptian foreign policy'.

Date: 11/JULY/2009

Source: Al Jazeera website (Arabic)

<http://www.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/4B84EFCF-7772-47D8-AB8A-395D523D9F56.htm>

Final Documents of the 13th Ordinary Session of the AU

These reiterate the AU's previous positions articulated in the decisions Assembly/Dec.199(XI) and Assembly/Dec. 213 (XII), adopted in Sharm el-Sheikh and Addis Ababa in July 2008 and February 2009 respectively, to the effect that there has been blatant abuse of the principle of universal jurisdiction, particularly by some non-African states. Deep concern is expressed that indictments have continued to be issued in some European states against African leaders.

Date: 1-3/JULY/2009

Source: AU Website (Arabic, French and English)

<http://www.africa-union.org/root/AU/Conferences/2009/july/summit/13thsummit-ar.html>

3. Darfur peace process

Moussa meets Plumbly to discuss efforts to bring peace to Sudan

Mr Amr Moussa, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, met Mr Dereck Plumbly, Chairman of the Committee on Evaluation and Assessment of the Convention on Comprehensive Peace in the Sudan. They discussed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in Sudan and the need to examine the steps implemented.

Date: 27/JULY/2009

Source: Arab League web page (Arabic)

http://www.arableagueonline.org/las/arabic/news_details_ar.jsp?art_id=1625

According to the UN, people in Darfur may not participate in the coming elections, but the Sudanese government denies those reports

Alain Le Roy, UN Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, said that the inhabitants of Darfur may not be able to participate in the general elections to be held in April 2010, because of the remaining problems with the census and the displacement of many families of that region. The Sudanese government recognised those

problems but officials said that they will be solved during this year.

Date: 26/JULY/2009

Source: Asharq Al-Awsat (Arabic)

<http://www.aawsat.com/details.asp?section=4&issueno=11198&article=529090&search=%CF%C7%D1%DD%E6%D1&state=true>

Foreign Minister receives a delegation of Darfur faction leaders

A spokesman for the Egyptian Foreign Ministry stated that Egypt, through welcoming Darfur faction leaders, is aiming to become acquainted with the viewpoints of the different groups in order to encourage negotiations between the Sudanese government and faction groups. He outlined that the different factions expressed their willingness to respond to Egyptian endeavours due to their conviction that Egypt has an important regional and international status. Aboul Gheit pointed out that Egypt is in consultation with Libya to share viewpoints between the factions in order to resume negotiations with the government, and supports Libyan positive efforts to solve current conflicts between Sudan and Chad.

Date: 11/JULY/2009

Source: Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs website (Arabic)

http://www.mfa.gov.eg/MFA_Portal/ar-EG/MFA_News/Press_Releases/1172009Darfur1.htm



Final Document – XV Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement

Sudan

228 The Heads of State and Government commended the African Union (AU), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the Friends of IGAD for their indispensable role and efforts, which had culminated in the achievement of a Comprehensive Peace Agreement in January 2005 in Sudan, hence ending one of the long-running wars in the African continent and thereby contributing to regional peace, and called on donors to fulfil their commitments made in Oslo in 2005 and 2008 to help implement that agreement. They welcomed the signing on 5 May 2006 of the Darfur Peace Agreement in Abuja, Nigeria as a historic step towards lasting peace in Darfur, and further commended the AU for its leading role and efforts in sustaining peace and stability in the Darfur region. They encouraged the political process as a priority and emphasised the need to focus on developmental assistance in Darfur, as peace and development are mutually reinforced. They expressed the Movement's resolve, therefore, to support Sudan as well as the AU and IGAD in their efforts to sustain and reinforce peace in that country, and called on the international community to do likewise.

229 The Heads of State and Government reiterated their commitment to the sovereignty, unity, independence and territorial integrity of Sudan.

230 The Heads of State and Government noted with satisfaction the sustained efforts being made by the Government of the Sudan, the African Union, the League of Arab States and the United Nations to reactivate the political process leading to a lasting peace in Darfur. They expressed their conviction that no action should be taken that could jeopardise the delicate nature of the process underway in Sudan. In that context, the Heads of State and Government expressed deep concern over the recent move by the International Criminal Court (ICC) against the Honourable President of the Sudan, and considered that this action could seriously undermine the ongoing efforts aimed at facilitating the early resolution of the conflict in Darfur and the promotion of long-lasting peace and reconciliation in Sudan, and could lead to greater destabilisation with far-reaching consequences for the country and the region. Therefore, they decided to support steps in the United Nations and elsewhere aimed at defusing this new and dangerous situation, and preventing its recurrence.

Date: 16/JULY/2009

Source: Summit webpage (Arabic)

<http://www.namegypt.org/Relevant%20Documents/01%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%88%D8%AB%D9%8A%D9%82%D8%A9%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A%D8%AA%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%A9.doc>

4. Humanitarian issues

The Arabic Network for Human Rights Information (ANHRI) resents oppressive Sudanese practices and requests changes to the General Discipline Law

The General Discipline Police Authority filed a communiqué against the female reporter Amal Habbani, editor of the column 'Tiny Issues' in the 'Ajress Al-Horreya' (Freedom Bells) paper, after Amal wrote an article on 12 July 2009 supporting her colleague Lubna Al-Hussein. Amal was questioned by the press and publication prosecution on 20 July 2009. The communiqué is based on article 159 of the criminal law regarding defaming. The General Discipline Police Authority claimed a compensation of 10 million Sudanese pounds, amounting to US\$ 400,000, to be paid by the reporter.

Date: 22/JULY/2009

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

<http://www.anhri.net/press/2009/pr0722.shtml>



United Arab Emirates mobile hospital to go into operation within days in Southern Sudan

A third UAE relief plane carrying medical equipment and supplies for the Emirates World Humanitarian Mobile Hospital has landed in Juba, South Sudan, as part of the Red Crescent Authority's campaign to deliver curative and preventive services to the people in Southern Sudan.

Date: 12/JULY/2009

Source: UAE Interact website (English)

http://uaeinteract.com/docs/UAE_mobile_hospital_to_go_into_operation_wit_hin_days_in_South_Sudan/36722.htm

■ Chronology - June 2009

31 July

- Darfur peacekeepers to stay for another year.
- The South African government has said it will be obliged to arrest Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir if he sets foot in the country.

30 July

- The EU and the US have welcomed the redefined boundaries of the oil-rich Abyei area in Sudan.

24 July

- The UN and the AU have announced that Rwandan Lieutenant-General Patrick Nyamvumba will be the next Force Commander of their joint peacekeeping mission in the Sudanese region of Darfur.

23 July

- The South African government is seeking legal advice on how to respond to the international arrest warrant against Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir.

22 July

- The UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Sudan, Ashraf Qazi, welcomed the court ruling in The Hague on the disputed oil-rich area of Abyei.

21 July

- The UN condemns bombings on the Sudan-Chad border.

20 July

- The AU Special Envoy to the Darfur region, Salim Ahmed Salim, has said the indictment of Sudanese President Omar Al-Bashir by the International Criminal Court is not the best solution to the problems in the troubled area.

19 July

- Court in The Hague redefines Sudan's Abyei boundaries.

18 July

- The head of the joint AU-UN peacekeeping mission in Darfur called on Sudan and Chad to end any hostile activities along their border.

17 July

- Bashir cancels Uganda visit after arrest controversy.

13 July

- Sudanese and Egyptian presidents discuss Darfur.

12 July

- Sudan says Obama's labelling of Darfur as genocide is 'a step back'.

11 July

- 15th summit meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement in Egypt.

8 July

- ICC prosecutor pushes for genocide charges against Sudan's president.

6 July

- Irish delegation arrives in Sudan to free abducted aid workers.
- Sudanese opposition parties decry elections delay.

4 July

- The AU agrees to protect Sudanese president from arrest.
- Gunmen abduct two aid workers in Darfur.

3 July

- Libya denies Qaddafi's support for the independence of Southern Sudan.

2 July

- The US calls on Sudan's president to stand before the ICC.

1 July

- Sudan delays national elections for the second time.

■ List of Sources

Regional organisations

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

Qatar - 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.jananeews.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

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

Asharq 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/