

Annex 50/2

ICC-02/05-03/09-HNE-36



SUDAN HUMAN SECURITY BASELINE ASSESSMENT

ICC-02/05-03/09-370-Anx50/2 23-07-2012 2/3 RH T

Home | Print | Feedback | العربية

Request free publications



PROJECT

FACTS & FIGURES

PUBLICATIONS

DOCUMENTS

LINKS

The Sudan-Chad Proxy War

The current leaders of Sudan and Chad, Presidents Omar al-Bashir and Idriss Déby, respectively, are two army officers who took power by force at about the same time—1989 (Bashir) and 1990 (Déby)—the latter with the former's support. They managed to maintain friendly relations for more than 12 years despite their different alignments: Bashir as the president of an Islamist regime mistrusted by the United States and Déby as an ally of the West keen to solidify relations with Washington (as well as Exxon, which runs the Chadian oil project). Their initial good relationship survived numerous attempts by opposition groups from both countries to find rear bases on the other side of the 600 km long Sudan-Chad border.

Their relationship began to change with the Darfur uprising in 2003, in particular after the Sudan Liberation Army and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) attacked the Al Fasher airport in North Darfur in April, humiliating the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF). The commanders who led those early armed opposition groups were Beri (Zaghawa and Bideyat, Déby's tribe), including Chadian army officers whose defection Déby had been unable to prevent. The Chadian president then tried and failed to prevent more Beri from joining or supporting the Darfur rebellion. In return, in particular since 2005, Bashir started to support Chadian groups seeking rear bases and arms in Khartoum. This proxy war culminated with armed opposition attacks on both capitals: N'Djaména in April 2006 and February 2008, and Khartoum in May 2008.

After May 2009, however, as raids on both sides of the border encountered unusual resistance, and as each regime failed to unite its neighbour's opposition groups into efficient coalitions, Khartoum and N'Djaména began a serious rapprochement. As a result, Khartoum began to move Chadian groups away from the border. Chad reciprocated by demanding the withdrawal of the UN Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT) from its territory and strongly pressuring JEM to sign a peace agreement, before expelling it (including the movement's chairman, Khalil Ibrahim) from Chadian territory. In July 2010, Sudan ordered four main Chadian armed opposition group leaders to leave its territory, sending them to Qatar. Déby visited Khartoum in February 2010 and Bashir flew to N'Djaména in July. This last visit earned Chad—a signatory of the Rome Statute establishing the International Criminal Court and thus obliged to arrest Bashir—strong criticism from the West. Since July, several hundred Chadian opposition forces, most from marginal splinter groups, have given up fighting and returned home, some on flights chartered by the governments of Chad and Sudan, others by their own means. In October, some 2,000 combatants—most of those remaining in Darfur—agreed to be disarmed by the Sudanese government.

As of mid-2010 it appeared that both countries had given up their proxy conflict to concentrate on other important events: the Sudanese referendum on South Sudan's self-determination, which was successfully held on January 2011, and the presidential election in Chad, also scheduled for 2011.

But the rapprochement is far from sufficient to solve either the Darfur conflict or the problem of Chad's democratic deficit, and both internal crises still have the capacity to cause regional destabilization. The armed opposition groups who joined the Chadian government remain largely dissatisfied with the government, which is showing no intention of fulfilling its many promises to them, in particular of (re)integrating rebel combatants into the army. Armed opposition members were also shocked by the arrests in November 2010 of several of their leaders, including Tahir Guinassou (Union des forces de la résistance/Union of Resistance Forces—UFR—splinter group) and Tahir Wodji (UFR ex-chief of staff), who returned to Chad after negotiations with the government in September and October 2010.

The number of Chadian armed opposition groups has been considerably reduced (to fewer than 1,000 as of early 2011), but some troops are still active in North Darfur, where they seem to have turned to banditry to survive. There are unconfirmed reports of others having joined SAF, together with militias from Darfur, in the contested areas of Abyei and southern Blue Nile. Some 300–400 Chadian rebels from the Missiriya Arab tribe have reportedly joined their Sudanese kin in Abyei, while another 400 (Arabs, as well as Ouaddaïan and Tama) are currently being trained, together with several thousand recruits from Darfur, near Damazin in southern Blue Nile, possibly to support locally recruited pro-Khartoum militias.

Perhaps more importantly, Chadian armed opposition groups who refuse to be disarmed or controlled by Khartoum remain active at the tri-border area where the Central African Republic, Chad, and Sudan meet. Their hope is to find support in South Sudan, where some of them have connections from before the Darfur conflict.

Another potential ally for the Chadian armed opposition is the Darfur armed opposition, in particular JEM, which has managed to survive its expulsion from Chad and, together with most Darfurian armed opposition groups, is also seeking other external supporters. South Sudan, again, is considered a likely candidate.

For a chronology of the Sudan-Chad proxy war, [click here](#). [Click here](#) for a chronology of the Darfur Peace Process.

Updated March 2011

ICC-02/05-03/09-370-Anx50/2 23-07-2012 3/3 RH T

Relevant HSBA Publications

Requiem for the Victims of the Proxy War Between Sudan and Chad
by Jérôme Tubiana, March 2011
(in French, in French)

Send Feedback

© The Sudan Human Security Baseline Assessment Project 2010
Website: www.smallarmssurveysudan.org



THE GRADUATE INSTITUTE (GENEVA)
INSTITUTE OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES
INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF DEVELOPMENT
CONFERENCES, RESEARCH, PUBLICATIONS,
AND CONSULTANCY SERVICES