

Sudan Studies

for South Sudan and Sudan

Number 69

January 2024





Front cover photograph: Coffee Pots in a souq, Sudan (Credit: Imogen Thurbon).

Contents

Editorial	1
Which Way to Peace? Ali Abdelatif M. Hussein	3
War, International Crimes, and the Breaking of the Cycle of Violence and Impunity in Sudan Lutz Oette and Mohamed Abdelsalam Babiker	6
Sudanese Political Parties: The (Elusive) Quest for a National Project Ali Abdelatif M. Hussein	13
Voting out of Transition? Perspectives on the Planned National Elections in South Sudan Jan Pospisil	18
Ordinary People in Extraordinary Times: Bob Wilkinson's Photographic Tribute to the People of Darfur, 1982-1986 Imogen Thurbon	33
The Greeks in Southern Sudan Antonis Chaldeos	41
The Evolution of Modern Medicine in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan 1924-1956: Report of the book launch at SOAS Charlotte Martin	53
Book Review	
I. G. and Morag C. Simpson , <i>Alternative Strategies for Agricultural Development in the Central Rainlands of the Sudan: with special reference to the Damazine area</i>	58

News from the Sudan Archive, Durham	62
SSSUK Notices	
Subscription Notice	65
Minutes of AGM, September 2023	66

Editorial

We would like to wish all our readers and SSSUK members a very Happy New Year. We can only hope that a path to peace will be found in Sudan, and an end to the genocide in Darfur, where war is entering its twenty-first year. It is often not possible to comment in the journal on the situation in either of the Sudans in a timely manner, as it is published only twice a year, but in this issue we are fortunate that **Ali Abdelatif M. Hussein** has spent the first days of 2024 writing a thoughtful and timely essay for us addressing the question, ‘Which Way to Peace?’.

The situation in Sudan and South Sudan was also addressed by many of the panellists at our last annual Symposium and AGM, which took place at SOAS in September 2023. **Lutz Oette** and **Mohamed Abdelsalam Babiker** have drawn on their presentations at the meeting and written about ‘War, International Crimes and the Breaking of the Cycle of Violence and Impunity in Sudan’ for this issue of *Sudan Studies*. Some of you will have attended the event at the Wiener Holocaust Library in London on December 5th 2023¹ with Waging Peace,² marking the anniversary of 20 years since the start of genocide in Darfur. The event included participants from the International Criminal Court and we hope to publish an article about its work on Sudan in our next issue.

Articles drawn from presentations at the Symposium have also been written by **Ali Abdelatif**, with ‘Sudanese Political Parties: The (Elusive) Quest for a National Project’, and by **Jan Pospisil**, ‘Voting out of Transition? Perspectives on the Planned National Elections in Sudan’. Both offer valuable perspectives about the role of politics, political parties and processes in South Sudan and Sudan.

These are followed by a photo essay by **Imogen Thurbon**, presenting the work of Bob Wilkinson, who held an exhibition of his stunning photos of Darfur in Coventry in 2023. The photographs date from the early 1980s and six are reproduced here. Bob reflects on the differences between Darfur then and now, providing a context for his images and the current situation in Darfur. Next we have the third in a series of articles about Greek people in Sudan by **Antonis Chaldeos**. His focus here is on the Greeks in Southern Sudan in the 20th century to the present day.

Lastly comes a report of the book launch held at SOAS in September 2023 by doctor and author **Tarik Elhadd**, who launched the second part of his

¹ <https://wienerholocaustlibrary.org/event/in-conversation-darfur20-sudan-two-decades-of-justice-accountability-and-impunity/>

² Waging Peace <https://wagingpeace.info>

work on the evolution of modern medicine in Sudan. This volume covers the years 1924-1956; we hope to publish a review in the next issue.

We are lucky to have the first in a series of book reviews of historic titles written by long-time SSSUK member **Aziz el Nur**. Aziz reviews **Ian and Morag Simpson's** short work, *Alternative Strategies for Agricultural Development in the Central Rainlands of the Sudan: with special reference to the Damazine area*, written in 1978. This is an initiative begun by our new book review Editor, **Heywood Hadfield**, and we hope to see many more historic titles reviewed in future issues of the journal.

This is followed by the usual 'News from the Sudan Archive, Durham', detailing events at the Archive and new acquisitions to their collection.

The 'SSSUK notices' section has an important notice for those of you who have not updated the amount of your subscription, so if this applies to you, please take note or else you are in danger of no longer receiving a print copy of the journal. We also have the minutes of the AGM held at SOAS in September 2023. As many of you will know, the 2023 Symposium online recordings are available on You Tube at <https://bit.ly/48053ao>; there is a link on the SSSUK website, [sssuk.org](https://www.sssuk.org).

We would like to invite proposals for the programme of the 2024 Symposium; these can be sent to our Membership Secretary Francis Gotto at secretary@sssuk.org. 2024 marks the 100th anniversary of the 1924 uprising and we would like the programme of this year's Symposium to reflect this, so please think about what you would like to see and how you might like to contribute to the event. Looking even further ahead, we plan to have a special journal issue on transport in Sudan and South Sudan in 2025, which is the 150th anniversary of the founding of Sudan Railways, so please send your suggestions and offers of articles and book reviews to the editor at sudanstudies@sssuk.org.

Finally, many of you will be interested in an article carried by a local Aberdeen newspaper, *The Press and Journal*, about the Society's President, **Leila Aboulela**. Published on November 3rd 2023, it is entitled, 'How Aberdeen Inspired Leila Aboulela to become an award-winning global writer'; a link can be found here:

<https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/lifestyle/6207405/aberdeen-inspired-leila-aboulela-global-writer/>

We hope you enjoy reading this issue and would be delighted to receive your comments, suggestions and offers of book reviews and articles.

Which Way to Peace?

Ali Abdelatif M. Hussein*

The war between the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and the paramilitary group it had itself established, the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), broke out on 15th April 2023. In January 2024, the most difficult issue to tackle in this war is the immediate one of how to stop the conflict. That is because both forces doing the fighting have no clear path to a strategic victory. They are both trapped in a high-stakes drama with existential implications for both, as a result of a *casus belli*¹ engineered by remnants of the old regime out of the deadlock in talks about Security Sector Reform. After eight months of fighting, the two factions have passed up all the chances provided for an honourable settlement of the issues that ignited the conflict, including a return to the Framework Agreement of 5th December, 2022. As war grinds on, with at least 9,000 people estimated to have died and, according to the United Nations, around nine million displaced internally or fleeing the country, the public mood is darkening, with diminishing hopes of a quick peace.

The question for peacemakers is how the two belligerents can be pressed to submit to a peace process. And what kind of political process would eventually result that would persuade both generals, Abdel Fatah Abdel Rahman el Burhan and Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo “Himedti”, to lay down their weapons and set aside their ambitions to gain a foothold on the rungs of power. The mechanics of the settlements proposed first, at the Jeddah talks, and second, by the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), entail the exchange of concessions and claims, of give and take. As the war progresses and destroys almost everything in its path, there is very little to fight over, and each has accumulated a rap sheet of violations of international humanitarian law, war crimes and crimes against humanity that denies them any hope of fulfilling any political ambition. Thus, a compromise, instead of being a way out for both, must seem to spell doom for both parties.

This situation also presents a consuming dilemma for the pro-democracy civilian forces, who have been consigned to the sidelines of political action, not least because as the war progressed, the state became dysfunctional, and in Khartoum particularly, non-existent, so there is nothing to mediate relations between society and those in power. In effect, civil society lost overnight its clout and influence over those in government. The army, on the other hand, has lost considerable ground and its fighting capacity for ground warfare has

¹ *casus belli*: an act or situation that provokes or justifies a war

been degraded so much that it is no longer capable of capitalising on the scorched-earth tactics pursued by its air force. At the same time, the RSF is incapacitated for a different reason. Once its fighters were dislodged from their camps and billets around Khartoum by sustained airstrikes, they sought cover in the city amongst civilians – a policy that spelled strategic disaster for the RSF. The RSF was constructed as a counter-insurgency strike force and instilled with a military doctrine that regards civilians as a resource to be fleeced, and worse. As a result, it has a ‘hearts-and-minds’ problem which is impossible to overcome.

Given this backdrop, it becomes clear how complex is the task of laying out a framework for a cessation of hostilities, let alone a long-term settlement. The international community and the regional mediators have made plain that they are committed to a two-track approach: a cessation of fighting and a humanitarian operation track, brokered at the Jeddah talks, involving the belligerents; and an IGAD political process leading to a new civilian rule and transition to democracy, involving pro-democracy civilian forces. With no clear path to political power for the warring parties in any political process or a win on the battlefield, this process is likely to push the armed conflict into a deadlock.

There’s conclusive evidence that remnants of the old regime who ignited the fighting back in April have been active in steering the operational levers of the army’s war. They now seem eager to expand the conflict by reframing it as a war of dignity and independence against ‘invaders from the Sahel region fighting to dispossess Nile Valley inhabitants and take their land’. The claim simply lacks credibility, as the RSF was the product of the army’s handiwork before it acquired a will of its own and parted ways with the army leadership. In a way, they are working for an ethnic conflagration to bring about a divided Sudan, *à la* Libya. In the context of Sudan, this is a far-fetched goal because of its ethnic geography which, contrary to official narratives, tends to function as spaces of federated or confederated moral communities, born of millennia of cultural interchange and common origins, which does not translate easily into lasting ‘do-or-die’ ethnic violence. In Darfur, it took years of a state-sponsored campaign of incitement in the 1990s to bring about a genocide there.

This level of suicidal adventurism, of starting an all-out ethnic war as a cover for old-regime aspirants to regain a semblance of power, is no longer feasible and the lesson of how mutually destructive this could be is well understood by the Sudanese people after eight months of war. What is required now, and what the people are ready for, is an ambitiously assertive civilian political intervention that would set out a strategic vision for a new and different path to peace and democratic transition.

The civilian political forces have passed a landmark in overcoming the divi-

sions sown amongst them by the military factions in the government before these turned on each other. They have finally agreed a unified body, gathering all the significant pro-democracy forces led by the post-Revolution former Prime Minister, Dr Abdallah Hamdok. What is missing so far, however, is a coordinated regional and international effort to use all the leverage at their disposal to set an ultimatum and a time horizon for a negotiated peace agreement to stop the violence. However, it is well understood that for that to be nudged into being, a key piece of the jigsaw must be set in place by the civilian and political forces: namely, a well-articulated, comprehensive, clear sighted political compact for peace, state building and democratic transition. Such a move by the civilian forces will pave the way for an international, regional and national consensus on Sudan, which is urgently needed to end the suffering of the people and to provide for their peaceful and prosperous future.

*Ali Abdelatif M. Hussein is a writer and researcher.

War, International Crimes, and the Breaking of the Cycle of Violence and Impunity in Sudan

Lutz Oette and Mohamed Abdelsalam Babiker*

This article draws on our presentation on war, international crimes and justice at this year's SSSUK Annual meeting.¹ It coincided with the publication of the joint REDRESS and SOAS Centre for Human Rights Law report, *Ruining a Country, Devastating its People: Accountability for serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law in Sudan since 15 April 2023*,² to which both of us have contributed.

The ongoing armed conflict in Sudan cannot, and must not be viewed in isolation. It is part of the processes of aborting the Sudanese peaceful revolution since December 2018 by both the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and Rapid Support Forces (RSF) supported by regional and international actors. In this five-years period, civic forces have witnessed unprecedented violence, including massacres against peaceful protesters, excessive use of lethal force in response to massive peaceful street protests against the military coup of 25th October 2021 and eventually an eruption of internal rifts within the military 'Islamist elements of the regime'. These developments culminated in the increasingly well documented, commission of war crimes, crimes against humanity and, potentially, genocide. The armed conflict therefore forms part of a wider history in which, particularly since the coup in 1989, ubiquitous violence – both direct and structural – as a mode of doing politics and business has been paralleled by an almost complete impunity. The lack of accountability



Cover of the Report.

¹ This took place on 16th September 2023 at SOAS.

² The report is available at https://redress.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Sudan_IHL-Executive-Summary_ENG_for-web.pdf.



The Authors at the Symposium in September.

has operated in an environment which lacked independent justice institutions that function with respect for the rule of law, instead ruling by law, including the application of repressive laws. This situation fostered autocracy, that is a political logic whereby recourse to violence with impunity replaced democratic processes and the rule of law. International and regional justice initiatives over the last two decades helped to build a wider momentum and understanding of key mechanisms and issues in Sudan. They did not, however, seriously disrupt or change the premium placed on the politics of violence or even act as a deterrence to the commission of further violations. The slogan of the revolution that began in 2018, ‘freedom, peace and justice’, provides a mirror image of the negative consequences of these political developments, ‘unfreedom, war and injustice’.

The transitional period following the departure of the former dictator President al-Bashir was marked by a serious defect. It included, albeit reluctantly, key actors or ‘partners’, both personally and institutionally, who have been responsible for serious human rights violations in Sudan over the last three decades. The political calculus, which was also, mistakenly, endorsed by diplomatic actors and regional (AU, IGAD) and international institutions (UN), of appeasing these actors without any accountability process, parameters or

conditions for their involvement in political and civic processes proved to be fatally flawed. It was also unacceptable when viewed through the lens of international law norms and standards. Combined with the emergence of the RSF as a powerful military-tribal, mercenary militia force (with considerable economic powers) that rivalled the Sudanese army, this development accelerated the still prevailing political logic of violence and raised it to an unprecedented level in Sudan's contemporary history. Its escalation is etched in living memory as traumatic moments: the massacre of 3rd June 2019, the October 2021 coup, and the systematic and widespread killings and wounding of hundreds of peaceful protesters thereafter. The outbreak of the war in April 2023 is the culmination of this destructive trajectory. As outlined above, it is part of persistent efforts to undermine the Sudanese dream of democratisation and the realisation of the revolution's slogans: freedom, peace and justice.

This article first identifies the specific features and challenges posed by the current armed conflict in Sudan for accountability, particularly criminal accountability; it views such accountability as a prerequisite for a symbolic and effective break with Sudan's violent past and justice for the many victims of violations. It then examines the avenues for such accountability, with a particular emphasis on national responses in any forthcoming transition.

The specific features of the armed conflict and associated challenges for accountability and justice are both factual and legal. Several of the violations that have been documented in the current conflict are not new; extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrest and detention, torture, sexual violence and sexual slavery, enforced disappearances, destruction and occupation of buildings and livelihoods, destruction of civilian infrastructure indispensable for the survival of the civilian populations, destruction of cultural properties (monuments, religious sites, archives, scientific materials), starvation of civilians, denial of humanitarian assistance and forced displacement have characterised the international crimes committed in the Darfur region and elsewhere in Sudan since 1989. Yet, their modalities, in certain circumstances, scale and settings differ. This includes, particularly, the targeting of journalists, doctors, humanitarian workers, and activists all over Sudan, and the renewed targeting of ethnic groups in Darfur. The urban warfare, in particular in the urban centres such as Khartoum and other cities, has been marked by novel developments. This applies especially to the indiscriminate killing of civilians, destruction of infrastructure, the use of human shields, taking of hostages and the widespread pillage, looting and occupation of homes. The perpetrators, particularly the RSF on the ground, appear to act with little restraint and their command structures, including the effectiveness of any such structure, is unclear. Another major factor is the involvement of, and complicity in the conflict of various actors,

both internally, such as businesses related to the parties of the conflict, and externally, such as the United Arab Emirates and other neighbouring countries. The ongoing fighting and destruction in, and displacement of millions from urban centres is not only deeply traumatic for the Sudanese population, it also makes the documentation and collection of evidence difficult and dangerous. This observation notwithstanding, a considerable body of *prima facie* evidence has emerged, based on the documentation of people on the ground, eyewitness accounts and audio-visual materials which details the nature and scale of serious, massive and systematic violations by both sides to the conflict.

The armed conflict engages several legal regimes. Both parties are bound by the rules of international humanitarian law applicable to non-international armed conflicts. This includes general principles such as distinction, proportionality, necessity, and the prohibition of superfluous injury and unnecessary suffering as well as the humane treatment of detainees, prohibition of torture and judicial guarantees. The State, particularly through the SAF, is also responsible for human rights violations committed during the armed conflict in breach of Sudan's international obligations. International criminal law governs individual liability for international crimes, including command responsibility. In the current conflict, emerging evidence indicates the commission of numerous war crimes and crimes against humanity – specific acts, such as torture or rape, arbitrary arrests, death in unknown detention centres, and forced disappearances which are carried out in a widespread or systematic fashion directed against any civilian population – and, in Geneina, Darfur, potentially genocide. These international obligations and standards binding on Sudan and various non-state armed actors are complemented by Sudan's national law. The latter incorporates some of these standards, including by criminalising war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide, albeit in an incomplete and deficient manner. While its application would allow for some accountability, it would need to be reformed to provide a suitable legal and institutional framework to ensure accountability and justice in relation to the violations committed during the armed conflict.

The multiplicity of legal regimes creates different avenues to seek justice based on several, including parallel, forms of responsibility. The most readily available avenue is, however, not necessarily the most effective one and does not open a direct way to criminal accountability. Individuals, victim groups or NGOs alleging that Sudan has violated its obligations under the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (African Charter) can bring cases before the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. However, proceedings tend to take long, will focus on State responsibility only – so do not cover the RSF – and are unlikely to be fully complied with. The same applies in prin-

principle to lodging a request for provisional measures with the aim of making Sudan comply with its obligations under the African Charter. Yet, the African Commission heeding such a request would carry some symbolic weight. The International Court of Justice may also issue provisional measures requesting Sudan to take measures to prevent the commission of genocidal acts, as it has done in the case of *The Gambia v Myanmar* concerning the treatment of the Rohingya. However, such an order can only be requested by another State. It is also questionable how effective it would be, as the latter would depend on the extent to which Sudan as a State can take effective measures against those accused of being responsible for genocidal acts in Darfur.

The Human Rights Council is a body composed of 47 State representatives. Its main role in a situation such as that prevailing in Sudan is to deliberate and take measures with a view to holding the perpetrators to account, providing justice to victims, and, first and foremost, to preventing further violations. The Council operates in a difficult international environment where several of its States are thwarting human rights mechanisms or are at best lukewarm about human rights protection. It has, albeit after some significant delay, adopted resolution A/HRC/RES/54/2 on 11th October 2023 to establish an independent international fact-finding mission. The mission, which was not operational by mid-December 2023, has a far-reaching mandate. It is tasked with investigating violations and abuses of international human rights law and international humanitarian law by all sides and with collecting and preserving evidence, so as to identify responsibility and for use in legal proceedings. Significantly, it is also mandated to address the root causes of violations as part of its work to end impunity. The fact-finding mission holds considerable potential to generate momentum towards accountability. If it does not achieve this in the short term, it should at least provide the means, eventually, to activate proceedings in national contexts, be it in Sudan or elsewhere. The fact-finding mission is also tasked to cooperate with national actors; its findings, based on credible evidential standards, could be used as a body of evidence to inform and support future transitional justice processes in post conflict Sudan.

It will be recalled that the findings of the UN International Commission of Inquiry on Darfur in 2005 were so persuasive as to lead the UN Security Council to refer the situation in Darfur to the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC). There is next to no chance of anything similar happening nowadays given that the Security Council is split and Russia and China, and in general terms also the US, are opposed to ICC referrals. This matters, as the ICC presently only has jurisdiction over crimes committed in Darfur, as emphasised recently by the ICC prosecutor. Good arguments have been put forward urging the prosecutor to interpret the Darfur nexus more expansively

to include the current armed conflict in terms of the jurisdiction over the crimes committed outside Darfur but this looks unlikely to happen. The ICC has also faced many difficulties that have limited its effectiveness in investigating and prosecuting crimes in Darfur. These factors have undermined the deterrent effect it might have otherwise had after 20 years have passed since international crimes began to be committed in Darfur. Nonetheless, there is still scope for it to provide at least some measure of justice, in terms of both criminal liability and reparation, for the victims of crimes that are subject to prosecution before the ICC.

The exercise of universal jurisdiction in countries other than Sudan has been probed recurrently. It promises an alternative avenue to hold perpetrators who come to countries such as the UK accountable. In practice, however, the presence requirement, the difficulty of obtaining timely evidence and the challenges faced by national authorities to investigate and prosecute such crimes mean that there are considerable obstacles. Successful prosecutions will therefore likely remain the exception. National legal systems outside Sudan can play other roles though. This applies particularly to prosecuting individuals who commit hate crimes online, such as spreading Islamist propaganda, ethnic hatred, inciting the commission of genocide, or otherwise contributing to violations in Sudan in a way that constitutes a criminal offence.

The US, UK and EU have imposed sanctions against specific individuals and entities in Sudan affiliated to the SAF and the RSF, although not the two main individual actors for ostensibly diplomatic reasons. Such sanctions express a level of political condemnation of violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law, and create some pressure. While they entail some disadvantages for those sanctioned, in terms of access to countries, assets, economic resources, business opportunities and arms, sanctions are based on political calculus, rather than a process underpinned by the evaluation of evidence, a judicial determination and the involvement of victims. The US announcement of 6th December 2023 that atrocity crimes have been committed in Sudan is a noteworthy development that may reinforce sanctions and efforts towards greater accountability but it remains to be seen what if any concrete measures it will entail.

The review of available legal avenues points to both the scope for and limitations of regional and international avenues for accountability and justice. Ultimately, whatever steps are taken, it will be for Sudan, and the Sudanese collectively, to devise (additional) appropriate justice mechanisms to this end once the war is over and circumstances become conducive. The failure to develop and expedite the implementation of a suitable transitional justice framework, including effective security sector reform, during the 2019-2022

transition serves as a lesson and warning, to prioritise this task from the very outset. The civic movement must therefore be ready to propose and advocate effectively for their transitional justice models or options. Accountability, both in terms of the process adopted and its outcome, is integral to the 2018 Sudanese revolution slogans of freedom, peace and justice. It is not a purely legal or technical exercise but a deeply political and social undertaking in bringing about change including through establishing suitable processes to provide (transformative) reparation for past violations. This change seeks to redress and reverse deep seated power asymmetries, domination, subordination, marginalisation, discrimination and exclusion that have affected people in Sudan differentially and the Sudanese people as a whole. Considering these dynamics and consequences, it is high time that the beneficiaries of decades of violent and harmful acts are made to answer for their conduct, and eradicate the cancer at the heart of Sudan's body politic.

* Dr Mohamed Abdelsalam Babiker. With a PhD from Nottingham University, Mohamed Babiker became Associate Professor of Law at Khartoum University. He has recently served as United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea.

Dr Lutz Oette is Professor of International Human Rights Law at SOAS, University of London, and Co-Director of the SOAS Centre for Human Rights Law. He has worked with NGOs, particularly REDRESS, and for two decades, with Sudanese counterparts on human rights, law and justice in Sudan.

Sudanese Political Parties: The (Elusive) Quest for a National Project¹

Ali Abdelatif M. Hussein*

There is little doubt about the human cost of this war. It is estimated that so far no fewer than 5.3 million people have been dispossessed because of the fighting: four million people have been displaced inside Sudan and about one million are now refugees or asylum seekers in neighbouring countries.

The sudden outbreak of the fighting and the fact that the theatre of conflict is centred in Khartoum, the capital city and the most densely populated area of the country, has amplified the suffering and human cost of this war. Whole areas of the city, and therefore families, have been cut off from services that were essential to their wellbeing for months.

Soon after the start of the fighting markets and shops were shut down. The most impactful and tragic consequence of the crisis has been the systematic disruption of health facilities, either because it is unsafe for staff to operate or



Ali Abdelatif (right), Peter Woodward (centre) and Dr Abdelsalam Sidahmed (left) in discussion at the SSSUK Symposium, September 2023 (Credit: Charlotte Martin).

¹ This article is based on a talk given by the author at the SSSUK Annual Symposium on 16th September 2023 at SOAS, London.

through the deliberate targeting of these facilities by the warring parties.

We are at a point now where death amongst civilians is more likely to be the result of not being able to access health care and services than as a direct result of the fighting. In addition we are witnessing the return of genocidal mass killing in Darfur. So the scale of the human tragedy is unimaginable.

There is also great damage being inflicted on the economic wellbeing of the country. Dr Ibrahim Al Badawi, the ex-finance minister of Sudan, made a study that concluded that the country's capital stock sustained a \$50 billion reduction in Khartoum alone. At the same time a conservative estimate suggests that Sudan's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has been reduced by 20%. This means that in the first five months of the war the GDP shrank by about \$7 billion, bringing it down to \$29 billion per annum. If this war continues and runs its natural course, (which is estimated at between 15 and 20 years) it is quite credible that Sudan will lose between \$195 billion and \$2.2 trillion of potential economic growth.²

Given the loss of life, the suffering and the economic damage, it is the right moral position to demand a stop to this war, which has been described by both protagonists at different points as 'senseless' and, 'a war in which no one is a winner'.³

We hope that the peace initiatives undertaken by the international community will succeed and we will see an end to the fighting.

In 2023 for the third time the International Community seriously engaged with the ongoing Sudanese crisis. The repeated cycle of peace deals and transitions to democracy followed by military coups and dictatorships suggests that there's something amiss in the country's body-politic. There is a countervailing force that militates against establishing a national political project which could unite all Sudanese people behind a common goal. This aspect of Sudanese political culture is being extensively discussed and pored over.

There is a broad consensus that the process of state and nation building in Sudan has been held back for over a century by the progressive 'racialization of the state'.⁴ Nothing better illustrates this racialization than the two most

² The information here is gleaned from an interview given by Dr Al Badawi citing an unpublished study he has made about the financial cost of the war. Saad Alkabl Podcast, Streamed on 31st August, 2023; Dr Ibrahim Albadawi: A Live Interview, YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b1jh6-hjqYg&t=1010s>.

³ Afatih Gabra, 9th May, 2023, Title: *Damn You All!* (تبا لكم!), Facebook article in Arabic, <https://www.facebook.com/alfatihgabra>

⁴ Amir Idris 2005, 'Slavery, Colonialism and State Formation in the Sudan', in A. H. Idris (ed.), *Conflict and Politics of Identity in Sudan*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 23-41.

earth-shattering events of Sudanese political life of the last two decades. The first is the secession and subsequent independence of South Sudan. The second, is the recurring genocide in Darfur. Looking at the on-going course of this war it is easy to see how it could metastasize into an all-out ethnic conflagration engulfing the entire country.

This running sore of ethnic friction and violence issuing from Sudan can no longer be described as mere 'mismanagement of diversity'.⁵ There is an unmissable pattern here. Successive regimes have invested in racializing inherent differences of phenotype, language and lifestyle so as to mask and entrench the interests of dominant elites.

This tactic of setting ethnic groups against each other worked effectively when the South was portrayed as the 'enemy within'.⁶ This trope acquired potency from mainlining deep-seated prejudices and enmities rooted in both Christian and Muslim traditions. However, when the Islamist regime turned its attention to Darfur, the mobilizing tropes of holy war were ineffective. Darfur is one of the ancient Muslim communities of Africa. So the regime turned instead to recruiting local militias along ethnic lines and framing the economic disparities of material wealth between agriculturalists and pastoralists as an issue of 'African' versus 'Arab' tribes.

What the regime did in Darfur initiated a chain of events that has led directly to this war. The Rapid Support Forces (RSF), one of the warring parties, was the militia that fought the Darfuri armed resistance movements on behalf of the regime and committed genocide in the process. The impact of the December revolution has shaken loose old alliances and created new ones, thereby ushering in the RSF as a new political player in the centre of power, motivated by ambition and fear of accountability in equal measure.

Despite the heavy toll exacted by this war on our confidence in the future, it is imperative to remain hopeful and open to new possibilities.

There are two experiences that occurred during the still stirring popular revolution that shed light on why there is cause for optimism about the future of civilian rule and democracy in Sudan. Both indicate the extent of possible changes engendered by the experiences of struggle against the dictatorial National Congress Party (NCP) regime.

⁵ Francis Deng Mading 2018. 'Preventing Mass Atrocities in Africa: The Case of the Two Sudans', T. Karbo and K. Virk (eds), *The Palgrave Book of Peacebuilding in Africa*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 103-118.

⁶ During the resistance war in the South 1983-2005, there was an army-sponsored propaganda programme on state TV called 'The Fields of Sacrifice' which often labelled SPLA combatants as Khawarij: intended to mean 'outsiders inside the national body'.

Firstly, the experience of the two-month long sit-in that launched the revolution. This became a living experiment attesting to the values that the revolutionary youths were fighting for. For the time it lasted, the sit-in community acted out the slogans of the revolution, 'Freedom, Peace and Justice'. People often describe the community of the sit-in as offering a glimpse of what a future Sudan could be.

Secondly, whilst the Jeddah peace process seems to lack progress, there have been several unpublicised and informal 'cessations of hostilities' agreements negotiated between the warring parties by civil society organisations, traditional leaders, and the Resistance Committees which are still holding on in the North, South and East Darfur States.

These events provide enough evidence to show that this is a war imposed on the population from above and that most Sudanese see it as solely serving the interests of those who started it and continue to fan its flames.

The strongest repudiation of this war comes from the Revolutionary Committees who from the first days of the outbreak of violence have organised themselves with ingenuity and dedication into volunteers' emergency rooms in the capital's neighbourhoods and in other places. They took on the task of humanitarian relief by operating makeshift ambulances, establishing new medical supply routes to hospitals and ferrying doctors and medical staff to where they are needed. They are the true heroes of this war.

Hope of what is possible is still alive within the hearts of the young who led the revolution to victory in its first wave in December 2019, in a second wave in June 2020, and again in a third wave that forced the 25th October *coup d'état* into retreat. We are now at a juncture that offers an unparalleled opportunity not only of stopping the war but possibly of opening the way for a lasting settlement. This requires a new departure and a new beginning.

It is true that all previous political settlements and transitions have produced distorted and unintended outcomes, if not outright failures. The focus has always been on the diagnosis of the problem and the standard course of treatment, but never on the capacity of the therapist (the political actors in this case), to administer the experimental treatment prescribed.

Peace agreements always failed because of the deadly sins of non-compacted peaceful settlement and democratic transition. There are two main points here:

Firstly, non-compacted peaceful settlement inevitably results in a power grab as the emphasis is put on who governs rather than how the country should be governed. Power-sharing and wealth-sharing are prioritised over state and nation building and peace above justice and accountability.

Secondly, democracy can only be built by those who genuinely believe in it

and practice it. Transition to democracy is a national project recognising that everyone has a stake in it because of its empowering potential for ordinary people.

Mass mobilisation in support of the transition to democracy is crucial. This is not about the size of crowds but about the moral force of the argument for democracy when it is expressed by a mass movement. That moral high ground can never be achieved by winning through political scheming and deal-making alone. State and nation building projects are compacts that are forged with the people in broad daylight after all the scheming and deal-making is done, not before. This is the only antidote to the countervailing forces mentioned earlier that fuel ethnic strife and violence. The success of the political process is in the gift of a public who trust in it and imbue it with their engagement and participation; without this no democratic transition is possible.

The mistake, universally acknowledged by the civilian forces as undermining the entire transition in 2019-21 but that went uncorrected at the time, was to start with a government and not an assembly. Therefore, to my mind, the route to a successful transition is to turn that sequence on its head. Begin with an assembly and not a government.

A national assembly along the lines suggested in both the original Constitutional Document and the Framework Agreement,⁷ should include representatives of major pro-democracy political movements, civil society organisations, Resistance Committees, women and youth. This should be the first order of business in any future political process. One of the first tasks of such an assembly must be to embed Resistance Committees at the basic level of local government, so as to ensure that democracy is built on a foundation of popular participation by those who fought to bring about this change and who are therefore the most capable of defending it.

* The author is the Research, Training and Planning officer of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-Democratic Revolutionary Current (SPLM-DRC). He worked for many years in education, including teaching in universities and colleges in West Yorkshire.

⁷ The Constitutional Document is the 'Sudan constitutional Declaration', August 2019, <http://tinyurl.com/yo5gy2fz>. The Framework Agreement is 'The Political Framework Agreement' proposed by the Lawyers' Union and a draft of which was initially agreed by the army and the civilian actors as the basis of a new settlement to end the military's seizure of power and return the country to civilian rule and the path to democratic transition. The war broke out in the morning of 15th April, before the final workshop session to agree arrangements for the Security Sector Reforms <https://tinyurl.com/ys9yx236>.

Voting out of Transition? Perspectives on the Planned National Elections in South Sudan¹

Jan Pospisil*

Introduction

Elections in December 2024 are foreseen as the culmination of South Sudan's recovery from its civil war. Initially set out in the 2015 Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (ARCSS),² and reaffirmed in its 2018 revitalization (R-ARCSS),³ these elections are meant to conclude the transitional period provided by the peace agreement. However, the elections are likely to face delays, again.

Despite a 44-month transitional timeframe that had already been extended by an additional nine months, many crucial steps for conducting the elections were unmet. Consequently, in August 2022, parties to the R-ARCSS signed an agreement to extend the transition by 24 more months,⁴ aiming for elections in December 2024. Even after this extension, key preparatory measures such as conducting a population census and formulating a permanent constitution have not progressed and appear unlikely to be completed in the available time.

Notwithstanding these setbacks, South Sudan's government, the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity (R-TGONU), and the dominant party, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), in particular, have resolved to proceed with the elections. The SPLM has already begun its presidential nomination process, endorsing incumbent President Salva Kiir.⁵ Additionally, steps like forming a new National Electoral Commission (NEC), a Political Parties Council, and a National Constitutional Review Commission, have been initiated. Still, there remain considerable doubts about whether these elections can be conducted at all, and if so, whether they would meet democratic standards and indeed provide a way forward in the ongoing political transition without exacerbating political tensions in a dangerous way.

This article discusses these questions based on discussions with political stakeholders in South Sudan and the perceptions of the South Sudanese public on when the elections should take place, what are the necessary precondi-

¹ This article is based on a talk given by the author at the SSSUK Annual Symposium on 16th September 2023 at SOAS, London.

² <https://www.peaceagreements.org/viewmasterdocument/1357>.

³ <https://www.peaceagreements.org/viewmasterdocument/2112>.

⁴ <https://dr.211check.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/EARCISS-ROADMAP.pdf>.

⁵ <https://radiotamazuj.org/en/news/article/wau-kiir-welcomes-endorsement-as-splm-candidate-for-2024-polls>.

tions, what are the main risks and what parties have the best political visions for the country. In doing so, this article is drawing on a series of four opinion polls conducted between 2021 and 2023 by Detcro and the Peace and Conflict Resolution Evidence Platform (PeaceRep).⁶ The polls captured the views of 13,325 people from fifteen counties across all ten states and one special administrative area, encompassing urban, rural and displacement camp environments.⁷ Respondents were asked questions about their daily experiences of safety based on indicators of everyday peace developed through qualitative research during the project's inception phase. They also shared their views on a wide range of governance and security topics.

The article will first give a brief overview of the debate on the role of elections in peace and transition processes, especially when they are meant to provide a way out of power-sharing arrangements. It will outline the public perceptions of the elections, especially regarding timing and associated risks, and will then proceed to look into the preparatory steps and the main challenges they provide. The conclusions will discuss the possible consequences of these elections on the transition process.

The Role of Elections in Peace Processes and its Reflections in the South Sudanese Context

Elections always had important roles in peacebuilding which, in itself, has always been linked to efforts of democratisation, even though the academic subfields have always been oddly separated (Call and Cook 2003). Research accounts often argue that elections can provide legitimacy to post-conflict governments, which are routinely based on power-sharing arrangements com-

⁶ David Deng, Sophia Dawkins, Christopher Oringa and Jan Pospisil. Public Perceptions of Peace in South Sudan Survey. 2020-2023 [original data on file with the author and available on request].

⁷ A convenience sample of 15 counties was selected to represent the principal regions and conflict theatres in South Sudan. The research team used an approximately self-weighting stratified random sampling approach to select households, and then individuals within households. This method centred on a randomization strategy implemented using ArcGIS and the GRID3 South Sudan Settlement Extents, Version 01.01 dataset. For each workday, enumerators began at randomly drawn map coordinates and followed a random walk guided by smartphone apps. Enumerators recorded responses using Kobo Toolbox smartphone software. See Center for International Earth Science Information Network (CIESIN), Columbia University and Novel-T. 2021, GRID3 South Sudan Settlement Extents, Version 01, Geo-Referenced Infrastructure and Demographic Data for Development (GRID3), available at <https://doi.org/10.7916/d8-khpa-pq09>.

ing out of peace negotiations. The process of holding free and fair elections is seen as a way to establish the democratic credentials of a new regime, fostering both domestic and international recognition: *“Electoral processes in post-conflict countries are invariably a critical step in transition processes from war to re-legitimizing of the state through reference to the ballot box”* (Sisk 2013, 258)

Nonetheless, there is a strong counterargument that elections in the immediate aftermath of conflict can exacerbate divisions. Early elections might entrench existing conflicts, especially if the electoral system is not ready to guarantee the ‘free- and fair’ principles of credible election processes that are designed to promote inclusivity. The timing of elections is a critical factor in this debate. The consensus in the literature is that rushing elections is not helpful and can lead to negative results (Reilly 2003), especially if there has not been a proper demobilisation of armed actors before (Lyons 2004; Joshi 2014).

It is, of course, much better to hold elections after a civil war has ended for good and armed actors are not in a position anymore to act violently (Höglund *et al.* 2009). Given South Sudan’s no war/no peace situation – where a fragile peace at national level is underpinned by frequent subnational violence with considerable political implications (Craze and Marko 2022) – such conditions will not be given. Nonetheless, the time that the transition period has already lasted puts South Sudan in the range of those elections that have not been rushed: *“at least two years of preparation are needed in new democracies—and even then, the effect of elections is not nearly as positive as it is in established democracies”* (Flores and Nooruddin 2012, 568). Elections are, in any case, only one step in a longer democracy building process and their importance in determining the formation of a political system should not be overrated.

The choice of the electoral system does play a crucial role that can support or undermine peacebuilding efforts. The South Sudanese system, as laid out in the national election act, provides for a mixed system with inclusive components targeting marginalised minority groups. At the level of the national legislative assembly – and also the state-level assemblies – the voting system is split in half between first-past-the-post and proportional representation, with the latter providing designated seats for women (35%), youth and disabled. While the probable dominance of the SPLM will certainly reduce and control diversity, the system still can be labelled inclusive and favouring transitional politics.

Finally, the role of international partners, multilateral as well as bilateral actors, will be critical in supporting and supervising the electoral effort. The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) has, along with the United Nations Country Team, already taken steps in organising practical support, from logistical planning to crafting the necessary legal framework. The role

of bilateral partners is more mixed. While largely in favour of not prolonging the formal transition process any further, most partners – especially the three Troika countries United States, the United Kingdom and Norway – are sceptical and reluctant to support the preparation efforts, with Japan and the European Union taking a slightly more optimistic stance. Financial means have, so far, not been pledged, which has had a significantly negative effect on the preparations for the elections given South Sudan's depleted official budget. At present, the financing situation has evolved into a waiting game, with all actors looking at one another and wondering who might move first.

Public Perceptions of Elections in South Sudan

The current transitional set-up as laid out in the roadmap agreement envisages elections for December 2024. Some elementary steps have already been undertaken, such as the passing of the National Election Amendment Act (albeit with some critical mistakes, see Geng and Biong 2023), and the formation of the reconstituted National Election Commission (NEC), the Political Parties Council (PPC) and the National Constitutional Review Commission (NCRC). In-depth discussions on the electoral process, necessary preparatory steps and regional lessons have been held (Cheeseman *et al.* 2023).

Nonetheless, preparations are behind schedule, especially at the logistical level. Since a proper population census appears impossible (see further below), the voter registration process is of utmost importance to ensure the credibility and legitimacy of the elections. In order for the elections to happen on time, this process should ideally start 18 months, at the latest 12 months before the scheduled date – hence, it is already delayed, mainly because of procurement challenges due to a lack of funding.

Nonetheless, in the public perception survey, respondents favoured elections to be held on time when asked when elections should happen. At the time of interviewing (April 2023), all the above-mentioned steps had not yet been completed, hence respondents could not see any tangible progress apart from the roadmap agreement. Nevertheless, as Figure 1 shows, respondents overwhelmingly want to vote in December 2024, as foreseen by the roadmap. To an extent, respondents would accept a delay of one year, but December 2024 is favoured by a majority in all surveyed counties. Three counties (Aweil Centre, Rubkona and Yirol West) show a substantial number of non-responses, which points towards challenges for the open political space conducive to conducting elections.

Importantly, the figures also clearly show that the perceived risk of election violence is not undermining the willingness of people to vote. In some counties (for instance, Gogrial West, Jur River and Renk), the demand to hold

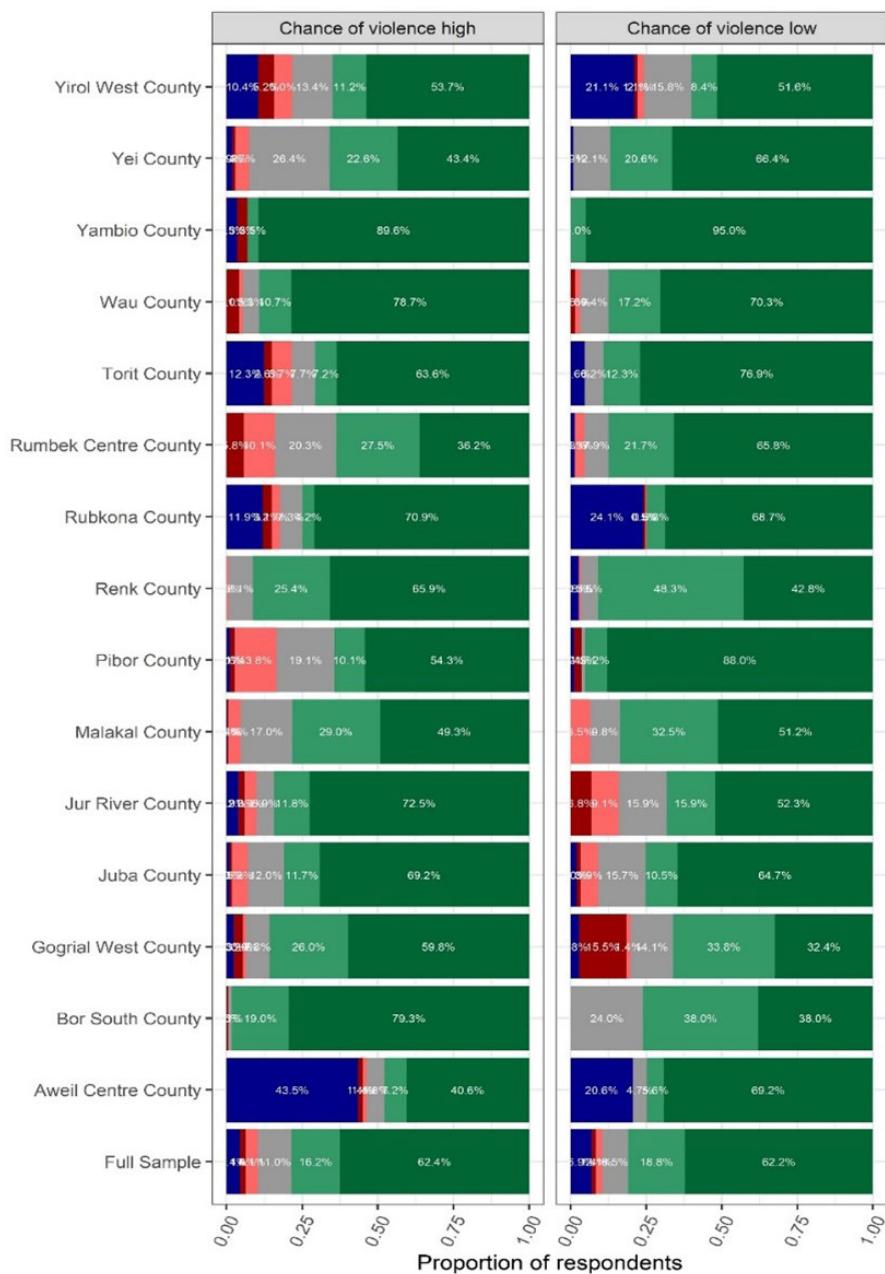
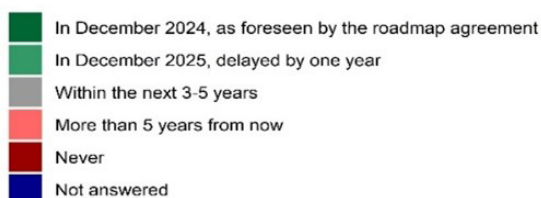


Figure 1. 'When should elections happen?' N = 4246; Year = 2023.
(Excludes respondents who did not answer questions about election violence.)

Figure 1. Key to colour coding



elections on time is even stronger among those who see election violence as a substantial risk. An argument that election violence would deter people from voting is, therefore, not correct.

Figure 2 shows that residents of the sites for internally displaced people are particularly looking forward to elections. Seventy-six per cent of the respondents in the camps want to see elections to be held on time, in contrast to about 60% in the other settings. These results provide a substantial political

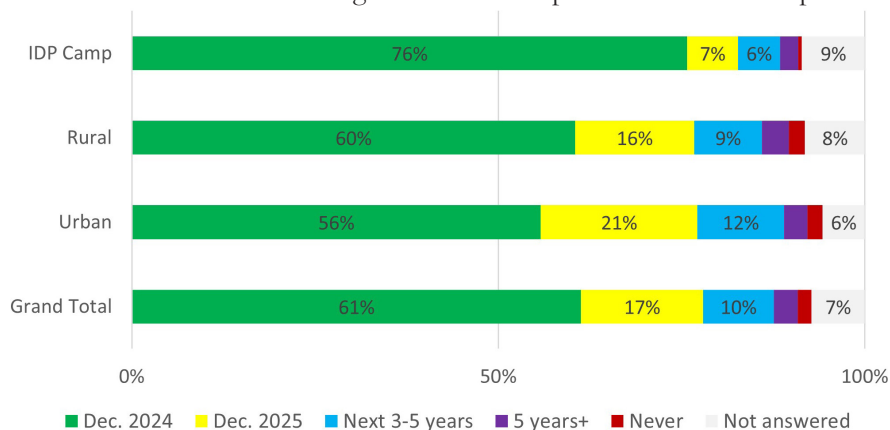


Figure 2. When should elections happen? By Environment (2023, n = 4,482).

challenge for the SPLM-IO, which has its main constituencies in these camps (Figure 9 below confirms this when looking at party popularity). For tactical reasons, the SPLM-IO currently leans towards delaying the elections, mainly citing the lack of peace agreement implementation, but of course also in the face of a probable election defeat. This stance, however, is challenged when the demand of their constituencies to vote on time is stronger than the South Sudanese average.

Survey results contradict commonly held assumptions of people being potentially overburdened with the voting process. Instead, they reveal a strong inclination towards voting among a majority of respondents from various locations. An overwhelming 90% of individuals feel prepared to cast their votes, demonstrating a surprising level of electoral readiness and awareness.

The survey also sheds light on people’s voting experiences. A notable 84% of respondents eligible to vote in 2010 participated in the elections, surpassing the 70% turnout reported by Sudan’s National Election Commission for registered voters. This suggests that the current generation has already been politically active in the last, (formerly Sudanese), election process.

Additionally, voting experience stretches to the traditional and civil realm. Half of the respondents have exercised their voting rights in traditional leadership elections, reflecting a blend of modern and customary political participation. Notably, 71% expressed willingness to vote for a political leader from a different ethnic group, signalling a progressive attitude towards ethnic diversity in political representation. Nevertheless, group voting is likely to happen. While 84% perceive voting as a matter of personal choice, a significant 38% of this group also believes that their community should vote the same way. This indicates a complex interplay between individual liberty and community influence in the voting process, as it has been also suggested in the literature (Schaffer 2000).

Can It Be Done? Risks and Preconditions

The main risk in relation to the elections is election-related violence; this is discussed nationally and internationally and confirmed by survey results. The perceived likelihood of violence among survey respondents is severe, with 61% in 2023 assessing election violence as likely or highly likely (see Figure 3). This number represents a slight improvement, however, compared to 66% in 2021. The regional results differ significantly (Figure 4). Some counties, especially Pibor, Gogrial West and Bor South, show remarkably high numbers, while others, such as Rumbek Centre and Aweil, and, to an extent, Wau and Jur River, are characterised by more optimistic expectations. However in these

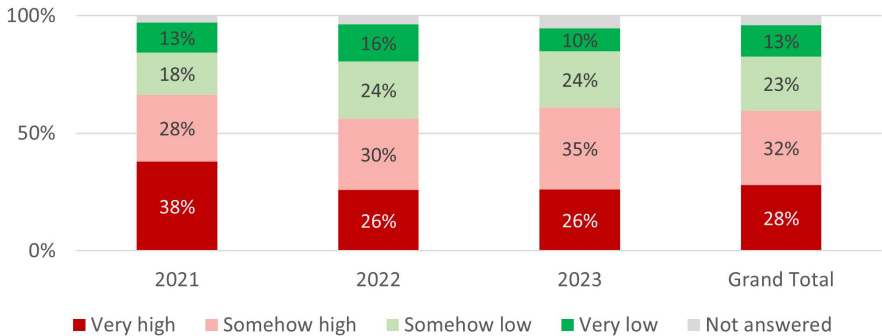


Figure 3. How would you assess the risk of violence in relation to the elections?
By Year (2021-23, n = 13,317).

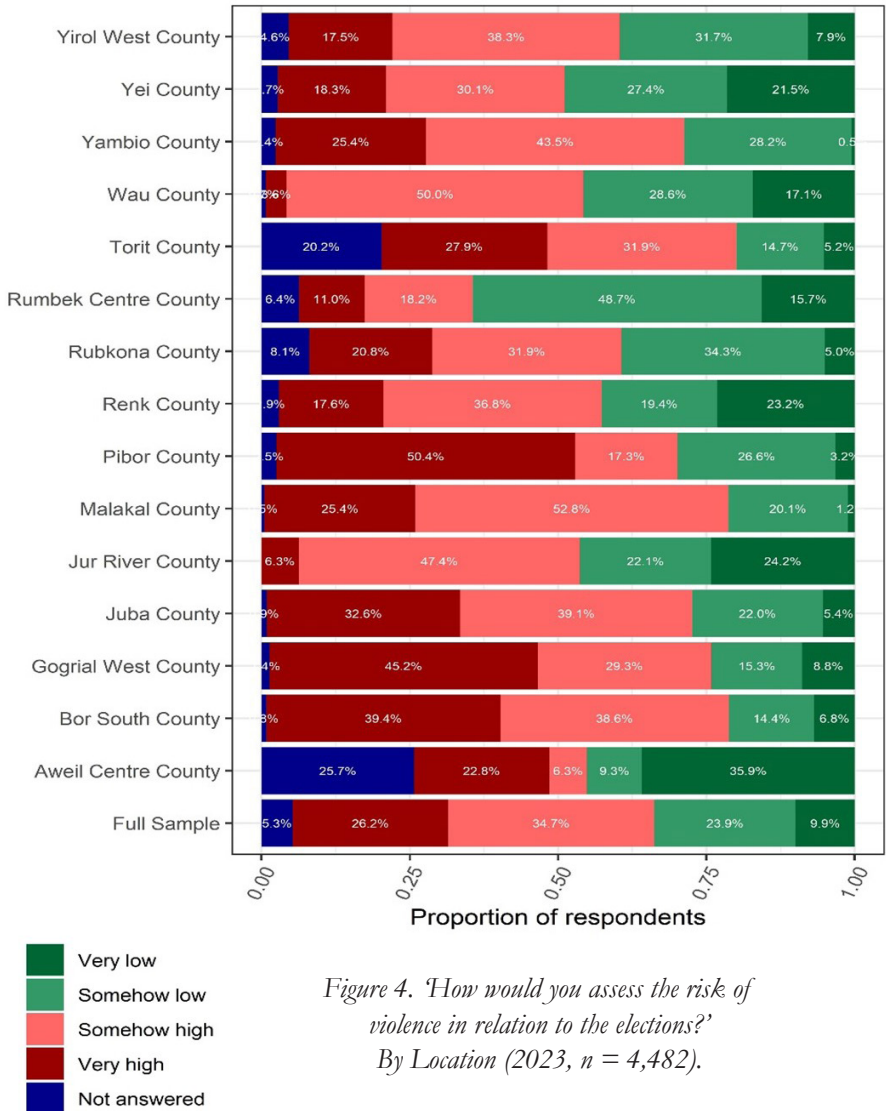


Figure 4. *How would you assess the risk of violence in relation to the elections?*
By Location (2023, n = 4,482).

places, a sizeable number of respondents see election violence as likely.

The issue of election-related violence underscores the importance of establishing robust security measures. Figure 5 below further highlights this challenge, while also pointing to significant concerns about the political environment. A mere one-third of survey participants feel either safe or very safe when discussing politically sensitive topics in public. Conversely, over half of the respondents express apprehension, with 17% specifically indicating a sense of extreme vulnerability in these situations.

The data also reveals notable regional disparities that align with well-established patterns. In Greater Bahr El-Ghazal, where many of the current political leaders originate, people tend to feel more at ease expressing their political views publicly. In contrast, in Greater Upper Nile and, particularly, in Greater Equatoria, there is a heightened sense of reluctance. For instance, while 45% of those in Greater Bahr El-Ghazal report feeling comfortable discussing politics openly, only 18% in Greater Equatoria share this sentiment.

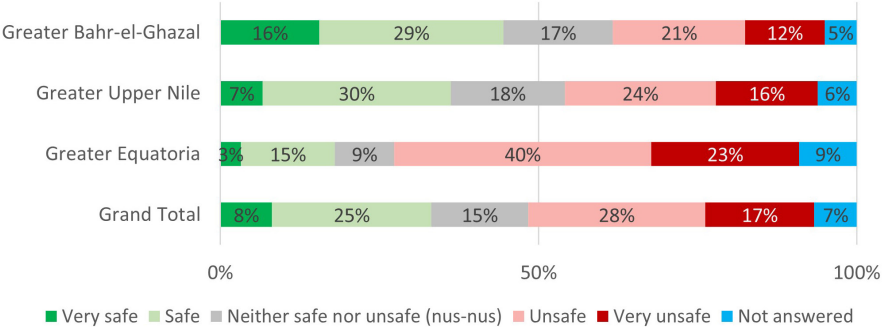


Figure 5. ‘How safe do you feel speaking publicly on politically sensitive issues?’
By Region (2023, n = 4,482).

These statistics suggest that the political climate is not yet favourable for conducting elections that are both free and fair, and proper security arrangements that remain politically neutral need to be established. The current deployment of the so-called ‘Necessary Unified Forces’, built from the armed outfits of the peace agreement signatories, is one of the steps undertaken in this respect. The recruitment of additional police personnel is another planned step, however always dependent on available funding. Furthermore, the prevalent distrust in the government seems to be a significant factor contributing to the public’s hesitancy to openly criticise and engage in political discourse.

Besides working security arrangements and guaranteeing a conducive political space, conducting a census, and drafting a permanent constitution are two further, often-cited preconditions provided for by R-ARCSS and the subsequent roadmap agreement. Currently, both elements are unlikely to be implemented, due to a shortage of time and resources. Indeed, conducting a census in a country as big and weak in its transport infrastructure as South Sudan, is a formidable task. It is a task, however, of significant relevance for a first-past-the-post electoral system, where elected representatives are supposed to represent a more or less equal number of citizens in their respective constituencies.

This importance is understood and valued by the survey respondents, with, overall, close to 80% stating that they see a census as a necessary precondition

for credible elections. This figure shows remarkable distrust in the population estimates that are available and which might be used for deciding on political constituencies. In any case, with a census highly unlikely to be conducted before elections, proactive political communication on how credible elections may work without one is of utmost importance.

The most recent official population estimate, based on an assessment from 2021 and published in March 2023, was severely contested,⁸ as it heavily favoured Bahr El-Ghazal, which is considered a stronghold of the ruling SPLM. The creation of about 155 political constituencies that differ from the currently 78 counties, necessary for the first-past-the-post system, thus represents a significant political challenge, given that substantial gerrymandering is to be expected. Another related challenge is the voting of South Sudanese outside the country, especially the large refugee populations in Kenya and Uganda. How these populations should be integrated in the voting process, especially at the subnational level, is not yet clarified.

The survey participants generally show greater flexibility concerning the

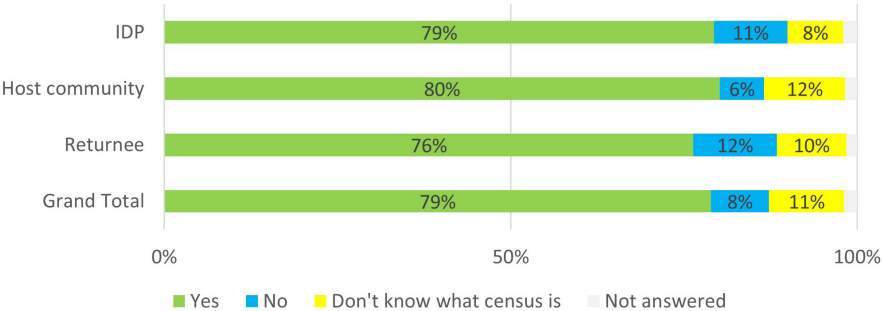


Figure 6. Is a census necessary for conducting fair and credible elections?
By Displacement status (2023, n = 4,482).

adoption of a permanent constitution, as indicated in Figure 7. Contrary to the – Sudan People’s Liberation Movement-In Opposition (SPLM-IO) – led National Constitutional Review Commission’s assertion that credible elections require a pre-established permanent constitution,⁹ a significant portion of the respondents (52% in the overall sample) believe that creating a permanent constitution should be the responsibility of a newly elected government rather than the current transitional government.

This perspective is both comprehensible and practical, considering that a

⁸ <https://www.eyeradio.org/population-estimate-data-not-suitable-for-elections-says-aruai/>

⁹ <https://www.eyeradio.org/agreement-doesnt-allow-holding-of-elections-without-permanent-constitution-ncrc-chief/>

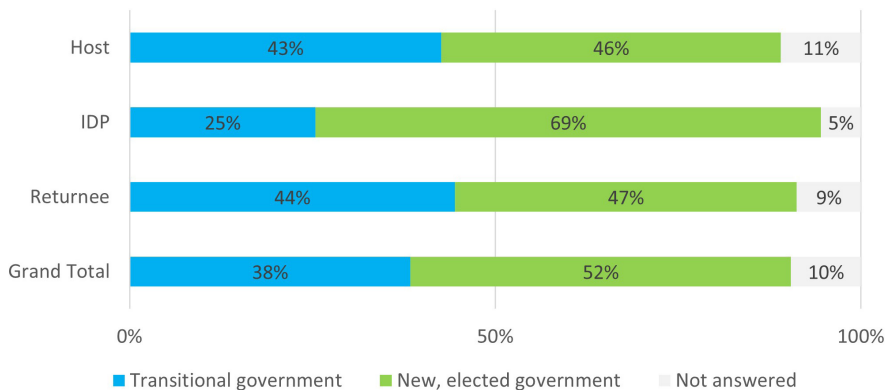


Figure 7. *Do you think the enactment of a permanent constitution should be done by the transitional government or by a new, elected government?* (2023, $n = 4,482$).

transitional constitution already exists, which could serve as a legal foundation for elections with some essential modifications. Furthermore, the current power-sharing political landscape poses a challenge in forming committees that would adequately represent all parties for drafting a permanent constitution. Therefore, entrusting the task of constitution-making to a government that has gained legitimacy through elections seems like a reasonable approach in the current political context.

Possible Outcomes

In the absence of any polling and historical data, the outcome of the election is uncertain. Given other examples of post-independence settings, it is likely that the incumbent liberation movement in South Sudan, the SPLM, is in a favourable position to win convincingly, irrespective of its recent political track record. Indeed, the available data confirms this expectation. The Public Perceptions of Peace survey, on which this assumption is based, did not poll voting behaviour for presidential, parliamentary, and local government elections. Instead, it used the question ‘which political party has the best vision for South Sudan’ as a proxy to predict voting behaviour. The question has been asked twice (both in 2022 and 2023) with only marginally different results in a randomised survey setting, which suggests that the results are reliable.

The data in Figure 8, broken down by county, reveals interesting trends in political support. Nationally, the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement-In Government (SPLM-IG) comes out clearly as the leading party, securing 45% of the support in the fifteen surveyed counties. The SPLM-IO is the only other party that has a good chance of crossing the 4% threshold necessary for representation in the national parliament, although its support stands at

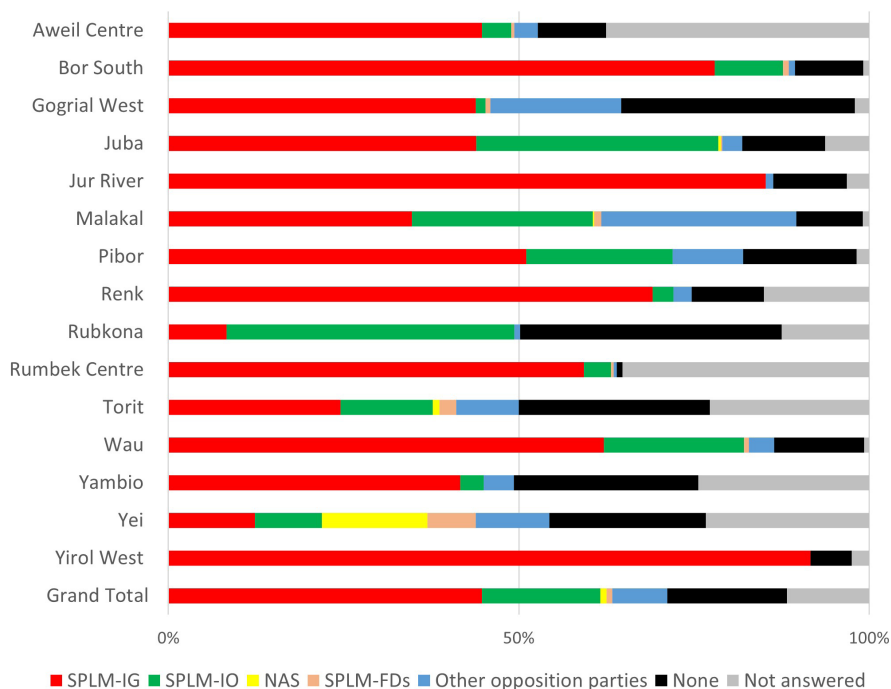


Figure 8. Which political party do you think has the best vision for South Sudan? (2023).

a much lower 17%. These numbers indicate that the SPLM-IO is unlikely to pose a significant challenge to the SPLM-IG at the national level. State-level results are more varied: in Unity State’s Rubkona, the SPLM-IO enjoys a majority, also the Equatorias show a highly mixed picture. In Greater Bahr El-Ghazal, unsurprisingly, the SPLM-IG appears as the clear front-runner.

In the capital city, Juba, political preferences are notably diverse, with the SPLM-IG having only a slight lead. The party shows weaker support in two counties in Equatoria – Torit and, more markedly, in Yei. Yei presents a unique scenario where 15% of respondents support the National Salvation Front (NAS), a group that remains technically illegal due to its non-participation in peace agreements. Figure 9 shows the disaggregated results by environment. Unsurprisingly, it shows the high popularity of the SPLM-IO in the IDP and PoC camps, where their core constituencies live. Outside this environment the SPLM-IO struggles mightily, with support only reaching 10% in rural and urban settings outside the camps.

Concerningly, the data also shows that the level of political frustration is high. Seventeen percent of respondents state that not a single party has a good vision for South Sudan, and another 12% are not answering the question.

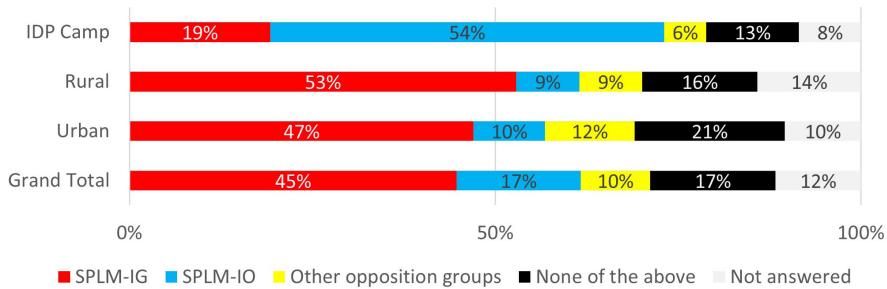


Figure 9. Which political party do you think has the best vision for South Sudan?

By Environment (2023, n = 4,482).

Addressing this level of political frustration needs to be a cornerstone of the pre-election process, where all competing parties and individuals are in dire need of working on their political credibility.

Conclusion

Holding elections in a fragile political landscape such as South Sudan bears considerable risks. There is a fair chance of election violence, especially should there be rigging on a broad scale. The creation of political constituencies and the process of voter registration are likely to be contested as well. Furthermore, given the presented data on party popularity, a change of leadership at the national level is unlikely. Even without rigging, incumbent President Salva Kiir has by far the best chances of winning the presidential elections, as has his party, the SPLM, at parliamentary level.

Given this picture, it is a valid question whether holding these elections makes sense in the current environment, especially since a number of the preconditions laid out in R-ARCSS and the 2022 roadmap agreement have not been met. However, there are two important counterarguments for why these elections are still important: first, there will be political changes. The opposition has good chances of winning some of the state governorships, for instance, in Unity State. The first-past-the-post element in the parliamentary elections is also hard to control, and political surprises can happen. The reduction of the number of positions and seats at all levels also guarantees political changes. The biggest loser of seats and positions in absolute numbers, compared with the current power-sharing framework, will be the strongest party – the SPLM.

These political consequences lead to the second argument in favour of elections. Prolonging the current power-sharing framework is not likely to change anything. The often-heard argument that all preconditions need to be met and that therefore, elections need to be postponed, would be equally valid for years

to come. Peace processes are not about full implementation by the book, but about process dynamics. The South Sudanese transition is, without doubt, in the need of a dynamizing element.

Against this background, any argument for the elections to be postponed provokes the answer ‘waiting for what?’ The overwhelming majority of South Sudanese want elections to be held as confirmed by the survey data presented in this article, and this is probably strongest factor pointing to the need to hold these elections. If people want to vote, even when clearly seeing the associated risks, it is a politically but also ethically difficult argument to make that they need to wait longer because the country is just not ready.

It is unlikely that all the globally accepted conditions for free and fair elections will be met, and the environment will become more conducive. Elections will always be a ‘good enough’ exercise, associated with considerable risks such as election-related violence, rigging, and unfair politicking. This is confirmed by looking at neighbouring countries: for instance, the 2022 Kenyan national elections were the first in the country’s history without an election-related death. Holding regular elections is a challenging process in itself, and it needs to be started at some point.

References

- Call, C. T. and S. E. Cook 2003. ‘On democratization and peacebuilding’, *Global Governance* 9, 233.
- Cheeseman, N., L. Biong and E. Yakani 2023. ‘How to Not Hold Elections in South Sudan’, FES Discussion Paper. Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation South Sudan Office.
- Craze, J. and F. D. Marko 2022. ‘Death by Peace: How South Sudan’s Peace Agreement Ate the Grassroots’, *African Arguments*.
- Flores, T. E. and I. Nooruddin 2012. ‘The effect of elections on postconflict peace and reconstruction’, *The Journal of Politics* 74.2, 558-570.
- Geng Akech, J. and Luka Biong Denk Kuol 2023. ‘Operationalizing the 2023 National Elections Act: Opportunities and Challenges’, *Sudd Institute Weekly Review*, 24/10/2023, Sudd Institute.
- Höglund, K., A. K. Jarstad and M. S. Kovacs 2009. ‘The predicament of elections in war-torn societies’, *Democratization* 16.3, 530-557.
- Joshi, M. 2014. ‘Postaccord political violence, elections, and peace processes: evidence from Nepal’, *Civil Wars* 16.3, 276-299.
- Lyons, T. 2004. ‘Post-conflict elections and the process of demilitarizing politics: the role of electoral administration’, *Democratization* 11.3, 36-62.
- Reilly, B. 2014. ‘Post-conflict elections: Constraints and dangers’, in E. Newman and A. Schnabel (eds), *Recovering from Civil Conflict. Reconciliation, Peace*

and Development. Routledge, 118-139.

Schaffer, F. C. 2000. *Democracy in translation: Understanding politics in an unfamiliar culture*. Cornell University Press.

Sisk, T. D. 2013. 'Elections and Statebuilding After Civil War: Lurching toward legitimacy 1', in D. Chandler and T. D. Sisk (eds), *Routledge Handbook of International Statebuilding*. Routledge, 257-266.

*Dr Jan Pospisil is Associate Professor (Research) at the Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations at Coventry University, United Kingdom, and a co-investigator of the PeaceRep programme. He is co-responsible for the South Sudan Public Perceptions of Peace Survey. Jan has undertaken research in South(ern) Sudan since 2009.

Ordinary People in Extraordinary Times: Bob Wilkinson's Photographic Tribute to the People of Darfur, 1982-1986

Imogen Thurbon*

*After 100 days of war in Sudan the most harrowing atrocities have occurred in west Darfur*¹

The Context: Darfur 2023, The Phoenix in the Fire

In mid-April 2023 war broke out between the Sudanese Armed Forces and its former military ally and partner, the Rapid Support Force (RSF). Initially confined to Khartoum State, the conflict is now engulfing western Sudan, re-igniting longstanding ethnic tensions in its wake and swiftly taking on the character of a “multidimensional civil war across ethnic or tribal lines”.²

Since June, Darfur has witnessed what UN sources describe as a campaign of “wanton destruction” with some 1.64 million internally displaced.³ The civilian populations of Nyala, El Fasher and El Geneina are now acutely vulnerable to malnutrition, disease, wide-scale looting, and grave levels of physical and sexual violence.⁴ Hospitals and pharmacies across the region have ceased operating. In late June El Geneina was reported to have been “obliterated” by RSF gunmen,⁵ leading Minni Minawi, Darfur Region Governor, to declare Darfur a disaster area and call for immediate international relief.

As the most recent round of peace talks between the warring factions gets underway this month in Jeddah, observers fear further attacks by a Rapid Support Force seeking to strengthen its negotiating arm. Any such attacks “would subject civilians, including hundreds of thousands of displaced persons –

¹ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/9/5/in-sudans-south-darfur-armed-men-pillage-loot-under-cover-of-fighting>

² <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/9/5/in-sudans-south-darfur-armed-men-pillage-loot-under-cover-of-fighting> and ‘Sudan’s Darfur spiralling into “humanitarian crisis: UN aid chief’ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/06/1137772>

³ <https://operationalsupport.un.org/en/wanton-destruction-sudans-darfur-region-blattant-violation-of-international-law>

⁴ ‘Women and girls abducted, held in “slave-like conditions” in Darfur’ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/11/1143177>

⁵ <https://www.dabangasudan.org/en/all-news/article/west-darfurs-el-geneina-completely-extermiated-by-rsf-backed-militias#:~:text=People%20who%20fled%20from%20El,humanitarian%20situation%20continues%20to%20deteriorate>

many of whom only recently fled to El Fasher from other areas – to extreme danger.”⁶

The Context: Darfur 1983-5, The Phoenix that Rose from the Ashes

When teacher, aid worker and photographer Bob Wilkinson was travelling through Darfur in the early 1980s, the region was facing very different but equally grave challenges. USAID estimated at the time that 8.4 million people were facing drought and famine after the farmers of North Kordofan and northern Darfur experienced near total crop failure.⁷ From 1983 to the end of the following year more than 600,000 Darfuris fled their homelands, initially migrating southwards within Darfur and later, as the drought worsened, away from the region. At the same time Sudan was host to the largest number of refugees in Africa (over one million), taking in Ethiopians, Ugandans, Chadians and Zairis fleeing drought and civil strife. By mid 1984 Darfur was home to 121,000 Chadian refugees living in camps or absorbed into the local Darfuri population.

In 1984 it is estimated that 250,000 Sudanese died of hunger⁸ and later studies of the massive relief operation undertaken at the time identify the inability to deliver food to remote areas as a key failing. More telling, however, was the analysis of Alex de Waal, whose detailed research into the famine revealed millions did not in fact starve to death. Most deaths were attributable to outbreaks of diseases which followed the social disruption the famine had caused. De Waal’s work called into question the ‘death by malnutrition’ paradigm prevalent at the time and argued that international relief was largely irrelevant to the survival of rural Sudanese communities, whose skills, local knowledge and tenacity enabled them to preserve their way of life for the future.⁹ Darfuris, like many other Sudanese, were accustomed to droughts (de Waal notes that the region had been suffering from diminishing levels of rainfall since at least 1916) and that they knew how to use wild foods and preserve foods through drying and fermentation.¹⁰

Darfur suffered what have been described as extremes of destitution from

⁶ <https://www.dabangasudan.org/en/all-news/article/usa-and-un-deeply-troubled-by-battles-for-north-and-west-darfur-capitals>

⁷ Sudan drought /famine, USAID, https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pbaab327.pdf

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ de Waal, A. 1989, ‘Famine Mortality: A Case Study of Darfur, Sudan 1984-5’, *Population Studies* 43, No. 1 (Mar.), 5-24; de Waal, A. 1989. *Famine that Kills: Darfur, Sudan*. Oxford Studies in African Affairs.

¹⁰ <https://womensliteracysudan.blog/2023/10/11/sudanese-fermented-foods-part-1-feseekh-fessiekh/>

the end of 1984 until the rains returned in later 1985. During the second half of 1985 USAID provided relief sorghum distributed by Save The Children UK. Against the odds and thanks to what is now increasingly recognized as in no small part its own resilience, Darfur survived and later flourished.

Ordinary People in Extraordinary Times: Bob Wilkinson's Photographic Tribute to the People of Darfur, 1982-1986

In October this year The Litten Tree Building Showrooms in Coventry hosted Ordinary People in Extraordinary Times, a month-long exhibition of Bob Wilkinson's photographs taken in Darfur between 1982-1986.¹¹ Interviewed in the *Coventry Telegraph*, Bob stressed that he wanted the exhibition to provide a contrast to the images so many remember of Sudan during the Band Aid and Live Aid appeals:

Iconic images of the begging bowl never did justice to the generosity and dignity, as well as the well-being of Sudan, even at its worst period. These photos, I hope, go some way to re-writing that erroneous impression of a starving country reliant upon the west for salvation.¹²

Anyone who has been lucky enough to visit the exhibition or see Bob's photographs elsewhere cannot but be struck by the intimacy, the respect and sense of trust shared by the photographer and his subjects. These are not photographs taken by a detached professional looking for the strikingly exotic. It is clear these are the product of lived experiences undertaken together. In a culture where the photographing of people, especially of women, has become overlaid with issues of colonial exploitation, lack of sensitivity, and invasion of privacy, Bob's portraits are a testimony to openness built on trust.

In addition to the stunning portraits, some of which are reproduced below, of people he knew, the exhibition included large scale projections of Darfuri landscapes, travelling wedding parties with their graceful camel-borne canopies of coloured and cowrie-encrusted leather, as well as scenes of everyday working life. They are a unique and poignant historical record of a Darfur largely untouched by tourism, devoid of social media and mercifully unaware of the tragic conflicts and hardships that would beset the region from the

¹¹ The Litten Tree Building Showrooms Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/groups/510826886577795/> /

The captions for the photographs reproduced in this article were written by Bob Wilkinson who took the photographs and owns the copyright / credits

¹² 'Unseen pieces of history to be showcased in Coventry' <https://www.coventrytelegraph.net/news/coventry-news/unseen-pieces-history-showcased-coventry-27807046>



Miriam, the Elder

I was the Field Officer for Save the Children Fund, and worked mostly in a region called Dar Zaghawa, in North Darfur. Dar Zaghawa is a remote expansive territory, home of the Zaghawa tribe, that extends west to Chad and north to Libya. Here we have a dignified elder woman in a town in the north of the region. I discovered, after some time chatting with her, that her name was Miriam. She was sitting with her peers, several other elder women, although Miriam also stood out as a woman who commanded the respect of others.

Farmer in Dar Zaghawa

This man is called Ibrahim, and we encountered him at a small village called Kornoi, on the road to Tina. Tina is an arid village situated on the border with Chad. Ibrahim was a farmer, and was illiterate. He was also very much a man with some influence. I met his family, and they were really warm and friendly. Their life was hard and uncertain, especially at this time. However, Ibrahim remained optimistic, and used the term Inshallah (God Willing) إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ frequently during our short conversation.





South Darfur

I remember this one vividly. I was invited into this go'tiya or hut, by the woman in red. I have no record of her name, unfortunately. She is holding a baby, although you cannot see the baby in this image. She, like many others I met, was kind and welcoming. She was also unusually serious. Here she is calling to the boy outside of the hut to come in.

The scene, because of an accident of light, seems to me quite biblical.



Samiya

One of my students at the Teachers' Training College in Nyala, the capital of South Darfur, when I worked as a teacher. On this occasion, she came wearing her traditional head beads. I took many photos of my students, to give to them the following year. This photograph stands out. Her name was Samiya. I wonder where she is today.



Camels at the Lake

Camels watering at the lake at Malba. This is a volcanic part of the area of Mellit, and lies to the north. It is a very hard terrain. The camel facing the camera was not hostile but he was curious. This herd belonged to a nomadic tribe, possibly Meidob herders, who were making their journey south from the Meidob Hills, tracing and following the watering places, underground wadis and sparse grasslands of the area.

1990s onwards. As a Save the Children field officer responsible for the whole region, Bob travelled to some of the most remote areas of Darfur and had the privilege of spending time with and documenting the lives of the Zagawa camel herders among others. He also recorded village life near Jebel Marra where remote indigenous communities wore their Islam lightly and lived out what he describes as a gentle approach to human relations.

Bob was kind enough to tell me more about his time in Darfur in October 2023. The first thing he said he needed to get across – and I could sense the urgency in his voice – was that when faced with an influx of refugees from Chad, the Central African Republic and Ethiopia, the Darfuris immediately “made them safe”. They welcomed them. This, he emphasised, is sadly in marked contrast to the UK’s present attitudes to refugees.

“I have travelled widely but I have never encountered people so warm or welcoming. I have to say being in Sudan made me a better person.”

Like so many young British people who came to Sudan in the 1980s, Bob’s



The Leather Souk in Mellit

Mellit is a principal town in North Darfur, and the souk, or market, is an integral part of any community, and Mellit is no exception. Here, I was greeted by these women, all selling leather straps – cruppers and girths – saddle bags, and other leather items for camel riding. Every item here is handmade, probably by the women themselves. Such a craft is still practised in the region.

move to Sudan was unplanned and fortuitous. He had found himself at a loose end in London after returning from travelling in Asia, and a friend had suggested he go there. He moved to Darfur in 1982, working initially as a teacher at Nyala Girls' Secondary School where he knuckled down to studying Arabic. Bob describes this time as a revelation to him, as he met and got to know so many students and their lives in a "close-up, unfiltered way". When his partner who was to become his wife, Eileen Gilmour, took over at the girls' school a year later, Bob went on to work at the Girls' Teacher Training College. They went on to travel widely throughout the state.

When images of western celebrities holding starving Sudanese children in their arms flashed across the world as the famine took hold, Bob was approached to take photographs by Head of State Abdel Rahman Suwar al-Dahab. The Sudanese were saddened and offended that these were the only images of their country being seen and wanted a counterbalancing and dignified corrective to the assumption that the country needed saving by well-meaning westerners. Bob's photographic tribute more than achieved this and stands

as a testimony to Darfuri tolerance, both religious and tribal, its kindness and ability to overcome the most terrible of crises.

* Imogen Thurbon is a retired British Council language teacher based in Madrid. For the past thirteen years, she has been a volunteer women's literacy worker for Women's Education Partnership and has visited Sudan yearly to data-gather and publicize their Khartoum-based programmes. She writes a blog dedicated to Sudanese women's education and Sudanese culture; <https://womensliteracysudan.blog/>

The Greeks in Southern Sudan

Antonis Chaldeos*

Abstract

Greeks settled in almost every part of southern Sudan during the early 20th century. Most of them were engaged in trade activities and were pioneers in the economic development of several cities in the south, notably Wau and Juba. After 1960, they were also involved in the struggle for southern autonomy. Some Greeks took up important posts in the new state of South Sudan after 2011. This article analyses their role in the Sudanese civil wars and presents new material and case studies drawn from a wide variety of unpublished sources.¹

Introduction

One of the most important issues in Sudan's history after independence in 1956 was the demand of the southern provinces for autonomy. This struggle stemmed from the nineteenth century when the economy of the north was based on the work and trafficking into slavery of those living in the south (Gray 1961, 120-125; O'Fahey 1973, 29-43; Deng 1995, 10). It largely derived from the racial and religious differences between the Arabic-speaking mainly Muslim peoples of the north and the African inhabitants of the south (Barbour 1961, 85; Shepherd 1966, 194).

The British-led Anglo-Egyptian Condominium in Sudan applied a model of separate administration in the southern provinces. Although there were thoughts among British officials about connecting the southern provinces of Sudan with Uganda, due to cultural and racial affinities, ultimately the view of a united Sudan prevailed (Niblock 1987, 154; Deng 1995, 11, 27; Collins 2005, 189-194; Muddathir 1970, 10-13; Wai 1980, 375-395).

Shortly before Sudan's independence the departing British left the predominately northern educated elite to fill most of the administrative posts in the south (Deng 1995, 28, 35; Burton 1985, 368). This impeded the integration of the south into the newly independent state and led many southern Sudanese to believe that British rule had been replaced by Arab-Islamic dominance (Burton 1985, 368). Political leaders in the south protested against this with appeals and strikes in the 1950s and 1960s (Collins 1976, 8). The government in Khartoum sent an armed force to suppress the first mutiny of southern troops in

¹ This article is the result of extensive research made in the archives of the Anglo-Egyptian administration of Sudan located in The Palace Green Library at Durham University; the records of the Greek communities in Sudan and interviews with Greeks who live in South Sudan.

1956 after which some of the rebels escaped into the bush from where they started the first civil war in 1962. By the late 1960s, more than 500,000 people had been killed, and more than 700,000 south Sudanese were forced to flee to neighbouring countries. The first civil war ended in 1972 with the Addis Ababa Peace Agreement. However, a second war broke out in 1983 which continued until the Comprehensive Peace Agreement of 2005. A referendum in 2011 resulted in an independent South Sudan.

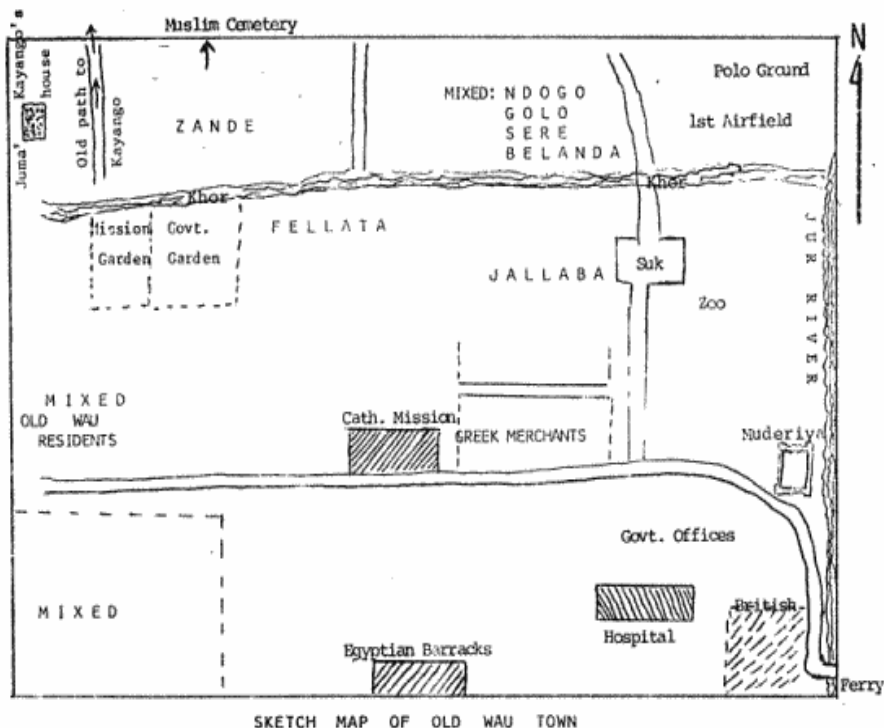
The Greek community of southern Sudan in the early 20th century

Greeks settled in every part of southern Sudan within the first decade of the 20th century as the British consolidated their rule in the south. However, the Greek presence in Bahr El Ghazal dates back to 1895. Gregory Apostolidis was active in Sambi, a transport station on the White Nile 245 miles far from Wau (Kalaitzakis 1997, 237-241). Later, Apostolidis moved to Yirol where he opened a small shop and engaged in trade. He got married to a native woman and had two sons.

Bahr El Ghazal

In the early 20th century, the ivory trade was flourishing in Bahr El Ghazal. As a result, more Greeks settled in the south (Comyn 1911, 205; SAD, Sudan Intelligence Reports/ Main Sequence /Intelligence Report, Nr. 110, p. 6). Most of them worked for the large trade firms of Contomichalos, Capatos, Grivas and Coutsouridis (Landor 1907, 323). In Wau, which was the capital of Bahr El Ghazal province, Greek merchants settled in the northern sector of the city, while their shops, which had warehouses at the back, were located on the main road (Santandrea 1977, 52). Among the pioneers of this period were Dimitis Gialouris, Vasilis Kikezos, Gregory Kyriazis, Maistros Lagoutaris and Ilias Papoutsidis. Gradually, the Greeks dominated the local economy, selling ivory that was transported up the Nile to Khartoum and then Port Sudan (Comyn 1911, 262).

In 1939, the Greeks of Wau and the adjacent areas established an organised community. Greeks were pioneers in trade activity not only in Wau, but the whole province of Bahr El Ghazal (Santandrea 1977, 46). Although they were not numerous, they lived in several cities in the southwest of Sudan, e.g. Raga, Aweil (Volianitis and Evangelidis 2012, 314), Tonj (Volianitis and Evangelidis 2012, 322), Rumbek, Deim Zuber (Skotidis 1908, 51), Nzara, Meshr'a Er Req (Volianitis and Evangelidis 2012, 325) and Kossinga (SAD, Sudan Intelligence Reports/ Main Sequence /Intelligence Report, Nr. 105, p.7). We should note that trading through Raga, Greeks were active in the trade up to the border



Map of the city of Wau in the early 20th century (Santandrea, 1977, 51).

with the neighbouring French Congo (Kumm 1910, 218) and Belgian Congo.²

Upper Nile

Greeks moved to the Upper Nile during the early 20th century, a few settling in Malakal, Bor (Skotidis 1908, 52) and Tefikia (Skotidis 1908, 49). Malakal, which was the capital of the province, was the main station for the river barges on the Nile, lying roughly half way between Kosti and Juba; it was also near a river link to Wau to the west. The town was also very close to Gambela, an important coffee trade centre. Although Gambela was in Ethiopia, trading was possible because of a treaty with the British (Volianitis and Evangelidis 2012, 314). Malakal was thus an attractive location for the Greek merchants who settled there. Next to the dock there were a few Greek shops selling food and retail goods (Kalaitzakis 1997, 237-241; Schanz 1913, 141).

Equatoria

In Equatoria, due to the lack of infrastructure and the outbreak of tropical

² FO 403/443 (Report of the British Consulate in Khartoum, 1913); FO 403/425 (Report of the British Consulate in Khartoum, 1911).

diseases, the presence of Europeans was limited till the 1930s (Collins-Herzog 1961, 119-135, 133). In 1926, the British built Juba on the White Nile; it was the terminal for transport along the Nile and also the contact point for trade with the wider region of the Belgian Congo, Uganda and Kenya. In that year, a hundred Europeans settled in town, mostly, British government employees. There were also twelve Greeks who worked for the “Metaxas and Makris” company (Hill 1951, 238), that was involved in the field of transport and general trade (Pachtikos 1938).

Besides Juba, Greeks settled in Maridi, Yambio, Tambura, Li Yubu and Ezo in the southwest and in Yei and Mongalla to the south (Skotidis 1908, 52). The majority of Greek settlers dealt with the ivory trade which was conducted under the control of the central government (Fothergill 1910, 162) and local *sbeikhs* (SAD, Sudan Intelligence Reports/ Main Sequence /Intelligence Report, No. 98, 9/1902, p. 3). However, a few of them worked as contractors, engineers and employees (Volianitis and Evangelidis 2012, 323, 324).

By 1930 as Juba was transformed into the major trading centre of the whole region the rate of Greek migration increased.³ This was also the result of the British policy in the region. In 1930, Sir Harold MacMichael launched a reconstruction plan for the southern provinces aiming to increase the participation of indigenous people in the local administration (Keith 1966, 236) and reduce Islamic influence. This involved expelling Northern ‘Arab’ merchants from the region (Collins 2005, 192-194). The use of the Arabic language and dress code was prohibited and those who were of Northern origin were forced to give up their trading activities. At the same time the settlement of Europeans and non-Arab merchants was encouraged. Consequently, in 1932, there were only Greek, Jew and Syrian merchants trading in southern Sudan (Collins 2005, 194).

Most Greeks owned shops or transferred goods by their own trucks to the Belgian Congo. However, there were employees, building contractors and people who organised safari activities.⁴

In 1935, the Greeks in Juba, established an organised community with the primary intention of erecting a church and school. Contomichalos, the then president of the Greek community of Khartoum offered 500E£ for the construction of the first community building (Kamitsis 1967, 112). In 1941, after Contomichalos had visited them the local community raised money for the construction of a church (Newspaper *Sudan Chronicle*, 3/11/1941). The money to fund the project was offered by Stelios Roussos (Newspaper *Sudan News*,

³ Newspaper: *Sudan News*, 13/11/1950.

⁴ SAD/*Sudan Gazette*, no. 869, 15/5/1954.

3/10/1950) and in 1951, the construction works began. The church of St Stylianos, named in honour of its benefactor was completed in 1954. As the Greek community increased in size in subsequent years, they constructed the first community building (Kamitsis 1967, 114).



The church of St Stylianos in Juba (Credit: George Ginis).

The Greeks in southern Sudan during the second civil war: the Gialouris family

During the second civil war (1983-2005) much of the fighting took place in the provinces of Equatoria and Bahr El Ghazal where Greeks had settled. Some Greeks, like members of the Gialouris family participated in the autonomy movement.

The Gialouris family

Dimitris Gialouris originated from Plo-mari, in Lesbos Island and migrated to Gogrial in Bahr El Ghazal province in the late 1930s.

Dimitris had initially migrated to Alexandria, in Egypt, where his elder sister



*Dimitris Gialouris
(Credit: Marina Gialouris).*

Sophia lived with her husband. With their help he gathered the necessary funds and left for southern Sudan. This was at the time when the British tried to expel Northern 'Arab' merchants from the region and gave incentives for Europeans to settle there.

Gialouris arrived in Khartoum and along with Vasilis Kikezos, Gregory Kyriazis, Maistros Lagoutaris and Elias Papoutsidis left for Wau. After the group had settled in the province of Gogrial, Dimitris entered the leather and food trade. He expanded his business to the neighbouring villages and in 1932 he met and married Ayen Achom Malang from the Dinka tribe; she was related to Giir Thiik Kero who had ruled the area for 51 years.

After their marriage, Dimitris Gialouris began an effort to develop the East Gogrial region in cooperation with the local leader. He set up thirty-four grocery stores throughout the region to supply even the most remote villages and proposed to create an organisation that could provide assistance to those in need. Gialouris, was given the honorary name Makoldit [colour of the bull] by the Dinka and was so prestigious that he often replaced the local leader when he was absent.

Dimitris had three sons, John (1931-1967), Vasilis (1937-1967) and Gregory (1941). Ayen Achom died suddenly in 1947 and Dimitris brought up his children alone. In 1958, he left Sudan and returned to Greece, leaving the business to his children and particularly Vasilis. Vasilis married Nyajok Kuac, the daughter of the local leader Kuac Aduol, and had three children, Gregory, Mary Ayen and John.

All of Dimitris Gialouris' sons took part in the first civil war (1955-1972). Vasilis, supplied arms to the Anyanya army. As a result of this important role, the Sudanese army decided to kill him. In 1967, a special operation was set up targeting Vasilis and his brother John. Vasilis escaped but his brother was killed. Vasilis did not know what happened and searched for his brother until finally, he was surrounded by the Sudanese army and also killed.



Dimitris Gialouris with his wife Ayen Achom Malang (Credit: Marina Gialouris).

Vasilis Gialouris in his shop in Gogrial at some time between 1947 and 1951 (Copyright: Godfrey Lienhardt Collection, Pitt Rivers Museum. Accession Number:2005.51.485; Ahmed Al-Shahi).



As the war progressed thousands of people died. Most Greeks left the region but a few remained in the south, including the third generation of the Gialouris family who continued to participate in the struggle for independence.

In 1984, Vasilis' son, Gregory Gialouris, joined the SPLM / SPLA forces and gradually moved up the hierarchy. In 1994, he was responsible for oil-field operations and in 2003 he was in charge of the SPLM in the East Gogrial region. Between 1997 and 2002, he served as the director of the Sudan Integrated Mine Action Service (SIMAS). In 2002, Gregory Gialouris,⁵ was appointed as the Commissioner of the Gogrial East Province by the Sudan People's Liberation Movement. In 2005, he was elected as a member of the Transitional National Assembly and in 2006 he was appointed the head of the South Sudan security services. From 2013 till 2016 he was the Southern Sudan chief of staff responsible for the protection of oil facilities in the Greater Upper Nile and Greater Unity States. Finally, between 2017 and 2022 he served as the governor of Gogrial state. He married Mary Athil Ngeth and had four children: Marina Ayen, Eleni, Marika and Yiannis.

⁵ He is also known as Gregory Vasili Dimitri or Gregory Deng Kuac.

The Greek Community in the late 20th century in Wau and Juba

By the end of the 20th century, although some Greeks remained in southern Sudan, the Greek communities of Juba and Wau were inactive. For that reason, the Greek community of Khartoum tried to save their property. They authorised a lawyer to take the necessary steps to bring the estate of the dissolved community to Juba. In 1994, a delegation from the community in Khartoum



The Greek Club in Juba, as it is today (Credit: George Ginis).

went to Juba and leased the Greek Club and the Greek Orthodox Church to the Catholic Archdiocese; the same happened in Wau.

In Wau some Greeks returned in 1995 and sought to regain control of the community's property there, including six shops, seven warehouses, three houses, the school building, the priest's home, and the holy temple.⁶ At that time the community in Wau consisted of 63 people, 30 of whom were children.

In 1997, and as the war continued in southern Sudan, the Greeks living in Wau fled to Khartoum and settled there, receiving the help of the Greek community which provided shelter and financial support. In 2001, they provided financial



*Members of the Kikezos family in Wau
(Credit: Eleni Kikezos).*

⁶ Interview with Lefteris Kikezos, son of the president of the Greek Community in Wau, 8/2014.

assistance amounting to 300,000 S£ and on 18/6/2001, they offered 200,000 S£ to the hospital in Wau.⁷ In 2009, they covered the cost of repairs to the community's buildings there.⁸

The situation in the south was normalised with the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) that was signed in 2005. As a result, some Greeks began to return to their homes in southern Sudan.

Greeks returned once more to Wau and successfully re-engaged in business: for example Eleni Kikezos, won an architect's contest and undertook the design and construction of the Wau Municipal Mansion in 2015.⁹

In Juba, at the initiative of George Ginis whose father was the last president of the Greek community, an effort was made to re-establish it, and by 2006 "The Greek Community of South Sudan" was active again.¹⁰ However, the community's property including the holy temple, had been sold by the Greek community of Khartoum when the Juba community was dissolved due to the war.¹¹

In 2008, the Greek community of Juba numbered thirty-three people, mainly the descendants of mixed marriages, such as the Gialouris family. We should note that the daughter of Vassilis Gialouris, Mary Ayen, is the wife of the current president of South Sudan.¹²

After July 2011, when South Sudan gained its independence the "Hellenic Community of Juba", was officially recognised by the newly established state.¹³ Having resolved the issues of its legal status, the community dealt with the problems of its members. One of these was to cover the costs of the children that were studying at the Greek school of Khartoum and staying in the community's boarding school. Due to a lack of resources, the Greeks of Juba asked for the help of the Greek state and the Patriarchate of Alexandria.¹⁴

⁷ Archives of the Greek community of Khartoum., undated document.

⁸ Archives of the Greek community of Bahr el Ghazal, letter of 15/9/2009 from the community of Wau to the community of Khartoum.

⁹ Interview with Eleni Kikezos, resident of South Sudan, Athens 4/2016.

¹⁰ Archives of the Greek community of Khartoum, letter of 8/12/2006 from G. Ginis to the community of Khartoum about the re-establishment of the community of Juba. (registration Nr. 47/2006).

¹¹ Archives of the Greek community of Khartoum, letter of 5/2/2007 of the Greek community of Khartoum to the Greek ambassador.

¹² Interview with Eleni Kikezos, resident of South Sudan, 1/2015.

¹³ Archives of the Greek community of Khartoum, letter of 23/3/2011 of G. Zaphiriou, president of the community of Juba, to the community of Khartoum stating that the state of South Sudan recognised the Greek community.

¹⁴ Archives of the Greek community of Khartoum, letter of 25/10/2011 of the community of Juba to that of Khartoum.



The house of Ioannis Carolidis (Credit: George Ginis).



*The president of South Sudan and Mary Ayen, his Greek-born wife
(Credit: Marina Gialouris).*

Today, (2023) although several members of the Greek community have left Juba the community is still active.

Conclusion

Greeks have been living in several areas of southern Sudan for more than a

century. They were among the first Europeans who settled there and in all those years they have played an important role in the local economy mainly through their trade activities. After the end of colonialism in 1956, Greeks were also involved in politics and some of them took part in the struggle of the southern provinces for independence. Nowadays, descendants of the Greek pioneers are prominent members of the local society in South Sudan.

References

Documentary sources

The National Archives of the UK, Foreign Office (FO):

FO 403/443 (Report of the British Consulate in Khartoum, 1913)

FO 403/425 (Report of the British Consulate in Khartoum, 1911)

The Sudan Archive at Durham (SAD): *Sudan Gazette*, no. 869, 15/5/1954.

Printed Sources

Barbour, K. M. 1961. *The Republic of the Sudan, A regional geography*. London: University of London Press.

Burton, J. 1985. 'Christians, Colonists, and Conversion: A View from the Nilotic Sudan', *Journal of Modern African Studies* 23:2, 349-369.

Collins, R. 1976. 'Colonialism and Class Struggle in the Sudan', *Middle East Research- and Information Project* (MERIP) No. 46.

Collins, R. 2005. *Civil Wars and Revolution in the Sudan: Essays on the Sudan, South-ern Sudan and Darfur, 1962 – 2004*. Los Angeles CA: Tsehali Publishers.

Collins, R. and R. Herzog 1961. 'Early British Administration in the Southern Sudan', *Journal of African History* 2:1. 119-135.

Comyn, D. C. E. 1911. *Service & sport in the Sudan, a record of administration in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. With some intervals of sport and travel*. London: John Lane.

Deng, F. M. 1995. *War of Visions: Conflict of Identities in the Sudan*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institutional Press.

Fothergill, E. 1910. *Five years in the Sudan*. London: Hurst & Blackett.

Gray, R. 1961. *A History of the Southern Sudan, 1839-1889*. London, etc.: Oxford University Press.

Hill, R. 1951. *A bibliographical dictionary of Sudan*. London: Thomas Nelson Printers, .

Kalaitzakis, A. 1997. 'Ένας Έλληνας στη χαμένη Αφρική' [A Greek in unknown Africa]. Observer.

Kamitsis, G. 1967. *Το Σουδάν και ο Ελληνισμός του* [Sudan and Hellenism]. Athens.

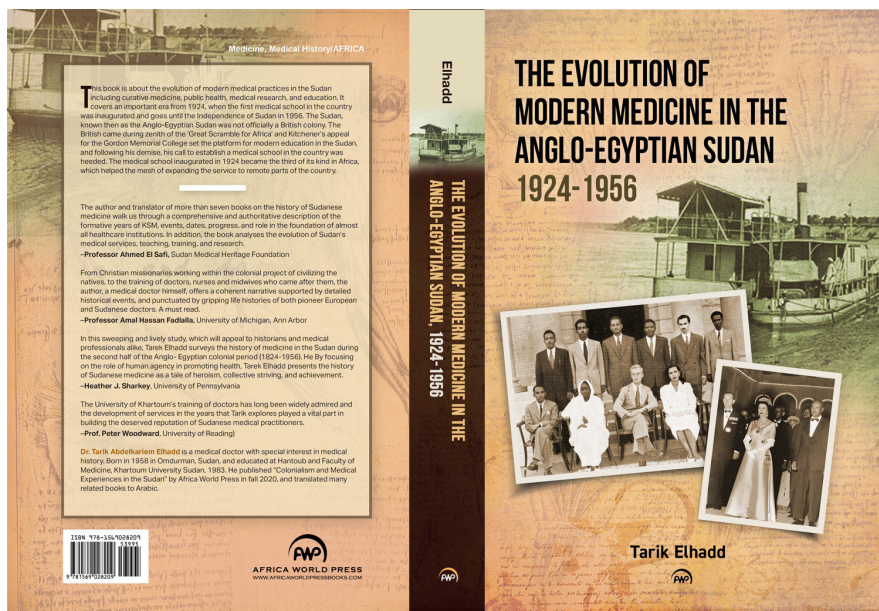
Keith, K. 1966. 'The Sudan Today', *African Affairs*, 65:60, 233-244.

- Kumm, K. 1910. *From Hausaland to Egypt, through the Sudan*. London: Constable and Co.
- Landor, H. 1907. *Across widest Africa, Vol. I*. London: Hurst and Blackett.
- Muddathir, 'Abd Al-Rahim 1970. 'Arabism, Africanism, and Self-Identification in the Sudan', *Journal of Modern African Studies* 8:2, 233-249.
- Niblock, T. 1987. *Class and power in Sudan: the dynamics of Sudanese politics, 1898-1985*. New York: SUNY Press.
- O' Fahey, R. 1973. 'Slavery and Slave Trade in Dar Fur', *Journal of African History* 14:1, 29-43.
- Pachtikos, A. 1933. *Ειζονογραφημένη Αφρική* [Illustrated Africa]. Alexandria: Hermes.
- Santandrea, S. 1977. *A popular history of Wau (Bahr El Ghazal - Sudan) from its foundation to about 1940*. Rome: Santandrea.
- Shepherd, G. 1966. 'National Integration and the Southern Sudan', *Journal of Modern African Studies* 4:2, 193-212.
- Schanz, M. 1913. 'Cotton in Egypt and the Anglo- Egyptian Sudan,' submitted to the 9th International Cotton Congress, Scheveningen, June 9th to 11th, 1913.
- Skotidis, N. 1908. *Το Σουδάν* [Sudan]. Alexandria.
- Volianitis, H. and N. Evagelidis 2012. *Ο ελληνισμός στην χώρα του Νείλου* [Hellenism in the land of Nile]. Athens.
- Wai, D. 1980. 'Pax Britannica and the Southern Sudan: The view from the theatre', *African Affairs* 79:316, 375-395.

*Antonis Chaldeos is a Research Associate at the University of Johannesburg. His thesis was about the Greek presence in Sudan between the 19th and 21st centuries. Contact e-mail: anchald1997@hotmail.com

The Evolution of Modern Medicine in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan 1924-1956: Report of the book launch at SOAS

Charlotte Martin



The cover of The Evolution of Modern Medicine in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan 1924-1956.

On a wet and windy December afternoon¹ members of SSSUK, relatives, colleagues and friends of Dr Tarik Elhadd met at SOAS to launch his latest book about modern medicine in Sudan. We were joined by an equal number of people online, ably assisted by the Society's secretary Francis Gotto and by Mohammed the SOAS technician. The session was chaired by Prof. Peter Woodward.²

Dr Elhadd is a medical doctor as well as an historian and author. He began his presentation by talking about the lifelong passion for history that had led him to write his earlier books and to translate several classic medical histories and accounts from English to Arabic.

The Evolution of Modern Medicine in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan 1924-1956 is the sequel to the first part of his medical history, *Colonialism and the Medical Expe-*

¹ 9th December 2023.

² Thanks are due to SOAS and its staff, particularly the Centre of African Studies.



Dr Elhadd outside SOAS.

riences in the Sudan 1504-1956 that was published in 2021.³ The latter section of this book details the foundation of modern medicine in Sudan in the early twentieth century and the establishment of the Wellcome Tropical Research Laboratories in 1910.

Dr Elhadd's talk was illustrated throughout by black and white photographs, many of which are held in the Sudan Archive at Durham. Tarik introduced *The Evolution of Modern Medicine in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan 1924-1956* section by section beginning with Part 5 and the evolution of the Sudan Medical Service (SMS); "the best in the world" according to Dr Kenneth Owen who served in Sudan during the 1940's. The structure of the SMS provided a prototype for the organisation of medical services in other parts of Britain's empire with its three levels of hospitals. Part 6 details the establishment of the Kitchener School of Medicine which eventually merged with the Gordon Memorial College in 1951 and in 1956 formed the core of the new University of Khartoum.

Part 7 deals with the training of doctors and other health care professionals (including in public health) in the SMS. The training courses provided the opportunity for many Sudanese doctors to come to the UK for studies, beginning the links between Sudanese doctors and the UK that remain strong today.

³ This volume was reviewed by Peter Woodward in *Sudan Studies* 64, 99-100.



Dr Elhadd speaking at the book launch.

The importance of training for nurses, midwives and other health officials and the role of women within this training was also outlined. Some of this history has been written up by other researchers but Dr Elhadd has been able to put all the details in one place and provide an overview of this important area, placing his medical narrative within the wider political and social context of Sudan.

Part 8 concerns the role of missions in medicine with a particular emphasis on the work of the Church Missionary Society in the south as well as the establishment of their hospital in Omdurman. Part 9 is entitled “Medical Research, Ministry of Health and the Prelude to Independence” while Part 10 is about epidemics and infectious diseases.

The Epilogue concludes that four decades building an excellent health service were followed by two and a half decades during which this service crumbled completely, even before the current conflict broke out.

There were many questions and comments from both online participants and those in the room and it was clear that there was a lot of interest in the subject and the book. In response to one question Dr Elhadd concluded that in the 21st century much needs to be done to build a health service for Sudan. Dr Elhadd’s book on modern medicine in Anglo-Egyptian Sudan was declared to be well and truly launched!



Participants after the book launch in SOAS.

We hope to have a review of Dr Elhadd's book in the next issue of *Sudan Studies* in July 2024. The book is published by Africa World Press and details of how to obtain a copy can be found on their website.⁴

⁴ <https://africaworldpressbooks.com>

Book Review

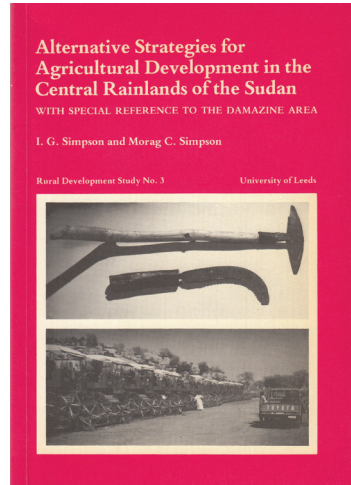
I. G. and Morag C. Simpson, **Alternative Strategies for Agricultural Development in the Central Rainlands of the Sudan: with special reference to the Damazine area**, University of Leeds, Rural Development Study No. 3, 1978, ISBN 9780905060026, 0905060024

This short book remains as important today as when it was published in 1978, before oil and gold influenced the economy. It provides a microcosm of the development process and its problems, focussing on a study of mechanised farming in Damazine.

As the authors indicate in their Introduction, Sudan's central rainlands were one of the largest reserves of undeveloped cultivatable land at the time and had the potential to become the "bread-basket" of Africa and the Middle East. However, results were disappointing, threatening the financial viability of existing development and inhibiting further expansion. Great emphasis had been placed on the potential of agricultural exports to generate foreign exchange but Sudan became a net importer of grain rather than a major exporter.

The book begins with a brief historic review covering different aspects of the rainlands farming sector, from prior to the introduction of non-irrigated sector mechanised farming in 1944, through to 1977. The study identifies the various alternative types of mechanised farming, the changes in direction that it underwent during its development and associated problems. In 1968 the Mechanised Farming Corporation (MFC) was established to oversee and develop all rainland mechanised sectors. The book covers standard MFC tenancies, together with the role of state farms, commercial companies and the efforts that were made to help small farmers through co-operatives and modernisation schemes.

Much of the book is given over to case studies of the Damazine area, based on fieldwork that was conducted between 1975 and 1977. The focus of the book is on Standard Tenancy Farms but a chapter on the traditional sector includes discussion of sedentary traditional cultivators, pastoralists and those in other sectors. The presentation of the study's findings is to the point but comprehensive, demonstrating how well the authors and their research team understood the issues and problems that arose on the schemes and were thus able to make meaningful recommendations and workable solutions.



As the authors point out, at the time Sudan had high hopes for the support of the Arab Authority for Agricultural Investment and Development (AAAID). AAAID was founded in 1976 with the objective of investing in suitable agricultural development projects in Arab member countries. Ambitious expansion targets were set for Sudan, based on financing suitable projects that offered acceptable rates of return.

Agadi State farm was the largest in the country at 250,000 feddans (fd) (1 fd = 1.04 acre). Established in 1971-2, by 1984 it had turned a corner and 180,000 fds were being farmed, of which 40,000 feddans was a very successful crop of cotton. However the Farm was handed over as it was to the AAAID. In its most successful periods about 60,000 feddans were cultivated, but the average was 20-25,000 feddans a year. It has now ceased operations and the land is rented out to farmers. All the other projects run by AAAID, seven or so in other parts of the country, failed miserably. Their one successful project, on the outskirts of Khartoum, was a poultry project. That, too, has now shut down. However, there remains a very impressive large office block in the eastern part of central Khartoum.

The authors also discuss the potential innovations of the Saudi-Sudanese "Prince Faisal Scheme", a concession of nearly 700,000 feddans south of Damazine. Expectations were high amongst farmers: *"if the Saudis are investing L.S. 30 million, they will not abandon the land in 10 years but employ the best experts money can hire, to keep the land in cultivation"*. The project included a slaughterhouse and a landing strip to enable meat exports to Saudi Arabia. It was hoped that this would be an incentive for pastoralists to modernise their production methods. Anglo-Australian multinational Dalgety managed the farm, cultivating 60,000 feddans at one point. However, the farm no longer exists.

I worked in the Damazine area in 1979, a year after the study was published. The situation there was as described in the study and many of their predictions were starting to take place. A lot of water has flowed under the bridge since then but if the Simpsons were to visit today they would see little change, although there are many fewer trees and substantial horizontal expansion (neither of which were envisaged or recommended at the time). The roads they recommended were built but are now unusable. The average yield for sorghum remains at 2 sacks (180kg/feddan).

In an attempt to transfer technologies and know-how from the similar farming practices of the Canadian prairies, the 20,000 feddan "SimSim State Farm", in the Southern Gedaref area, was allocated by the MFC to a Canadian company funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). Funding continued for 15 years but eventually ceased due to international sanctions and poor economic results. Today it would be difficult to

identify that there had ever been any external intervention: 'before' and 'after' photographs would be almost identical.

I would like to conclude this review with reference to a short section about the 'village modernisation' approach in the Southern Blue Nile region, which the authors considered to be perhaps the only successful attempt in the case study area to tackle the problem of small cultivator participation. The scheme was managed by the Ministry of Agriculture's 'Department of Soil, Conservation, Land Use and Water Planning' and adopted an integrated rural development approach aimed at improving not only the productivity of land and labour but also welfare aspects such as better housing, water and sanitation, as well as measures to prevent soil erosion.

The authors describe how the first few years nearly proved disastrous and farmers were resistant to new techniques. They couldn't be persuaded to weed the fields until the officials themselves started to hoe. Then, to avoid "the loss of good manners", the local villagers joined them. At first all the land was worked communally but production didn't take off until families were given their own private plots in each of the open fields. As a result of this experience and the lessons that were learnt, the data showed that yields increased over time rather than fell: in the first year sorghum production averaged 1.7 sacks (155kg) per feddan but by the fourth year had risen to a record level of 12 sacks (1,091kg) per feddan; *"the highest figures reported to the writers in their field work"*.

In 1984, when I first came across the officials administrating these areas around Kurmuk, funding for their projects had stopped and a few years later the Department was itself scrapped. As the authors show, agriculture in Sudan should be managed by an extension system that embraces and coordinates all the stakeholders, including farmers, researchers, financing bodies, breeding centres, machinery and chemical companies.

The book has stood the test of time well, though the study was made at a time when the sector was at a crossroads. Yields were falling and costs rising. The year following the study and prior to the book's publication, the Sudanese currency was devalued and fuel was in short supply at the start of the new rainy season. Taxation, which was a big issue for farmers in determining their survival and development, almost doubled in 1983 when *Zakat* was introduced in addition to existing taxes. The coup of 1989 put a stop to any meaningful development of the agricultural sector and so the recommendations made in the report about the approach that should be taken to research, plant breeding and financing were not followed through.

This book should be essential reading for anyone studying economics, agriculture, development and planning in Sudan. It should feature on university

curricula as a case study to illustrate both best practice and planning pitfalls. As the authors point out considerable research directed primarily at the needs of large farms had been undertaken in the past, but there was a need to avoid duplication of effort. Meanwhile, annual reports were delayed, lost or left to rot in odd corners of research stations. It seems that this study has met with the same fate as those it describes. A reprint of the book would be highly recommended so that its lessons can be learnt by a contemporary audience.

Aziz El Nur is an Agriculturalist with a BSc from Nottingham University who used to farm in the area covered by the study.

News from the Sudan Archive, Durham

The range of material in the Sudan Archive provides an exceptionally rich research resource for scholars in all disciplines of studies relating to Sudan and South Sudan and to the wider region, with records dating from the 19th century to the present day. Please get in touch, whether to pursue your own research, to suggest additional records we should try to collect, or to make a donation to the collections yourself. The Archive's homepage is <https://libguides.durham.ac.uk/asc-sudan-archive> and includes a blog. More digitised material from the collections is added most weeks; digital images are linked from the catalogues and can also be browsed here <http://iif.durham.ac.uk/jalava/>.

This year's Sir William Luce fellow was **Dr Azza Mustafa Mohamed Ahmed** who delivered her lecture on "The Sudan Movement: the emergence of a new political block, 2013-2019" on 11th July 2023. A link to the published paper will be circulated once it is available. The 2024 Sir William Luce Fellow will be **Dr Altea Pericoli** who will develop her research on aid from Gulf donors in conflict zones. The application period for the 2025 fellowship will run from June to September.



Recent accessions to the Sudan Archive

Acquisitions of recent publications are not generally noted – but are nevertheless received with deep thanks. Large accessions generally remain uncatalogued for a period of time, but can usually be accessed on request. This is a summary of accessions since January 2023.

Iain Archibald Gillespie (1906-1973), Sudan Veterinary Service 1930-1956: 1 album (182 photographs) and 274 loose photographs

Dr Ahmed Al-Shahi and Professor F. C. T. Moore: papers relating to Sudanese folk stories and games, including stories collected in Sudan under the direction of Al-Shahi and Moore in the 1970s and 1980s (part published in "Wisdom from the Nile" (1978) and "Wisdom from the Desert" (2022)) (4 boxes, 5 vols)

James Baynard-Smith: biographical papers, and groups of correspondence, photographs and cuttings relating to the Mahdi family, Dr Mohamed el-

- Murtada, Buth Diu, and several other prominent South Sudanese figures, 1950s-2023 (6 files)
- Sir Robert G. Howe** (1893-1981), Governor-General 1947-1955: “Inherit the kingdom”, unpublished autobiography (1 vol.)
- Purchased: **Sudan photograph album, 1926-29**, including many scenes of railway and bridge construction
- ***Gen. Reginald Wingate** (1861-1953): copy of the sale catalogue of the contents of Wingate’s home “Knockenhair” in Dunbar, 27-28 May 1953
- ***Harold R. J. Davies** (1931-2022), Khartoum University (1955-60) and Swansea University (1960-97): further papers, publications and photographs (1 box)
- ***Michael Tibbs**, Sudan Political Service, 1949-1955, and his wife Anne Wortley (1932-2019): further papers, photographs and printed material, 1948-2011 (2 boxes)
- Nick Cater**, journalist: papers, newspaper cuttings, posters, 1980s-1990s (1 box)
- ***Ewen Campbell** (1897-1975), Sudan Political Service, 1922-1947: 1939 diary, correspondence, papers, 1939-1940s (1 file)
- ***Evelyn Robertson** (1907-1985), wife of Ewen Campbell: Sudan memoir, 1980s (1 file)
- Arthur Stafford Oakley** (1899-1980), Sudan Political Service 1923-1948, and his wife Mary Dorothea Holmes (1901-1992): diaries and photograph albums, 1923-1948 (9 vols)
- Alexander McKillop** (1898-1980), Manager Production Division (Nzara) of the Equatoria Projects Board: 5 photographs, 1950
- John A. B. Ritchie** (1943-2021), photo-journalist: photographs of the 1986 Sudanese parliamentary election and humanitarianism during the Second Sudanese Civil War (1 box)
- ***Henry E. Hebbert** (1893-1980), Public Works and Posts and Telegraphs Departments 1924-1944, Director P&T 1939-1944: correspondence, photographs, including First World War cuttings, photographs and letters, 1912-1945. The donation also included extensive Hebbert family correspondence from India and England, 1830s-1930s (6 boxes)
- ***Maj. James J. Bramble** (1883-1943), Sudan Political Service 1916-1935, and his wife Daisy Flowers (1885-1973): personal and some official papers and photographs, c. 1900-1943 (1 box)
- ***Anne Cloudsley-Thompson** (1916-2012): thesis and related publications about obstetrics and physiotherapy in Sudan, 1978-1984 (3 vols)

* accruals to existing collections

SSSUK Notices

Subscription Notice for all SSSUK Members

At its last meeting the Executive Committee of SSSUK agreed that members still paying the old lower subscription rates will no longer receive issues of *Sudan Studies* until they update their payments. The current subscription rates can be found on our website. When a member's subscription to the Society is not paid members will receive a notification; if still unpaid after 6 months the journal will no longer be sent to that member, and after a further 6 months membership will be withdrawn.

Society for the Study of the Sudans (UK)
37th Annual General Meeting, 16th September 2023

MINUTES

1. Welcome from the Chairperson

Gill Lusk welcomed everyone to the 37th Annual General Meeting of the SSSUK. A minute's silence for the victims of the war in Sudan was then proposed by Dr Husam Elmugamar and observed by those attending.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from: Leila Aboulela, Mohamed Baraka, Simon Bush, Peter Everington, Dan Large, Cherry Leonardi.

3. Minutes of the AGM of 8th October 2022, and matters arising

There were no matters arising from the minutes, which had been previously circulated, and they were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting.

4. Chairperson's report

Gill Lusk sadly reported the death of Prof. Herman Bell on 7th February 2023. Two obituaries by Peter Woodard and Ahmed Abdul Rahman had been published in the July edition of *Sudan Studies*. The chairperson read out an appreciation by Fatih Osman, and then relayed the thanks and good wishes of Herman's family for the Society's support.

Professor Herman Bell (1933-2023): a linguist, specialising in Nubian languages and culture; worked with Nubian communities prior to the Aswan Dam forced displacement, 1962-1964; African and Asian Studies Unit, University of Khartoum 1973-1979; Department of Foreign Languages, King Faisal University, 1980-1993; Oxford Academy of Advanced Studies, 1993-2003; notable among his many publications is *Paradise Lost: Nubia before the 1964 hijra* (2009).

Gill thanked the outgoing Treasurer Adrian Thomas for his 16 years of support for the Society in that role, and also thanked his wife Robyn for her own valued work behind the scenes during this time.

Gill noted that this would be her last year in post as Chairperson of the Society and urged members to join the Committee and take an active role. New blood and new ideas were needed so that momentum created during her tenure could be continued. As is the convention, Gill would be happy to stay on the Committee for a period after stepping down.

Finally, Gill acknowledged everyone's pain at the terrible suffering and vio-

lence in Sudan. She hoped that the Society gathering together at the Symposium offered a chance for solidarity and some consolation.

5. Treasurer's report

Adrian Thomas reported for the last time, as he now proposes to hand over his role to Shiamaa Ahmed.

The 2022 accounts were circulated. The Society's financial position is healthy. The Society's income exceeded its expenditure by £1,035.99, much as last year. In 2022 the Society spent less on printing and editorial activities (new printers were used), and there was a small increase in subscriptions income. However, these gains were balanced by a loss of £300 from the 2022 Symposium, which had been affected by a train strike and the pandemic.

For each of the last three years, the Society has made a surplus, such that the Society's current account balance now stands at about £9,000, and thus makes a reserve of nearly two years of our usual expenditure. This is a healthy position, and Adrian suggested now would be a good time to invest some of this reserve in new projects.

Membership remains stable at 225. Adrian noted this had grown from 190 in 2007 when he took on the role of Treasurer, and he urged that there was still lots of room to grow the membership further. He appealed to members to recruit among their friends and colleagues.

Members were again encouraged to subscribe to the Society by standing order. 27 members' direct debits had still not been updated from £12 to the new (2020) higher membership fee (see website for rates), and Adrian warned that such members would not receive hard copies of *Sudan Studies* next year if their direct debits remained uncorrected, the postal costs being the Society's highest outgoing each year.

Adrian remarked that he was an early member, joining in 1968. His first involvement with Sudan was in the field of education, post-independence. He noted recent events were a challenge for the many Sudanese and South Sudanese in the UK, and argued the Society has an especially important purpose now for these communities.

Adrian concluded by saying he had enjoyed his 16 years in the role as Treasurer and valued the support of committee members. Now was the time to hand over to younger members.

6. Editor's report

Charlotte Martin reported that two issues of the journal, *Sudan Studies*, (#68 and #69) had as usual been published this year. They included an eclectic

mix of material, including two articles by the editor. One of these was a report of a picnic to commemorate 20 years of genocide in Darfur and held at Alexandra Palace Park in London centred round a memorial to Sharif Barco (aka Majed Hassan, 1961-2021).

Charlotte welcomed Aly Verjee to the Editorial Board and thanked the Board's other members, particularly Jane Hogan for her work in supervising the publication and mailing the issues. Heywood Hadfield was also thanked for taking on the book reviews for the journal. A series of reviews of classic texts is forthcoming, the first to be authored by Aziz el Nur. Gill Lusk was thanked as a long-term contributor, and Aziz el Nur and Garth Glentworth were also thanked for linking Charlotte with potential contributors.

Issue(s) in 2025 will include articles on Sudan Government Railways (which included river steamers). Charlotte invited contributions on the topic of transport, and welcomed an immediate offer to help from member Hashim Mohamed Ahmed, a former General Manager of the Sudan Railways Company. Ian Cliff will contribute a history and Rosie Squires will also contribute. Charlotte noted that Nile barges were constructed at Rowhedge, Essex, where there is an archive and local studies library, and she would follow up this lead.

Charlotte noted that she would not be able to edit the journal for ever, and invited people interested in the role and in contributing pieces to the journal to get in touch and to continue to provide much needed support.

7. Website

Francis Gotto reported that the SSSUK Committee had formed a sub-committee to make recommendations to improve or replace the website.

8. Elections to the SSSUK Committee

Leila Aboulela (re-election) (Proposer Gill Lusk, Second Mawan Muortat)

Francis Gotto (re-election) (Proposer Rosalind Marsden, Second Simon Bush)

Fidaa Mahmoud (re-election) (Proposer Peter Woodward, Second Francis Gotto)

Charlotte Martin (Editor) (Proposer Douglas Johnson, Second Rebecca Bradshaw)

Mawan Muortat (Co-Deputy Chairperson) (Proposer Jacob Akol, Second John Ryle)

Aly Verjee (Proposer Gill Lusk, Second Mawan Muortat)

Jane Hogan (co-opted member) (Proposer Andy Wheeler, Second Jihad Mashamoun)

Shiemaah Ahmed (Treasurer) (Proposer Adrian Thomas, Seconder Abdel Azim El Hassan)

All candidates were elected unanimously by the members attending the meeting.

9. Any other business

(a) Aziz El Nur reported a Chatham House event on Wednesday 13th September ‘Making sense of coups and democratic renewal in Africa’. This presented a new UNDP research paper of the same title (available online), based on 8,000 questionnaires. Prof. Lutz Oette will review this for the journal.

(b) Hashim Mohamed Ahmed emphasised the importance of the journal and urged its wide distribution to members and non-members. To this end he volunteered that one of the two copies sent to his address may be re-directed elsewhere.

(c) A participant asked if SSSUK could promote charitable organisations active in Sudan and South Sudan on the website. Hazel Oberst noted as an example the activities of <https://www.kidsforkids.org.uk/> in Darfur. The Committee offered to discuss this practical suggestion, but noted that we must always be guided by the charity’s constitutional purposes, which are:

“to provide, for the public benefit and in any appropriate place, a forum for discussion and the circulation of information and ideas between groups and individuals concerned with or interested in Sudan and South Sudan, and to advance the education of the public in Sudanese Studies”.

(d) Salwa Ahmed offered to contribute to the journal and will contact the editor.

(e) Nahla Abbas asked if the Society had collaborative links with Sudanese civil society organisations and professional bodies active in the UK, and if they could contribute to the Society in any way. Gill answered that there are several such links, offering the recent examples of Waging Peace and Sudan’s Doctors for Human Rights, and welcomed further such contacts.

Close of meeting

Society for the Study of the Sudans (UK)

The Society for the Study of the Sudans (UK), (founded in 1986 as the Sudan Studies Society of the UK) encourages and promotes Sudanese studies in the United Kingdom and abroad, at all levels and in all disciplines. SSSUK is a registered charity (No. 328272).

Enquiries about Society matters and membership should be addressed to:

Ms Shiemaa Ahmed
430 Abingdon Road,
Oxford
OX1 4XG,
Shiemaa.Ahmed@outlook.com

Membership

Anyone with an interest in South Sudan and Sudan, general or specialised, is welcome to join the SSSUK. Membership is by annual subscription payable in January each year; new members can join at any time. Current annual subscription rates are:

	UK	Europe	Elsewhere
Individuals standard rate (standing order / Pay Pal)	£18	€28/£25	US\$30/£25
Individuals (cheque or cash)	£20	€31/£28	US\$34/£28
Students (with identification)	£12	€18/£16	US\$20/£16
Institutions	£28	€35/£32	US\$40/£32

NB: Dollar & Euro subscription rates take into account postage and any bank charges.

Members receive two issues each year of *Sudan Studies* and the right to vote at the Annual General Meeting.

Chairperson

Gill Lusk
chair@ssuk.org

Vice-Chairpersons

Fidaa Mahmoud and Mawan Muortat

Treasurer

Sheimaa Ahmed

Secretary

Francis Gotto
secretary@ssuk.org

Website Manager

Mawan Muortat
www.sssuk.org

Editorial Board, *Sudan Studies*: Mr Jacob Akol; Ms Jane Hogan; Dr Douglas Johnson; Ms Charlotte Martin; Rev. Andrew Wheeler, Prof. Peter Woodward and Mr Aly Verjee.

Sudan Studies

Sudan Studies – ISSN 0952-049X – is published twice a year by the Society for the Study of the Sudans (UK). Views expressed in notes, articles and reviews published in *Sudan Studies* are not necessarily those held by the SSSUK, the Editor or the Editorial Board. Articles are published to promote discussion and further scholarship in Sudan and South Sudan studies.

All correspondence, articles and features relating to *Sudan Studies* and books for review should be addressed to:

Charlotte Martin,
Editor,
Sudan Studies,
72 Castle Road,
Colchester,
CO1 1UN
Email: sudanstudies@ssuk.org

Notes for Contributors

SSSUK welcomes notes and articles intended for publication, to be assessed by the Editorial Board. The maximum length is 5,000 words including foot-notes; longer articles may be accepted for publication in two or more parts. Short pieces are also welcome. Notes and articles should be typed in Times New Roman and single spaced and should normally be submitted as Microsoft Word files and sent to the editor as an e-mail attachment. Maps, diagrams and photographs should be of high definition and sent as separate files, with a file name corresponding directly to the figure or plate number in the text. Any bibliographies should be in Harvard style. SSSUK retains the right to edit articles for reasons of space or clarity, and consistency of style and spelling.

It is helpful to have some relevant details about the author (2-3 lines), e.g. any post held or time spent in the Sudan and interest in the topic being discussed.

Unless stated otherwise, SSSUK retains the copyright of all material published in *Sudan Studies*.

Single copies and back numbers may be obtained from the Secretary (secretary@ssuk.org) at a cost of £8 per copy plus postage.

