



Global Peacebuilding Association

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The United Nations African Union Hybrid Operation in Darfur: Transition from Peacekeeping to Peace Building in Darfur

Global Peacebuilding Association of Japan (GPAJ) and

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Part 1: General Overview



Babacar Cissé is the Assistant Secretary-General (ASG) for the United Nations- African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID). He was the former UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Sudan and Deputy Special Representative for the UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire,

On April 8th, 2004, the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) was sought to address the conflict between Sudan's government and the different rebel groups in Darfur, which came after the signing of the Ndjamena Ceasefire Agreement. AMIS's mandate was to monitor and observe compliance with the ceasefire while facilitating humanitarian relief delivery. AMIS played a central role in maintaining security in Darfur; yet it was criticized for lacking resources and capacities. .

Despite the African Union's assistance, the Darfur conflict continued to be known as the worst humanitarian disaster of the century, with an estimated 2.7 million internally displaced people (IDPs), 650,000 refugees and 450,000 people dead. The first series of peace agreements failed and fighting continued. The United States characterized the conflict as genocide and multiple resolutions by the UN Security Council Resolutions passed.

In 2007, the African Union Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) and the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) deployed the UN-African Union Hybrid Operation in Darfur. The UN covered financial, logistic, and military support. The AU provided political regional leverage. However, they could have had a more

robust and consistent political approach on Darfur with the government. The mission suffered from a lack of strategic backing to play a more influential role.

To provide support to local communities affected by the existing conflict, UNAMID focused on peacebuilding initiatives, covering the rule of law, governance, gender-based violence, community policing, transitional justice, human rights, and DDR. The Protection of Civilians and Human Rights helped decrease casualties from 1000 in 2010 to less than 400 between 2017 and 2018. UNAMID also supported the establishment of 54 women protection networks across five states in Darfur. This provided real-time information on security threats from first responders. Since 2009, the UNAMID Child Protection Unit established over 1,800 community-based child protection committees (CPC), preventing and responding to violations against children. CPCs also aimed to respond to local communities, reinforce information sharing on grave violations, and promote local ownership of child protection. In 2011, the UNAMID supported humanitarian agencies to gain access to the West Jebel Mara.

In terms of gender, the UNAMID also supported the Darfur-wide consultations that aimed to help reach common ground on women's issues among representatives who developed a joint position paper for Juba Peace Talks, focusing on women-centered security reform.

The UNAMID, in collaboration with UN agencies, brought the amendment of the Criminal Act in 1991. It also brought international crimes under the domestic jurisdiction of Sudanese Courts in 2008 and 2015. These efforts discontinued charging women with adultery in cases of alleged rape where the victim became pregnant. Among other accomplishments, the UNAMID helped to extend the Darfur prison national strategic plan for an additional five years (2018-2023); revise the Prisons and Treatment of Inmates Act of 2010; enact the Public Prosecution Act of 2017, and establish the Office of Public Prosecution separate from the Ministry of Justice. The development of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) on Prison Management and Reinforcement of Rural Courts' capacity addressed inter-communal conflicts. To enhance access to justice, legal awareness, and accountability for the most vulnerable lead to the establishment of legal aid in 2010 within the Ministry of Justice in North Darfur and other states.

The UNAMID formally supported the disarmament and demobilization of over 10,000 ex-combatants from both the DPA (2006) and the DDPD (2011). The Mission provided technical advice, financial, logistics, and capacity-building support to the Sudan DDR Commission (SDDRC) and Darfur Security Arrangement Implementation Commission (DSAIC).

The Community Stabilization Programme (CSP) was part of the mission's strategy to support the government of Sudan address the social exclusion of at-risk youth, reducing violence in communities, building trust, contributing to a secure environment, and consolidating peace in Darfur. In actual terms, the CSP was intended to provide employment and training opportunities for 3,000 young men and women, but it eventually supported over 10,000 youth (2011-2019) and vulnerable community members.

In June 2017, following an extensive disarmament campaign in Darfur 2017, the Security Council decided to gradually reduce UNAMID forces to nearly half the current strength, The UN Security Council requested UNAMID to consolidate the whole-of-system approach for. They also requested for the UNAMID to focus on peacekeeping while providing sustainable solutions to conflict drivers.

The mission's withdrawal from Darfur took place with approximately 1.8 million IDPs still in camps, Darfur experiencing pockets of armed conflict and a spike in inter-communal violence. The transition objective of UNAMIDs was always to move beyond peacekeeping and towards peacebuilding, which would contribute towards sustainable peace. The transition consisted of three pillars including political (through the Juba peace agreement), security (the government takes up physical protection), and peacebuilding.

Mr. Babacar Cissé's presentation focused on the peacebuilding aspects of the process implemented by the UN Agencies Programs and Funds (APFs). The SLFs emerged in 2018 following a critical juncture in the existence of UNAMID. The Security Council mandated the UN in Sudan to use a unique programmatic transition tool in Darfur.. The SLFs were established to shift the focus from peacekeeping to peacebuilding, with an overall aim to towards preventing a conflict relapse. SLF implementation began in 2019. Approximately 45 million USD from the assessed budget was provided under the programmatic lead of ten UN Agencies, Funds, and Programs, and almost 100 UNAMID staff. The staff included Individual Police Officers (IPOs) and some IPOs were embedded with the Sudanese Police Force. SLF projects were designed to address the root causes of conflict in areas where the UNCT and UNAMID had the comparative advantage to work together. Therefore, we worked jointly on the potential conflict triggers of land, resources, and the return of displaced people and refugees. These programs were implemented in four priority sectors including - Rule of Law, Human Rights, Livelihoods, and Immediate Service Delivery. The SLFs aimed to strengthen "liaison" functions with the government and transition activities to the UN country team and UNITAMS.

Results in the first year showed that East Darfur saw an increase in peacebuilding programming and presence of the UNCT. Two different agencies in line with the rule of law and human rights, provided 300 pieces of training or workshops, supported over 10,000 returnees, trained 60,000 Darfuris (women, men, and youth) across a range of issues within the context of the rule of law, human rights, and violence prevention. They constructed 29 courts, 15 police stations, and community policing centers in Darfur's potential conflict areas. UNAMID also trained 655 paralegals; 612 Sudan police officers; 458 Family and Child Protection Unit professionals; 225 child judges and prosecutors; 137 prosecutors; and 90 district court judges. All these entities strengthened and enhanced access to justice and legal aid systems for vulnerable groups. Two hundred civil society members, including women lawyers, were trained in trial monitoring, focusing on SGBV; and 384 prison officers were trained on Human Rights approaches to prison management in four of the five Darfur states.

However, significant challenges remain. The Mission had minimal time to plan and operationalize this programmatic transition concept with the UNCT and the government,, which was exacerbated by the geographic separation and difference in focus between UNAMID (Darfur focused) and the UNCT (Sudan

focus). A more substantive challenge to the SLFs resulted from the tensions between political and humanitarian work and dilemmas around the prioritization of Mission objectives and UN agency objectives.

The objective during any transition process includes a coherent UN contribution towards sustaining peace and minimizing the possibility of conflict relapse. Maintaining peace requires sustained support, especially in an unpredictable environment like Darfur, where significant protection concerns persist. Therefore, post-UNAMID support to the government of Sudan in sustaining relative peace. Furthermore, trust needs to be built between the population and authorities. Despite challenges, the Juba Peace Agreement provided an opportunity for the government and former rebel movements to define priorities with the UN jointly and reach the sustained peace in Darfur. Sudan's political and social revolution harbors a unique window of opportunity, unavailable for generations. At this critical juncture, the international community's support must be harnessed to mobilize resources to support the political and peacebuilding pillars of Sudan's transition.

Part 2: Discussion

The following section is a summary of the dialogue-based discussion between participants and Mr. Cissé. It contains the description of questions, followed by detailed answers.



Tadamichi Yamamoto, SRSG in Afghanistan and Ambassador to UNESCO

“The transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding requires a change of mind. A lack of understanding of the long-term outcome may lead to a collapse. What do you find to be most challenging in terms of dealing with political interests? How does it square with the expectations of the people? Do they understand the situation? Is it accepted?”

Mr. Babacar Cissé’s Response

“The main challenge is the lack of trust among the political actors, leadership, and people. The transitional government is ready to take up this responsibility but will need to build consensus around a common vision and approach of conducting the political dialogue and addressing Sudan’s remaining challenges after the mission ends. Sustaining a political dialogue is essential to address key concerns regarding human rights, justice, land, and poverty issues. Addressing effectively these issues will require a full commitment of the government and support of the international community.”



Ilidio Ximenes da Costa, Ambassador of Timor-Leste to Japan

“If the problem came from the people, the solution must also come from the people themselves, which they would facilitate themselves. The UN and AU are just facilitating the mediation. The solution cannot come from the outside. How far do you involve the stakeholders for the goal of achieving peace? What kind of approach do you use against arms? What kind of approach is necessary to put together the factions?”

Mr. Babacar Cissé’s Response

“The role of Sudanese stakeholders including local communities is critical but due to the lack of trust, they need the support from external partners to facilitate this dialogue and or mediation. The role of the Sudanese stakeholders is key in peacemaking. The role of the UN and AUPSC was to bring them around the table without restraining the issues and challenges at stake. As all actors aspire for lasting peace, and steady progress has been made recently with the signing of the Juba Peace Agreement.”



Yasuhiro Ueki, Professor of Sophia University, Former UN Spokesperson:

“Protection of civilians had been given significant attention by the UN, who produced a set of guidelines regarding the level of force used to protect civilians. The peace agreement aims to create a single national army. Where does it stand at the moment? Is it being applied in Darfur? During the transition, the budget was built into UN peacekeeping. However, at the moment, the UN does not provide financing. It has to be mobilized, which may create difficulties. What is the current role of the peacebuilding

commission? Do they play an active role in mobilizing resources?”

Mr. Babacar Cissé’s Response:

“The POC will be central in Sudan following the departure of UNAMID. The new United Nations Integrated Transitional Assistance Mission for Sudan (UNITAM) has neither a physical protection mandate nor the capacity to provide such assistance. This will be the government's responsibility with some civilian protection from the UN agencies and UNITAMS. That being said, it should be noted that there has been a significant decrease in the number of deaths resulting from intercommunal violence and armed conflicts. Although signatories to the Juba Peace Agreement have committed to the formation of one national army, the Security Sector Reform (SSR) is yet to be achieved. Sudan is still lacking capacities including formed and well-trained security forces for ensuring adequate protection of civilians.

The role of peacebuilding funds has been critical in supporting durable solution initiatives at the local level but also in building the capacities of the Peace Commission and initiating the implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement.”



Takaaki Mizuno, Lecturer at Tokyo University and Hosei University

“The UN recognized the gap between the situation in Darfur and the interest of major political players. This is an ad hoc hybrid mission; rather than carefully planned action. There is no consistent holistic approach. On the one hand, the International Criminal Court has tried to negotiate with political leaders, but on the other hand, they try to prosecute the leader of Sudan. How can you envision the holistic strategy to peacebuilding? How do you mobilize other players that have leverage in the area?”



Keiichi Tanabe, Associate Professor, Department of International Studies, School of Humanities and Culture, Tokai University

“At the UN HQ, there was an organizational reform in January 2019, which created the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA), the Department of Peace Operations (DPO) from previous Department of Political Affairs (DPA) and the Department of Peace Keeping Operations (DPKO). Do you observe any positive or negative impact of this reform on UN peace operations?”

Mr. Babacar Cissé’s Response:

“I do not think that we can say there is no consistent approach. From the Security Council's standpoint as well as the UN agencies, we had to have a joint approach in terms of peacebuilding, to transition for UNAMID's programmatic activities. This is the first time that the SC accepted to allocate to the UNCT \$45 million of assessed budget for the SLF projects. Besides, the third pillar of the UNITAMS' mandate is about peacebuilding in Darfur and the two Areas. To implement this pillar, UN agencies will consolidate and scale up the SLF initiatives. With regards to the ICC, they are conducting their investigation independently.

It is possible to come up with a joint approach. We want to achieve the result, and even with all the contradictions and challenges, it is possible as long as we stick together, plan together and have a shared objective. A consensus at the Security Council would be critical to advance this agenda. “



Mayumi Yamada, Assistant Professor, College of International Relations, Ritsumeikan University

“Trust building is an important element of peace operations in the long run. However, my concern is that the leaders have not trusted each other. Has the UN developed a strategy to facilitate the reconciliation process? In the case of Sudan, Pope Francisco has played the role behind the UN, IGAD, and AU. This may indicate what would be missing in the current process of sustaining peace.”

Mr. Babacar Cissé’s Response:

“UNAMID supported the peace agreement process. Hence the reconciliation process in Darfur. In terms of strategy, although the JSR good offices and mediation was central, the focus has also been at the local level. The goal has been to obtain the buy-in of local communities but also to lessen violence among them. To this end, a series of intercommunal and intercommunal dialogues have been organized to promote reconciliation.”



Naoko Kumagai, Vice President of GPAJ and Associate Professor of Aoyama Gakuin University

Professor Kumagai asked how major powers influence the political dynamics of Sudan through their involvement of the major powers.

Mr. Babacar Cissé's Response:

“With the political transition and the lifting of the sanctions, the international community including IFIs is reengaging with Sudan. Two meetings organized in Berlin and the French President is convening in May for the third conference to further support the political transition, mobilize private sector engagement, and donors’ support for debt relief.

The US is also playing a significant role and has helped mobilize bridge financing to pay the WB arrears. The UK is planning to do the same with the African Development Bank. Some Arab countries, as well as the EU and Russia, are also engaging with Sudan.”



Sukehiro Hasegawa, President, Global Peacebuilding Association of Japan:

Professor Hasegawa asked two questions. First was about the situation in Sudan, regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. He wanted to know the extent of infection and the measures taken by the Government. Secondly, he asked about the role played by the regional and subregional organizations in resolving conflicts and building peace.

Mr. Babacar Cissé's Response:

“We do not know the real number of cases and deaths but there is a COVID-19 national strategy supported by the UN and international partners. There is a need for more tests, communication, and sensitization on the pandemic.

Last week, the government of Sudan has received 823,000 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine from the UN COVAX facility. Additional 17 million doses are expected over the coming months to cover up to 20% of the population. The UN personnel will benefit from the national response plan.

The role of regional actors is critical in promoting peace. Thus it is crucial to bring them on board in these processes. We can cite the central role played by South Sudan in the Juba Peace Agreement.

Sudan is in transition and many political actors, including transitional leaders, are potential contenders for the elections to be organized at the end of the transition. This further complicates the situation.

With regards to Protection of Civilians UNAMID, UNITAMS and UN agencies have conducted an assessment and identified gaps resulting from the closure of the Mission. These gaps will be presented to the National Commission in charge of PoC. UNITAMS and UN agencies will subsequently support the implementation of the PoC National Strategy.

The reform was needed. However, although DPPA and DPO are now co-located. There is a need to reinforce coordination and synergy between the two departments.”

Sukehiro Hasegawa, President, Global Peacebuilding Association of Japan:

In conclusion, Professor Hasegawa noted that the current situation touched upon what five dichotomies of competing factors. This included leaders and people; humanitarian assistance; and internal competition between DPO and the DPPA. They continued to struggle among all the institutions to keep prominence and lack of trust. There was a need between the national leaders and the people to change their mindset and work together. For that, they need to trust each other.