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# Violent Conflict and Peacebuilding

The continuing crisis in Darfur

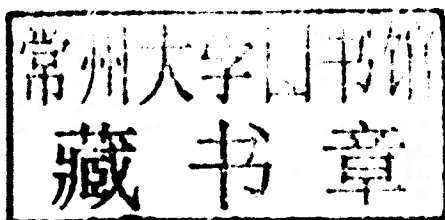
Johan Brosché and Daniel Rothbart



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# Foreword

The Darfur conflict in Sudan received considerable international attention during several years in the first decade of the twenty-first century. It had many of the hallmarks of ethnic conflicts in the Balkans and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Thus, international peacekeeping operations were launched in cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union. International mediators were appointed. The International Criminal Court became concerned. After this period of intense scrutiny, however, the Darfur situation was overshadowed by other global concerns: climate change, financial crises, dangers in Afghanistan and Pakistan, the rise of China, the Arab Spring and the independence of South Sudan. But the conflicts in Darfur lingered on. The lack of attention was not a sign of working solutions or positive developments. On the contrary, there were continued reasons for concern.

This is why this volume, *Violent Conflict and Peacebuilding: The Continuing Crisis in Darfur*, is a timely reminder of a large problematique the world has not followed as closely as it needs to. To enhance our understanding, the two authors of this book apply a framework of four increasingly complex levels. In this light it becomes obvious to the reader that the “Darfur problem” actually has to be understood as a set of conflicts on the communal level, as well as relations between local elites. Furthermore, there is a center-periphery dimension that connects the “distant” Darfur to the centers of power and wealth in Sudan. Finally, there are the cross-border conflicts, making neighboring countries actors in Darfur and Sudan. In addition, the authors point to the interconnections among these levels. Thus, they work with a rich set of questions, and try to carefully respond to all of them. In particular, the authors do not end with just observing the intricacies of Sudan; they also bring in the possibilities of solutions. Again this is done by considering the four levels of conflict. Furthermore, the authors do not shy away from pointing out shortcomings of many of the efforts for peacebuilding and negotiation. In the end, however, they conclude that international efforts are indispensable if the Darfur conflicts are to be solved.

Thus, in this book the reader is simultaneously provided a broad and focused understanding of “the Darfur conflict.” The framework the

authors apply has a wider applicability than the Darfur situation, which makes the book even more useful. Thus, this volume is stimulating reading and the approach is testimony to their shared background in solid peace research.

The two authors complement each other. One is the young scholar Johan Brosché from the Department of Peace and Conflict Research at Uppsala University in Sweden. He has closely followed the developments both in Darfur and in Sudan as a whole. He has been a frequent visitor to the different regions of Sudan and has accumulated great insight into the complexities of what now is Sudan and South Sudan. The other author is Professor Daniel Rothbart at the School of Conflict Analysis and Resolution of George Mason University, Virginia, United States, where he also is Professor of Philosophy. He brings to this project knowledge that comes from his work on a peacebuilding initiative for Darfur. He also specializes in the study of identity-based conflicts and has a solid background in philosophical studies, which adds the importance of complementing “cold” analysis with a moral concern, not the least from the perspective of the civilians in a conflict.

Together Johan Brosché and Daniel Rothbart have produced a readable, informed and well-argued analysis of the protracted conflicts in Darfur. It is my hope that this book also will help in making the warring parties and the third parties understand better the conflict they are involved in. With such insights and with the support a more informed international community the book *Violent Conflict and Peacebuilding: the continuing crisis in Darfur* may become a catalyst for action, aimed at conflict resolution and peacebuilding in a country that desperately needs much of that commodity.

Peter Wallensteen

Dag Hammarskjöld Professor of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University, Uppsala, Sweden, and Richard G. Starmann, Sr. Research Professor of Peace Studies, Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, University of Notre Dame, Indiana, USA

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This book is the culmination of countless meetings, group discussions, interviews, and casual conversations in which the authors have invested. Johan Brosché would like to thank Uppsala University for providing him the opportunity to be part of an inspiring environment at the Department of Peace and Conflict Research. In particular, I want to thank the UCDP, and especially Professor Peter Wallensteen, who led the project and gave me the opportunity to study the fascinating country of Sudan. Also, I would like to thank the magnificent Wednesday Group their support and invaluable suggestions. By far the most rewarding parts of this research project have been my trips to Sudan. For these I greatly appreciate the support I have received from the Anna Maria Lundin Foundation, the Royal Swedish Academy of Science, the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Mediation Support Unit at the United Nations. With every visit to Sudan, I am struck anew by the Sudanese kindness. As a result, I have been able to cultivate many life-long friendships, by which I have been enormously blessed and for which I am very grateful. These friends are too numerous to name, but you know who you are.

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# Abbreviations

AMIS	African Union Mission in Sudan
AN	Alliance National
AU	African Union
BI	Border Intelligence
CAR	Central African Republic
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
DDPD	Doha Document for Peace in Darfur
DPA	Darfur Peace Agreement
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
DRDF	Darfur Reconstruction and Development Fund
ECOS	European Coalition on Oil in Sudan
ESPA	Eastern Sudan Peace Agreement
GoS	Government of Sudan
GoSS	Government of South Sudan
GoNU	Government of National Unity
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICG	International Crises Group
IGAD	Inter-Governmental Authority on Drought and Development
IHL	International Humanitarian Law
JEM	Justice and Equality Movement
JEM-CL	Justice and Equality Movement Collective Leadership
LJM	Liberation and Justice Movement
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
MLS	Mouvement pour la Libération du Congo
MPS	Patriotic Salvation Movement
NCP	National Congress Party
NDA	National Democratic Alliance
NIF	National Islamic Front
NISS	National Intelligence and Security Service
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

PCP	Popular Congress Party
PDF	Popular Defense Force
RCD	Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie
RCD-ML	Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie-Mouvement de Libération
RDFF	Revolutionary Democratic Forces Front
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
SAF	Sudanese Armed Forces
SLM/A	Sudan Liberation Movement/Army
SPLM/A	Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army
SSDF	South Sudan Defense Force
UCDP	Uppsala Conflict Data Program
UFR	Union des Forces de la Résistance
UN	United Nations
UNAMID	United Nations African Union Mission in Darfur
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNMIS	United Nations Mission in Sudan
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
URF	United Resistance Front
URFF	United Revolutionary Forces Front
WHO	World Health Organization



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# Introduction

The people of Darfur have experienced horrific devastation of various kinds—systematic slaughter of innocents, sexual violence, and internal displacement into camps that have become “warehouses” for the homeless. The brutality against Darfurians reached its peak in 2003–2004, when certain so-called Arab militias, known as the Janjaweed, joined forces with the state-run militaries of Sudan in a struggle against the insurgent resistance movements. Although the violence has waned in recent years, the fighting continues to this day. Despite the peacebuilding initiatives launched by various national and international bodies, the security of Darfuri civilians remains precarious at best, even for those living in displacement camps.

This westernmost region of Sudan already has a long history of violent confrontations between farmers and herders. In 2003, full-scale war erupted when two of the rebel groups, the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A) and Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), took up arms against the central government regime in the capital of Khartoum. In the following years, a coalition of government forces and militia groups from Arab tribes embarked on a scorched-earth campaign against certain so-called African groups—primarily the Fur, Masalit, and Zaghawa tribes. This ruthless campaign of ethnic cleansing included unprovoked assaults on these tribal civilians and destruction of their homeland. Countless villages have been ravaged by the attackers, who have systematically killed men, raped women, and abducted children. The assaults often begin with unprovoked air strikes by government bombers, fighter jets, or helicopter gunships, followed by coordinated ground attacks, in which the Arab militia fighters—often partnered with regular army troops—then sweep into a town or village on horseback or makeshift military vehicles. Although the number of fatalities has decreased and global outrage over this crisis has dwindled in recent years, Darfurians still suffer from continued warfare and brutality, mass displacement, desperate poverty, and a slew of fatal diseases brought on by the conditions of war. Darfur is very much a continuing crisis.

Certain aspects of the crisis are typical of many other current, protracted conflicts. While the number of state-to-state wars has declined

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sharply in recent years, wars involving non-state actors have increased significantly. A vast majority of today's ongoing conflicts include non-state actors on one side (and sometimes both sides) of the fence. The actors in many of these conflicts are amorphous collections of young men who draw their strength, support, and purpose from local communal groups—whether religious, ethnic, racial, or cultural. In most identity-based conflicts, these amorphous martial forces are harbored and supplied by their home community (or group), often blending seamlessly within these local communities. As a result of this merging of combatants and non-combatants, civilians are often targeted by martial forces. This is one reason why these kinds of conflicts so frequently include human rights violations, in which women and children are victimized by parties on both sides of the conflict. To further complicate matters, internal wars often traverse the boundaries of a single country. Frequently, neighboring countries will provide support to the conflict parties, offering arms, recruits, financial support, or possibly even shelter.

While these factors are certainly at play in Darfur, the crisis cannot be wholly explained as merely a struggle between state and non-state actors. And it cannot be reduced to any one kind of conflict. Careful reflection reveals that the Darfur crisis constitutes a multiplicity—an entanglement—of four distinct conflict types, each with its own particular parties, issues, behavioral patterns, causal processes, and influences. The parties to each of these kinds of conflict are driven by their own unique internal dynamics, which in turn can impact the parties of the other conflict types. In such cases, the consequences of one kind of conflict tend to spill over to the parties of another conflict type. The political dynamics between the center and the periphery regions, for example, have a direct impact on communal strife in Darfur, as illustrated by the government's practice of inciting certain Arab groups to attack African communities. Conversely, the militant retaliation of the resistance movements has impacted the political dynamics between the central powers and the Darfurians living in the periphery.

While we give special attention to the formation and transformation of the identity groups that are party to the conflicts, we must also attend to the various dynamics involved: contention between elite members of the martial forces, struggles between the central government and martial forces representing the marginalized groups who live at the periphery of power, and interferences of neighboring countries. When we consider these factors, the Darfur crisis is revealed as a conflict between communal groups in the region, a conflict between local elites vying for personal gain, a conflict between the central powers and the periphery, and a conflict over cross-border interference. Each of these four conflicts has its own innate dynamics—dynamics that come into play under different conditions, at different times.

Taking a comprehensive perspective, we cast this crisis as a complex web of four distinct, yet interlacing, conflict types.<sup>1</sup> We identify this theoretical approach as a conflict complementarity.

- The first conflict type stems from long-standing disputes between farmers and herders, and between different herder communities—groups that sometimes break down along African/Arab lines. These disputes have intensified from local skirmishes to all-out war in recent decades.
- The second conflict type centers on political struggles between the local elite leaders of the resistance movements, and also on those between traditional leaders (elders) and younger aspiring leaders. The resulting hostilities among these elite groups have prevented the disparate rebel movements from forming a united front against the Sudanese government, both militarily and politically.
- The third conflict type involves the long-standing grievances of marginalized groups at the country's periphery against those at the national center of power. In this thread of the conflict, a cadre of government officials and their collaborators have systematically exploited a politically fragmented periphery in order to maintain their power. The profound disparity of power that exists between the central government, on the one hand, and the peripheral movements and their constituencies, on the other, has threatened the survival of the population at risk. The central government in Khartoum has withheld vital resources from the populations in Darfur and seems indifferent to the humanitarian crisis that the Darfurians are experiencing.
- The fourth conflict type in our taxonomy consists of cross-border conflicts, primarily the proxy war waged between Chad and Sudan. In this situation the governments of each country supported the rebel movements of the rival country in an effort to topple each other's regimes, all with devastating effects for Darfurians. The most high-profile incidents stemming from this conflict include the Chadian rebel attack on N'Djamena in February of 2008, which was supported by Sudanese authorities, and the subsequent Sudanese rebel counterattack on Omdurman in May 2008, sponsored by the Chadian regime. Although relations between Chad and Sudan improved in 2010 and 2011, this proxy war is nonetheless a prime example of the cross-border dimension of the Darfur crisis.

Structurally, Part I of this book gives detail to a framework of conflict complementarity. Chapter 1 summarizes the scale and scope of the violence. In Chapter 2 we establish the theoretical framework used throughout the subsequent chapters, providing important links to recent advances in social identity theory. Chapter 3 focuses on the first conflict type in our theoretical framework—communal conflicts—followed by an analysis of the local elite conflicts in Chapter 4. In Chapter 5, we develop the center-periphery dimension of the crisis. Chapter 6 delves into the fourth conflict type, which encompasses the cross-border conflicts illustrated by the proxy wars between Sudan and Chad. At the national level, the crisis in Darfur is

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interwoven with the crisis in South Sudan. The two regions share certain critical characteristics, such as the marginalization of periphery communities, the scarcity of essential resources, ethnic divisions, and power-hungry elites. We devote Chapter 7 to South Sudan, examining the internal dynamics of the recent turmoil in this fledgling state through the lens of complementary conflicts.

In Part II of this book we turn to peacebuilding measures for Darfur, focusing in Chapter 8 on international response, such as the diplomatic efforts of key international actors. We discuss the important initiatives taken by certain countries (the United States, China, and Russia) and by major international organizations (the United Nations, the International Criminal Court, and the European Union). We also take stock of the peacekeeping operations in Darfur that were undertaken by the African Union and United Nations. In Chapter 9 we examine the promises and problems of the mediation efforts and peacekeeping missions that seek to bring long-term peace to Darfur. We conclude in Chapter 10 with observations about the prospects for peace and war.

The literature to date on the Darfur crisis can be categorized in three different ways. First, a large body of writing appears in journals, magazines, and newsletters intended for the general public. These seek to distill a great deal of information in order to draw global attention and pressure international bodies to address the appalling crisis. This body of writing tends to reduce complex topics into simple—and often simplistic—themes. A second category of literature on Darfur exists in the form of reports from organizations such as the International Crisis Group, Human Rights Watch, and the Enough Project. Although these reports are in large measure accurate, they tend to be shallow, and thus lack the kind of comprehensive nuance needed to truly understand the complexity of the crisis. A third body of work includes analyses by advanced scholars whose findings provide insight into conditions, causes, and consequences of the crisis. These writings are typically targeted at other researchers and their graduate students to be used for academic purposes. Such works include de Waal (2007), Jok (2007), Prunier (2007), de Waal and Flint (2008), and Burr and Collins (2008).

The book's unique explication of the Darfur crisis as an intertwining bundle of four parallel conflicts calls for multiple perspectives, drawing upon recent findings in conflict analysis, social identity theory, social psychology, international relations, and African studies. Moreover, the core elements of these perspectives provide insight into the causal complexities of protracted conflicts in other African nations. We believe that the patterns present in the way the four conflict types interact in Darfur bear a striking resemblance to the protracted violent conflicts between state and non-state actors in other regions of the world. We have also discovered considerable interest among the students in our classes on peace and conflict research, political science, and development studies.<sup>2</sup>

A large potential market for this type of analysis has yet to be tapped by the available literature to date. This market includes the interested general public, policymakers involved in North Africa, NGO workers, researchers, and students engaged in this conflict through their coursework or simply by their general interest in this highly publicized war. This book is suitable for readings in the following subject areas, among others: conflict analysis and resolution, international relations, African studies, war and contemporary war studies, peace studies, and development studies.

Research for this study has been collected during several field-trips to Sudan, interviews in various corners of the world, and through extensive desk studies. In order to gather information for this book, Johan Brosché carried out more than four months of field studies in Sudan between 2007 and 2011. These studies took place in Khartoum, Nyala, and Gedarif in Sudan, as well as in Juba, Malakal, and Bor, all located in what is currently the world's newest state—South Sudan. The information garnered from these studies laid a robust empirical foundation for the framework developed in the chapters to follow. Participation at conferences and workshops in Washington, Beijing, Brussels, Pretoria, and Siena also provided critical information.





## **Part I**

# **Violent conflict in Darfur**