

United States Institute of Peace  
Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training  
Sudan Experience Project

**Interview # 48 –Executive Summary**

*Interviewed by: Allison Bukowski  
Initial interview date: December 10, 2006  
Copyright 2007 USIP & ADST*

The interviewee enumerates three factors which are undermining the CPA: the continued existence of militias, the crisis in Darfur, and the failure on the part of the Khartoum government to fully implement the provisions of the CPA, specifically the wealth-sharing protocol.

The interviewee highly stresses the problem caused by other armed groups (OAGs). Militias are currently operating in Southern Sudan with the support of the government in Khartoum – a violation of the CPA. The interviewee specifically names the Sudan People’s Defense Force (SPDF). They are using certain tactics to divide the public and cause chaos in Southern Sudan, particularly by making it appear to the citizens that the conflict is between ethnic communities (the Dinka and Nuer) as opposed to it being strictly a political struggle.

The interviewee suggests that the international community should help bring the SPDF and other Southern Sudanese militias supported by Khartoum together with the SPLA to promote dialogue so that they may find common interests, work out their differences, and work together for a common purpose. The international community must be the actor to facilitate this meeting because the militias fear persecution by the SPLA. There must be a guarantee that they will be safe if they return. The interviewee believes amnesty to be a good mechanism to encourage the return of militiamen to the South, because they would not fear detention or death and would be able to go on with their lives. The interviewee believes some would surely return if amnesty were granted.

The international community must work for a solution in Darfur because the crisis there will affect the situation in Southern Sudan, but the interviewee also stresses that the international community must also stay concentrated on Southern Sudan to make sure that implementation of the CPA is carried out. The international community must stay focused on the government in Khartoum and strongly pressure it to fully implement all the provisions of the CPA.

The problems with the CPA are arising in Khartoum because the government there is failing to fully implement the provisions laid out in the agreement. Currently, all ministerial positions are held by the Khartoum government, and until the Southern Sudanese are able to actively participate in the Government of National Unity, there will not be any changes to what is happening with regard to CPA implementation. The

interviewee suspects that things will get worse if the government in Khartoum is not stopped right now.

The interviewee fears that Southern Sudan will not reach the referendum in 2011 peacefully, based on the things that are happening today: no solution to Darfur, OAGs still operating in Southern Sudan, and poor implementation on the wealth sharing protocol. The interviewee fears that the government in Khartoum will allow a military coup before 2011, with the new government subsequently able to dismiss the peace agreement. According to the interviewee, that would not be a first-time event for Khartoum.

The interviewee stresses that there must be development in Southern Sudan. For refugees to return, there must be something for them to return to. In order for development to occur, Southern Sudan must receive the resources it is entitled to, according to the wealth sharing protocol.

Southern Sudan lacks human capital in the form of leadership and knowledge. There is corruption, but more importantly there are not enough government officials who know how to effectively operate a government. The interviewee says that if the international community is interested in empowering the government of Southern Sudan, rather than sending money or food, it should assist in the training of government and civic officials, in addition to schoolteachers. The interviewee says that the people and government of Southern Sudan would happily welcome such assistance from the international community.

United States Institute of Peace  
Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training  
Sudan Experience Project

**Interview # 48**

*Interviewed by: Allison Bukowski  
Initial interview date: December 10, 2006  
Copyright 2007 USIP & ADST*

*Q: First, I'd like you to describe your connection to Sudan and the CPA process.*

A: I'm from Southern Sudan and I feel very strongly about how the peace is being implemented in my country. I find a lot of my information on [www.southsudan.net](http://www.southsudan.net). I also get a lot of my information from Sudan TV and African news, or BBC News Africa.

*Q: How familiar are you with the provisions of the CPA?*

A: The key thing that I'm familiar with is the Abyei commission. Also the wealth sharing provision.

*Q: What do you think is the opinion of the average person who lives in the South of the CPA? How much do they know? What do you think are the most important things that they need to know, and how should the international community get the message out to the people?*

A: Some of the people in the South know a lot about the CPA, but one thing that they don't know is how it is being implemented. For example, the wealth sharing that I talked about. The South was supposed to get fifty per cent of the wealth share. The question is how much money is being given to the South. A lot of people don't know exactly what percentage is given to the South. People just know that the peace agreement was signed. But the things that are affecting the peace, people don't know a lot about because they don't have access to media. A lot of people don't read newspapers, because illiteracy is high in Southern Sudan. I would say a lot of people know that peace has been signed between Southern Sudan and Northern Sudan and we are in a process of referendum, which means in 2011 Southern Sudan is allowed the opportunity to vote for secession or unity. Right now the question is how far we are in implementing the CPA.

*Q: What things are undermining or diverting the implementation process?*

A: There are a lot of things that are undermining the peace process. One is the Darfur issue. Another one is the fact that militias are still operating in Southern Sudan. Also the wealth sharing issue. These are things that are undermining the peace. Until these things are solved, we believe that the CPA has already been violated.

The problem with Darfur is that it shifted the international focus on Southern Sudan to Darfur. Right now you don't hear a lot of outrage on Southern Sudan because of the issue in Darfur. Therefore we Southern Sudanese are very concerned about the Darfur issue. We believe that if there's no peace in Darfur this will affect the CPA in Southern Sudan. Bringing peace to Darfur means a lot to us. When there is peace in Darfur we can have some attention to our side, in terms of development, because one of the things discussed in the peace was the return of refugees to Southern Sudan, with the money they put together in the Oslo conference. This money isn't coming in right now, because a lot of focus has turned to Darfur.

Another issue is the militias. There are still militias operating in Southern Sudan. These guys are rough. They kill civilians. They impose illegal taxes on people. They operate mostly in Unity state and Upper Nile province. Most of these guys are being supported in Khartoum by the Sudanese government, which I don't think the government should still be doing right now. If the government is committed to implementing the CPA, one thing they should be doing is stopping their support of the militias in Southern Sudan. In the peace agreement it was also documented that the militias in Southern Sudan were to either join the SPLA or the Khartoum government, so that we could move forward. But that hasn't happened yet.

Just last week there was an attack by a militia in Malakal, the capital city of Upper Nile province. In that attack a lot of people died, according to the reports. I read one account of that incident which estimated that about 150 died in the attack. A lot of civilians got displaced. It was a fight between militias from the SPDF and the SPLA. After a fight you find that most of these militiamen are running to the government troop barracks to hide. When the government in Khartoum was contacted about this issue, the government denied that fact, saying the government wasn't supporting these militiamen. That's a clear violation of the CPA and we believe that until these things are solved, nothing is going to happen in Southern Sudan. The government in Khartoum has to stop supporting militias in Southern Sudan and there has to be peace in Darfur so that the focus of the international community will shift to Southern Sudan development.

*Q: Can you elaborate on the history of the SPDF and tell us why they're cooperating with Khartoum?*

A: SPDF stands for Sudan Peoples Defense Force. It was first founded in 2000 by Riek Mashar, who is now the vice president of Southern Sudan, when he was still inside the government in Khartoum. First it was known as SSIM. SSIM stands for South Sudan Independence Movement, which was formed by Riek Mashar and other factions across Southern Sudan. If we go back to the history of the SPLA, the SPLA split in 1991 and that was the time Riek and other guys went to Khartoum and formed this party called the SSIM. From 1991 to 2000, Riek was still inside the party that's known as the SSIM. But when Riek defected from the Khartoum government, joining the SPLA, he had to form a different party and he came up with the SPDF. So the SPDF was formed in 2000. When Riek integrated into the SPLA, most of the guys in the SPDF did not integrate together with Riek. Most of them were left in the SPDF and they kind of let Riek go by himself.

So Riek joined the SPLA, but there were still people operating under this name, SPDF. Such is the name still existing and there are guys who are still carrying guns as this party. But mostly these guys are not a party at all. They are a militia group, because their interests, whatever you're told they are, are the interests of the Khartoum government. And that interest again in Southern Sudan means interference. So we don't see them as a party. We see them as our brothers, but their interests are not our interests. So that's why this party is still operating right now in Southern Sudan and mainly with their headquarters in Khartoum.

*Q: Could you elaborate on the interests of Khartoum and the SPDF and why they coincide?*

A: The interest of Khartoum is not clear at all. We don't see their interest. The interest is to just cause chaos in Southern Sudan. Their interest is to turn Southerners against Southerners. Their interest is to see that there's no future at all in Southern Sudan. That's their interest and that's what these guys are doing right now. They displace civilians. They impose illegal taxes. And they're not an addition at all for Southern Sudanese. So that's why we say these guys are not representing our interests. Our interest is to seek some development in Southern Sudan. We need to stop the war in Southern Sudan. We need to see progress in that direction. This means no more war. That's why we think these guys are not working in the interest of the Sudanese people. And these guys attack our community. They are a threat, because they are operating in Southern Sudan illegally. There was just an attack, one month ago, around Juba. There were unknown gunmen killing civilians, in the Juba-Uganda area. We didn't know who these guys were but ten of them were captured by SPLA troops. People tell me these guys were from the government in Khartoum. And when the government was contacted about this issue, the government denied it, saying they didn't know the guys. It's a clear violation of the CPA. The government has to be committed to implementing everything discussed in the CPA, and one of the things was no more militias in Southern Sudan.

*Q: How does the SPDF influence the behavior and the opinions of Southern Sudanese? How are they able to divide the population of Southern Sudan, to prevent unity? How would you like to see the international community or Southern Sudanese act in order to counter their efforts to divide the South?*

A: The SPDF used some other tactics to divide the public. For instance, the SPDF is not an organization at all. They don't have a mission that you could say, "Oh, this is good." But they use other tactics. Rather than making it like a political party, they make it like it is a problem between ethnic communities. They make it seem like it is a problem between Dinkas and other groups. The majority of people in Southern Sudan will see the SPDF as a Nuer political party, because a majority of the SPDF is Nuer. Most of the generals are Nuer, although there are Dinkas and other tribes. And in that form, people see it as Nuer politically. So rather than people focusing on the SPDF as a whole, people say, "Oh, it's a Nuer thing." That's how they divide people. When Nuer people see that there are tensions between Dinkas and Nuers, Nuers see the SPLA as the Dinka movement. Dinkas see the SDPF as a Nuer movement. And that's how they recruit their

guys, to carry that vision that there is a problem between Dinkas and Nuers, or a problem between peoples, instead of parties.

*Q: Do you think the international community can act in a way to prevent this “divide and conquer” strategy by the SPDF? How can they help unify the people of Southern Sudan, and counter these tactics by the SPDF?*

A: I think it would be good for the international community to bring all Southern Sudanese together and talk to them, telling them that they are one people and they have to fight for a common cause. Whatever is good for the Southern Sudanese population is something that we should be doing as a group. I think the international community could do a lot of things, bringing these SPDF guys in Khartoum together with the guys in the SPLA and putting them into some type of dialogue. If they could talk about issues – issues that the SPDF thinks are not really good which the SPLA is doing, maybe the SPLA can change some of their policies. But whatever interests the SPDF has, if the SPDF wants to be a political party within the SPLA, this means they have to drop their political-military wing. Then they could become like a political party within Southern Sudan. We agree to that.

But the problem is that they claim they should have their own armies. They want to have their own territory. They want an equal say on resources. That doesn't make sense. We are all the same people. SPDF could be active as a political wing in Southern Sudan but not a military wing. If the international community could do that, I think it would be fine; bringing Southern Sudanese together into some type of dialogue, so that they share their ideas on issues that they do agree on.

*Q: Do you think the CPA will succeed?*

A: I can't say if it can succeed or not, because the Khartoum government has a history of corruption, driven by military coups. This is not the first time we signed peace with the government in Khartoum. We have always been signing peace with the Khartoum government and this peace has always been violated. Every time we sign a peace agreement for a referendum, there is always a new government coming to power. And whenever a new government comes to power, they always dismiss whatever peace was signed by the Southern Sudanese and the former government. This history we know well. We don't believe the government in Khartoum, but if the government wants us to believe it, they have to implement the CPA so that we believe them. Otherwise, we can see that the government in Khartoum is not interested at all in bringing peace to the whole of Sudan or to Southern Sudan.

*Q: You had mentioned previously that you feared the referendum in 2011 would not be reached.*

A: I'm not sure if we're going to reach 2011, if things are going like this. I fear that the government in Khartoum might allow some type of military coup, bringing a new government into power before 2011, and that government will be able to dismiss the

peace agreement at any time. That means we will go back to war. And that will not be the first time they have done that in the history of Sudan. But this is the only time the international community has been involved. So whatever is going to happen will be known by the whole world.

*Q: So do you think that because the international community is involved the scenario you fear will be less likely?*

A: Yes, they might not do it. They might not dismiss the peace. But it's more likely that they could, because they are in their own affairs. Sudan is a chaotic state. They could dismiss the peace at any time. It's good that the international community is involved, because the world will know. That means it's going to be less likely. I think the government in Khartoum could do anything. I don't believe that government at all. I don't think we will reach 2011 peacefully, based on the things that are happening today – with the militias still operating in Southern Sudan, with no solution to Darfur, without any good implementation on wealth sharing. You remember, we get fifty per cent. We don't actually have access to how much oil is being transported outside Sudan. Without this information, that's one violation. The CPA says we have the right to have access to all the information of how much oil is being exported. That's a clear violation of the CPA.

The Abyei administration hasn't been implemented yet. In the CPA, Abyei was supposed to be administered by Southern Kordofan and sometimes by the Southern Sudanese government. The government is very reluctant on implementing that, so right now this area is being run by the Southern Kordofan government.

*Q: So what do you see as the biggest, or the top two or three biggest faults of the international community? Is it just failure to oversee the implementation process, or are there more specific issues that you are upset about with regards to the behavior of the international community?*

A: Because of the Darfur issue, the international community seems to be reluctant to address the problems of Southern Sudan. They don't think there's a problem at all in Southern Sudan. They ignore it, but we think the international community should pay more attention to the Southern Sudan issue. Paying more attention would mean closely watching how the CPA is being implemented, because if they do that, implementation is going to run smoothly. And I think the international community should pay more attention to the government in Khartoum. The government in Khartoum will affect how the peace is being run. So if the international community pressures the government in Khartoum, it will implement the peace according to how it was signed. I think there are not a lot of issues that are going to arise in Southern Sudan. And as I said, those issues will always upset the operation of the referendum, like the militias and the Abyei issue and the wealth sharing issue. Those are meant to be implemented as they were written in the CPA. So the international community could do a lot. I would say we need more attention from the entire international community. They should not focus only on Darfur.

I know that Darfur is an important issue. We also want the international community to bring that issue to some type of solution, because if there is no peace in Darfur, it will affect Southern Sudan. So we're not saying the international community should forget Darfur. But we also want the international community to focus on our issue in Southern Sudan, which is not happening right now.

*Q: In what ways can the international community pressure Khartoum to implement the CPA?*

A: I don't know how this government should be influenced. There's nothing the international community could do, because the government is already committed. One way is that when we see something like what is happening right now, the international community should pressure the government in Khartoum to stop that. Writing a letter to the government in Khartoum, it was a big thing, a good thing to do. We now know the government is supporting militias in Southern Sudan. The international community could send a team to the Khartoum government, telling them to stop those activities because they are undermining the peace. Otherwise, I'm not really sure about other things the international community could do because I don't know how they interact with the government in Khartoum. But I would like to see at least some type of attention on Southern Sudan.

*Q: What are the consequences of underdevelopment in Southern Sudan and what benefits would development bring, both socially and politically, in Southern Sudan?*

A: Underdevelopment in Southern Sudan is a threat to those issues. It upsets our government, our people, and even this transition process, because we are a country starting from nothing. We don't have the infrastructure for us to transport small things. For example, we have about 250,000 refugees still outside Sudan, mostly in Kenya and Uganda. Those people need to come back to Southern Sudan. They need to come back to rebuild their lives but right now this is being slowed down because no one wants to go back to where you don't have hope. Most of these people want to see schools built in Southern Sudan. They want to see some type of hospital or clinic because when they're sick they then have a place to go for treatment. People can't just move around in Southern Sudan, in terms of goods, transporting goods from city to city. These are things that we need in Southern Sudan. Without those things it's going to affect how we move forward. The first thing is for these people to come back home and rebuild their lives and until we do these things no one's going to come back. Reconstruction of Southern Sudan was one thing discussed in the CPA, and if the government in Khartoum is not committed to giving Southern Sudan the portion of money they deserve, according to the wealth sharing agreement, how is the government in South Sudan going to build all that infrastructure? It's an issue.

*Q: Is corruption within the Government of Southern Sudan a problem?*

A: It's a problem, but it's a problem that can be changed at any time, because corruption is human nature. I believe there's corruption within the Southern Sudan government. It's

going to change as we move forward, if we bring some democratic administration into the government. That means transparency and accountability. If someone does something wrong, they are accountable in the court of law. So there's corruption in the Government, but I would say the problem is lack of leadership, lack of knowledge, lack of education – because most of these guys are not specialized in their fields. So if someone's not specialized in their field, they don't basically know how to run things or how to manage things in the government. For example, let's say we have a minister of finance, who hasn't studied finance. Do you think this guy's going to run the budget in the government? What is going to happen is mishandling of the government budget and that leads to corruption. So there is corruption in the South Sudan government but I believe that will change as we are moving forward.

*Q: How would the people of Southern Sudan and the Government of Southern Sudan feel about the establishment of something along the lines of an international administrative body in Southern Sudan which could help get the Government on its feet and be able to create a functioning government, where the minister of finance can be trained and overseen by someone who understands finance and budgetary management, in order to really contribute to a functioning Southern Sudan?*

A: Our government is a very young government. We never had a government before. So we need a lot of support. Our government needs a lot of support. I'm sure a lot of Sudanese would be real happy if we see something like that. Remember, we Southern Sudanese think the international community is our brother, because without them this peace couldn't have been signed. So seeing international support in our country would be a good thing. We need a lot of support, and that's not all we need. For example, in terms of education, if we have a high representative who would help the Southern Sudan government put aid towards the educational system, that would be a good thing for us to do. We would support that. Not only education, but in all public sectors we need support. All I'm saying is that my people would be happy to see something like that happening in Southern Sudan. We're not talking about sending money or food. I'm talking about if the international community could assist in sending in personnel and civil servants who could erect a civil service. That would be a good thing too. Sending in teachers, creating something like a technical school where our people could be trained, and even driving training. In my country, it's a good thing to do. One official once said that he lost all of his drivers to other NGO's because he wasn't able to pay them. We have a lack of drivers in Southern Sudan. Not many of them even know how to drive. And even creating a school in Southern Sudan where Southern Sudanese civil society could go to train, just to drive, that's one way the international community could assist if it's really interested in empowering the Southern Sudan government.

*Q: Has the Government of Southern Sudan failed to implement provisions of the CPA? If so, which provisions, and how much have they failed?*

A: I don't think that the Government of Southern Sudan failed to implement anything in the CPA. One thing was that our government was supposed to withdraw all of its troops in northern Sudan. That has already happened. The SPLA has already withdrawn all of its

troops from northern Sudan. So if we did that, we want the government in Khartoum to do the same. Right now there are still Government troops in Southern Sudan, mostly in the Blue Nile area and around Abyei. One thing that Southern Sudanese believe is that most of the Government troops in Southern Sudan were redeployed to the North, but they're not actually taken to Khartoum or inside northern Sudan. They are around the Blue Nile area and Abyei, just because in case we go to war, they will easily be able to take over the oil fields. And that's a threat. We can see that the Government in Khartoum is actually not ready for the implementation of the peace agreement. The SPLA has done all it could. I can't say there's something that the SPLA needs to do.

We are participating in the Government of National Unity. We were supposed to nominate the minister of mining. We were supposed to have one of those ministers. But because the Government was insisting, we let the positions go to the Government. All are controlled by the government in Khartoum. We are reluctant to implement the peace agreement. If we see something that we think may make the agreement collapse, we let it go, because we know our chance is going to come up. One thing that's important to us is getting to 2011, so that we can make a decision. But the problem is, are we Southern Sudanese going to reach 2011 before something will start in Sudan? So you can say, "Well, nothing. Our aim is to wait until 2011 and then decide."

*Q: Do you think that because the CPA is a complex agreement, that is what has contributed to difficulties of implementation, or do you believe that it is just sheer lack of will on the part of the Khartoum government?*

A: I think the CPA is not biased – it's not unjust. All it says is that these things have to be implemented, and the Southern Sudanese are going to either work for secession or unity. That's not biased at all. I think the problem is within the government in Khartoum. The government in Khartoum has to step up in committing itself to implementing the CPA. Whatever is going to happen with the implementation of the CPA, if there's going to be another war in Southern Sudan, it will come from the government in Khartoum. So a lot of the problems in the CPA are rising in Khartoum. And until we actively participate in the government in Khartoum, there isn't going to be any changes to what is happening right now. I suspect that it's going to get worse than what it is right now if we don't stop the government in Khartoum right now.

*Q: If the government in Khartoum does break the peace and wage war against Southern Sudan again, how should the international community react?*

A: I don't know. I think if the peace collapses and the government in Khartoum makes war on Sudan, I think that's the time for the government in Khartoum to be gone. That war would be different than all the other wars. There's a problem right now in the east and there's a problem in Darfur, so I think the government in Khartoum would be really weakened if they tried to do that – if they tried to fight three problems. I think it's going to be a different war and it's going to be a lot of chaos. There are some ways the international community might intervene – bringing troops to Sudan to make some kind of peace. But starting a war, I'm sure it would be difficult, because it's not like an

insurgency. It's going to be like a real major war, where troops are sent to front lines, and I'm not really sure about the future of that. If that happens, it would be a different war than what has ever happened in Southern Sudan. They will only fight on one front line: Southern Sudan. Right now they're fighting in Darfur. So the government in Khartoum cannot fight Southern Sudanese, and fight in Darfur, and at the same time an insurgency in the east. That would be a disaster to the government in Khartoum.

Militias are in a mode of war. It's a mode of war that pushes people away a lot. So what Paride Taban suggested was some type of dialogue between Southern Sudanese themselves, where they could come together and talk on the issues that are affecting the Southern Sudanese population. One way to find a unified Southern Sudan is to set that up between ourselves, maybe talk to the guys who are being used by the government in Khartoum and try to empower them to think differently than they are thinking right now. We know that a lot of money is involved in this. Most of these guys are being fed by the government in Khartoum more than what the SPLM may be giving them. It's become a money issue. They do things because they are being fed by the government in Khartoum, so they have to do things in that form. But they don't see themselves as fugitives. But we have to change their thinking to "This is about Southern Sudan, not about you. This is about our children, our grandchildren. We don't need more people to die again. We have to come together and find a common cause for our people. And this is the Government of Southern Sudan. We want to see ourselves as one people. We want to work towards the development of Southern Sudan together and we don't want to see ourselves separate. But until we come together it's going to be hard to move forward for us." So one thing that Paride Taban suggested was some type of dialogue. If there was anyway these guys could be brought into some type of dialogue between themselves and the SPLA delegates, that would be a good thing. They share the ideas on all these issues and they may come up with some type of common cause that they want to pursue.

So rather than pushing them away we could operate in some other way, and that's dialogue. I think the international community is one body that could do that. If the international community could bring these militia guys from Khartoum together with guys from the SPLA and put them in just one room, so that they talk, it would be a good thing. The SPLA cannot do that by itself, because these guys fear they're going to be arrested by the SPLA government or killed. So there has to be an international presence when they're brought to this type of dialogue between themselves and the SPLA.

*Q: Bishop Taban brought up the idea of granting amnesty to everyone in the South, the idea being that it implies to everyone that "You are one of us. No matter what, you are our brother." Do you think something like that, or something like a truth and reconciliation commission, would facilitate the unification of the different peoples of Southern Sudan?*

A: I don't think that's under consideration in Southern Sudan, because we know that these guys didn't do things according to their own initiative. Someone is involved in this. That's an outside body that is interested in seeing Southern Sudanese fight each other. So amnesty would be "You're our brother, come back. You're not going to be arrested."

You didn't do anything wrong." This amnesty that they want to see, if you tell them they will receive it, I'm sure some of them might change their mind. They see it as a threat until now. They think that if they come back to Southern Sudan, they're going to be arrested or killed. If the SPLA is committed to amnesty, and if they're not going to arrest anybody, all these guys can come back to the community and go on with their lives. I'm sure some would come back.

*Q: I think we've covered a lot here. Is there anything else you would like to mention that you think is important to know with regards to CPA implementation and the role of the international community?*

A: I think I've talked about a lot of things that are very important. The only thing is that - I've said it already - the international community needs to pay more attention toward Southern Sudan issues, but the international community is now focused more on Darfur. Whatever is going to happen in Darfur will affect us in the South.

*Q: Thank you very much for your time. We appreciate it.*