



Human Rights and Advocacy Network for Democracy (HAND)

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Disturbance in Darfur's IDP Camps

Political polarisation, tension and violence are mounting among the internally displaced persons (IDPs) and war-affected communities in Darfur. The situation turned into violent confrontation between would be political rivals in the last two weeks of July 2010. Plots to assassinate political opponents, killing and indiscriminate destruction of property and forced displacement were reported in at least two major IDP camps i.e. El-Hamidiya near Zalengie in Western Darfur State and in Kalma, near Nyala in Southern Darfur State. An unknown number of IDPs were arrested and detained incommunicado by the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) during the last three weeks. The recent tension is directly linked to the participation of some IDP leaders and civil society representatives, as observers, in the peace talks on Darfur that are currently taking place in Doha (Qatar). While the overwhelming majority of the IDPs and war-affected communities in Darfur have regarded the peace talks in Doha with suspicious eyes, however, manipulation and intimidation by the Sudan Liberation Army/Movement faction led by Mr. Abdelwahid M. A. Al-Nur (SLA/M-AW) on the one hand and the Government of Sudan (GoS) and the Liberation and Justice Movement (LJM) on the other, had radicalised IDPs' political stands and divided them into anti and pro-Doha peace process.

The situation of unrest and disturbance in the IDP settlements started when some IDP groups questioned the neutrality and independence of the process of selection of their representatives that attended the Doha peace talks on Darfur. The disgruntled groups challenged the political position assumed by some IDP participants during the Doha talks. This situation is expected to degenerate into further dichotomy and disturbance as a result of the new strategy on peace in Darfur which was declared by GoS recently. The government's new strategy aims at resolving the armed conflict in Darfur from within the country and accordingly GoS unilaterally decided to involve civil society groups, tribal chieftains and parliamentarians in the peace talks on Darfur on equal footings with the representatives of the Darfur insurgent movements. The new developments would further polarise the tense political situation among IDPs and war-affected communities in Darfur, hamper the peace process and eventually create more conflicts in Darfur between the different ethnic groups.

27, Ch. des Crêts-de-Pregny, 1218 Grand-Saconnex, Geneva (Switzerland) Tel: 0041 22 747 00 89 Fax: 0041 22 747 00 38 E-mail: info@darfurcentre.ch Webpage: <http://www.darfurcentre.ch>

It was reported that since mid-July 2010, SLA/M-AW has started a campaign of harassment and intimidation against IDP leaders that attended the Doha peace talks and in particular those known to be in support of the Doha process. It was also alleged that SLA/M-AW ordered its followers in all the IDP camps to expel pro-Doha IDP leaders and to get rid of what they considered as the “*fifth column*” recruited by the NISS inside the camps and for this purpose it was reported that several SLA/M-AW soldiers were deployed in some of the major IDP camps to harass and intimidate the pro-Doha IDP leaders. It was alleged that in a meeting held by SLA/M-AW’s supporters in Kalma camp on 22nd July 2010, a list of 37 IDP leaders was circulated and identified as potential targets for assassination. On 23rd July 2010, a member of the SLA/M-AW (Commander Hussien Zambiga) was arrested by a group of IDPs while he was allegedly in his way to assassinate Omda Saleh Ahmed, tribal leader of Dajo tribe in Kalma camp and a strong supporter of the Doha peace process. The SLA/M-AW soldier was handed over to the police station run by the African Union/United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) in Kalma camp. UNAMID has eventually transferred him to the Sudanese security forces. Six other IDP leaders including one woman entered UNAMID police office in Kalma camp seeking refuge and protection from angry Dajo IDP mobs. UNAMID has threatened to hand over these persons to the NISS¹ anytime where there is high degree of risk that these persons will face ill-treatment, severe torture, enforced disappearance or extra-judicial killing.

On 27th July 2010, three IDPs were killed by unidentified gunmen inside Hamidiya IDP camp, Zalingei, Western Darfur State. The slain IDPs were allegedly supporters of the LJM and were targeted for their support of GoS and the Doha peace process. According to eyewitnesses, the three men were caught when they attacked Mr. Zakaria Harun, a youth leader in the camp, for his opposition to the Doha peace process. Two of the attackers were beaten to death by Doha opponents. Four other persons blamed for planning the attack were captured and handed over to UNAMID police station. An IDP leader at Hamadiya camp Mr. Ismail Harun Abdullah accused GoS of destabilizing the camp by arming some IDPs to create chaos. GoS security forces arrested Mr. Abdullah on 30th July 2010 when he was on his way to Zalingei hospital for medical treatment.

On 28th July 2010, SLA/M-AW called upon its supporters in Kalma camp to go out in a peaceful demonstration and submit a petition to UNAMID calling on the latter to stop assisting pro-Doha IDP leaders and facilitate their movement to propagate the political positions of one party to the conflict among the vulnerable IDP population. On 29th July 2010, a group of IDPs went to UNAMID compound in Kalma camp to discuss the content of their petition but UNAMID soldiers refused to receive the IDPs’ delegation and shot in the air to disband the crowd. The demonstration turned violent and a number of IDP dwellings were burnt down in Centres 1 and 2 in Kalma camp, which are inhabited by majority members of the Dajo tribe that are considered as pro-Doha peace process. About 35

¹ UNAMID chief threatens to hand over Kalma delegates to Sudanese government – IDPs, Sudan Tribune, 12th August 2010, <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article35928>

houses in Centres 1 and 2 were burned by supporters of SLA/M–AW and most of their dwellers were forced to move to Nyala. About 70% of those who fled the camp are currently in Baba and Bilail IDP camps. It is estimated that about 60% of the 100,000 residents of Kalma IDP camp have fled to Nyala, Baba and Bilail. During this riot a medical clinic run by the International Medical Corp (IMC) was burned and looted.

In addition to the ongoing violence there is severe shortage of food, medicine, potable water and other essential service in the IDP camps which also played a major role in accelerating the new IDP exodus. Food rations were not distributed to the IDPs in the days preceded the riot which left thousands of IDPs who fled Kalma with hardly any thing to eat. Increasing numbers of IDPs are currently leaving Kalma camp with their belongings to resettle in Bilail village and the environs of Nyala. It appears that the IDPs were split into three groups with GoS supporters fleeing to Nyala, SLA-AW supporters fleeing to Bilail and Baba camps in the south and east of Nyala while some politically active persons stayed inside the camp. By 31st July 2010 over 40,000 people or 65% of Kalma camp dwellers were believed to have fled. In their journey, the IDPs have to face a thorough search of their belongings at government security check-points. A number of IDPs reported that they have lost money and other valuables during this search.

There are also growing fears among the IDPs that Kalma camp is no longer a safe place as it is being invaded by GoS elements disguised as IDPs and that a growing number of such persons and military material are brought to the camp by government vehicles at nights with the complicity of the IDPs that support the Doha process. More IDPs are expected to leave Kalma camp in the coming weeks as there are credible reports about continuing influx of SLA/M–AW soldiers and NISS agents inside the camp. Sabotage of some installation and service centres was also reported in Kalma camp. On 9th August 2010 and during daytime a major primary school centre near the railway line in the eastern part of Kalma camp had burned by unknown men. The suspected arsonists fired shots at a UNAMID patrol team that went to the scene to investigate the arson. Some IDP leaders expressed fears that movement of IDPs outside Kalma camp meets an old goal set by GoS to gain full control over the IDP camps in Darfur, split the IDPs on ethnic and political lines, and finally, dismantle the IDP camps all over the region.

Medical service in Nyala confirmed that at least 13 IDPs were killed in Kalma camp during the violence in the last week of July 2010 while uncounted number of dead bodies remained inside the camp because nobody was able to have safe access to Centres 4, 6 and 7 areas of Kalma camp. About 45 IDPs were injured and arrived in different hospitals to get medical treatment including those who were evacuated by UNAMID on 28th and 29th July 2010. More than 100 people were arrested in Nyala, El-Fashir and Zalengie towns in relation to the disturbance while around 40 IDPs were arrested in Kalma and El-Himidiya IDP camps in the last week of July 2010. An injured IDP man aged 79 years old who was receiving medical treatment in Nyala hospital since 29th July 2010 had been arrested by the security forces from his hospital bed and taken to Bilail Police station. There are reports of

widespread ill-treatment, beatings and severe torture practiced by the security forces on the arrested anti-Doha IDPs.

UNAMID continued its joint military/police patrols in Kalma camp and among IDPs elsewhere in Darfur in an attempt to restore calm in a delicate situation. It has been accused by GoS and the SLA/M–AW of supporting the other party. On 30th July 2010 government authorities in Southern Darfur State announced that they will impose draconian measures on UNAMID soldiers including systematic search of their bags at airports and check points. It was also declared that movement of UNAMID personnel will be closely monitored by GoS and its soldiers will be obliged to take permission from the government about their movements even inside the major towns of Darfur. Imposing such measures represent clear violations of the agreements signed between the two sides.² Aggressions against UNAMID soldiers have increased recently and on 4th August 2010 two unidentified armed men car-jacked a Nissan Patrol vehicle and robbed personnel belongings, including a laptop, from a UNAMID military officer near the Turkish hospital inside Nyala. In another aggression on 4th August 2010 a Toyota Hilux Twin Cab Pick-up owned by a UNAMID Contractor was car-jacked by a group of armed men at about 100m from a GoS–manned military checkpoint on the way between UNAMID Super Camp and Nyala town. The occupants of the vehicle were forced out and the car was driven off towards Nyala.

Participation of IDPs and civil society in the peace process was thought as a means to avoid the failure of the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) signed in Abuja (Nigeria) in June 2006 between the GoS and the SLA/M led by Mr. Mini Minnawi (SLA/M–MM). The SLA/M–AW and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) rejected the DPA claiming that it did not provide a solid ground for solution of the armed conflict in Darfur or meet the aspiration of the people of the region or address key demands put forward by the IDPs and the war-affected communities. The DPA enjoyed very limited support in Darfur with practically no backing from civil society or the IDPs, refugees and other victims of the armed conflict.

On the other hand, there were concerns that the negotiations between GoS and the Darfur insurgent movements are an exercise among unrepresentative parties and accordingly there were calls for meaningful engagement of the IDPs and refugees in the peace negotiation.³ Engagement of civil society in the peace process in Darfur was encouraged by the UN Security Council in its resolution S/RES/1828 (2008) of 31st July 2008 which underlined: “... *the need for the engagement of civil society, including women and women-led organizations, community groups and tribal leaders*” in the peace process in Darfur.⁴ To ensure wider support to future peace agreements in Darfur, the Joint AU/UN Chief Mediator for Darfur Mr. Djibril Bassole’ encouraged the participation of civil society in the ongoing peace process through a civil society track. While the modalities and criteria for contribution

² Sudan Tribune, Sudan relations with UNAMID reaches low point, Tuesday, 3 August 2010 <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article35843>

³ Thomas-Jensen, Colin., and Prendergast, John., A Strategy for Success in Sirte, ENOUGH Strategy Paper #10 November 2007 <http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2007/11/pdf/enough13.pdf>

⁴ UN Security Council Resolution S/RES/1828 (2008) of 31st July 2008 <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N08/446/02/PDF/N0844602.pdf?OpenElement>

and participation of civil society in the peace process have not been clearly defined, articulated or agreed upon by the parties to the conflict yet, such participation seems to be imposed as one of the main tracks contributing to the peace process. The participation of civil society has been welcomed as a positive development in the peace-making in Darfur, but the lack of agreed upon selection criteria and manipulation of the process of selection of participants by the GoS produced negative consequences. Another crucial element is that because of their different constituencies, (Native Administration, Nomads and *Janjaweed*, IDPs, women, students and youth, etc.), the representatives of civil society organizations could have various and sometimes conflicting demands and priorities.

The Doha civil society track has started with the Inaugural Civil Society Conference held in mid-November 2009 with the participation of about 170 representatives from the different constituencies (States, districts and ethnic backgrounds). Although there were some representatives of IDPs at the Inaugural Conference, but the overwhelming majority of them rejected the outcomes of the Conference and instead they called for good will measures on the part of GoS. The IDP demands were centred on the provision of sound security measures, disarmament of Arab militia, immediate release of IDP leaders imprisoned by the NISS and lifting of restrictions on freedom of movement of persons in Darfur and guarantee of smooth inflow of goods and relief material to the IDP settlements. So far these demands were not met by GoS.

Disagreement and opposition to the Doha peace process has remained an outstanding position for many IDPs in their major settlements (Kalma and Dereg camps in Southern Darfur State; El-Himidiya, Hasahesa and Khamsa Dagaig camps in Western Darfur State as well as Abushouk camp in Northern Darfur State. Several statements against the Doha peace process were made by various IDP leaders in these camps since November 2009, when they were invited by the Chief Mediator to participate in the Civil Society Inaugural Conference. Many IDP leaders have also boycotted the workshops organized by the Mediation Team and UNAMID to build consensus around the declaration made by the civil society participants at the Inaugural Conference of November 2009.⁵

Although there were continuing objections, remarks and demands made by the IDPs towards participation in the Doha civil society track, the Mediation Team selected 60 IDPs to attend the IDPs/Refugees conference held in Doha late in June 2010, and the second Civil Society Conference held in July 2010. The selection of IDPs was challenged since most of the actual leaders in the IDPs camps were not invited for their opposition to the whole process. There are concerns that most of the IDP representatives that participated in the Doha Second Civil Society Conference were in fact selected with the full approval of GoS and upon its recommendations. There were also concerns that such individuals were selected on their individual capacities and not as key IDP leaders delegated by their consecutive constituencies to convey their demands.

⁵ Radio Dabanga Network, Interviews with Sheikhs from the IDPs camps in Darfur, March 2010. <http://195.190.28.213/node/131>

Conclusion and Recommendations

The situation in the major IDP settlements in Darfur in particular in Kalma IDP camp is very critical. Reported influx of weapons and government and rebel soldiers inside and around the camp represent a serious menace to the safety and security of the IDP population that remained inside the camps.

A considerable number of IDPs in Darfur, especially those fleeing the camps in search of security, have lost access to shelter and life-saving relief material since the international relief organizations are directing their shrinking provisions to those in calm settlements. Many IDPs had fled before they received the latest food rations. Due to the rainy season there is no way for the IDPs to survive without urgent provision of basic daily needs. Those IDPs who fled to the cities and towns in Darfur are now dependent on themselves to secure shelter, medicine, food and potable water.

Durable peace in Darfur could only be achieved by addressing the concerns of the most victimized and marginalized constituencies like IDPs and women.⁶ Involvement of the concerned stakeholders in the peace process is a holistic approach that could ensure the people's ownership of the future peace agreement. It is expected that the participation of civil society, women groups and traditional leaders in the peace process would add important and informed consultative opinion. However, serious difficulties remain to be addressed by the Mediation Team especially with regard to the role to be played by the IDPs, refugees and civil society groups. A key area would also be agreement on clear criteria on the identification and selection of resourceful, informed, representative and independent civil society groups.

The Human Rights and Advocacy Network for Democracy (HAND) strongly condemns the recent violence and disturbances in IDP camps in Southern and Western Darfur States and calls on SLA/M-AW, LJM and GoS and their supporters to cease hostilities and restore calm in the camps. The parties to the conflict in Darfur in particular the SLA/M-AW, LJM and GoS should also cease all attempts to manipulate and intimidate IDPs in order to support or reject the Doha peace process.

Because of the mounting tension among the IDPs and war-affected communities in Darfur at the present time, intervention of the UN Security Council is strongly urged in order to evaluate the situation and to undertake measures that could avert the imminent military confrontation in the camps.

GoS should cease all its plans aiming at raiding the Kalma and other IDP camps in Darfur and dismantling them. GoS ongoing plans to invade and disarm the Kalma camp dwellers seem to be the first leg in this dismantling programme. Dismantling of the IDP camps would

⁶ The initiative for inclusive security, 2007

http://www.huntalternatives.org/download/583_creating_an_inclusive_peace_process_in_darfur_6_18_07.pdf

eventually put the lives of thousands of vulnerable IDPs into serious dangers and renewed displacement and would lead to avoidable riot, disturbance, violence and destruction of lives and livelihoods.

HAND calls on the GoS to put immediate end to its campaign of arrest and incommunicado detention of IDP leaders, to investigate and put an end to the ill-treatment and torture inflicted upon IDP leaders currently held in detention centres and to produce those people before independent courts.

The warring parties in Darfur in particular GoS should refrain from putting any pressure on UNAMID and the humanitarian community that would hinder their ability to provide security and humanitarian assistance to the needy civilians in Darfur. GoS should lift all travel bans and other restrictions on the movement of UNAMID and the national and international humanitarian organisations and accord them all assistance to ensure smooth conduct of their activities.

UNAMID is encouraged to conduct night and day patrolling missions and to reinforce its presence around the major IDP settlements in Darfur, to continue the search for the wounded and to help them to get medical treatment. It should spare no effort to re-establish security and stability in the camps that would encourage IDPs to return. UNAMID should refrain from providing any cover or support for the government's plans for disarmament of the camp dwellers and eventual dismantling of these camps.

The World Food Program and all other international humanitarian organizations present in the region need to redouble their efforts and ensure that food is distributed to the IDPs, especially to those who fled the camp, as well as to maintain health and other emergency services.

For more information

Kampala, Abdelrahim Abulbashar hand.sudan@gmail.com Tel: +256 7 84 94 35 13

Geneva, Maria Behrens info@darfurcentre.ch Tel: +41 787 16 37 70