



SPECIAL REPORT

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ABOUT THE REPORT

This report originated from both the belief that civil society must be involved if a lasting solution to the Darfur conflict is to be found and the recognition that, outside specialized sectors, little is known about Darfur civil society. In defining the categories of civil society in the Darfur context, the report explores civil society's role in the greater peace process, examines mediators' efforts to harness civil society to date, and argues that civil society could be extremely useful to the peacemaking process, but only if its representatives to the process are carefully selected and properly involved in the process. The United States Institute of Peace worked closely with the authors in the conception of this report.

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SEPTEMBER 2010

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Civil Society in Darfur

The Missing Peace

Summary

- The present track-one rebel-government process is insufficient to bring peace to Darfur. Giving civil society a central role in the peace process is a necessity, not a luxury.
- Civil society is a loosely defined concept, but for the purposes of peacemaking in Darfur, it can serve specific practical purposes. Engaging with civil society offers mediators the chance to engage with actors who wield real power and influence in Darfur but who are not government officials or rebels.
- Civil society can contribute to the Darfur peace process by (1) generating momentum for the process and positively pressuring the existing track-one process and actors to engage, (2) ensuring popular “buy-in” and legitimacy for any eventual agreement, and (3) providing substantive input on and even directly negotiating certain issues.
- Although the tendency has been to focus on the substantive issues of the peace process, only with proper civil society representation will truly inclusive consultations take place and will the Darfur population see the process as a credible and legitimate one.
- Civil society has a unique role to play in some of the biggest issues to be resolved in Darfur. Land, return, compensation, justice, reconciliation, and security are all issues requiring consensus and discussion among the affected communities.
- Certain civil society blocs are particularly essential to the success of the peace process. Civil society talks provide a vehicle for involving the key communities of the displaced Fur (both major victims of the conflict and supporters of the rebellion) and the Abbala (camel-herding) Arabs, who contributed to the government's proxy militias but whose interests are not necessarily represented by Khartoum.
- Developing the civil society track is a long-term process. It should remain linked to the government-rebel negotiations but not driven solely by deadlines linked to developments in these negotiations. Once assembled into a political vehicle, the civil society track can play multiple roles at various stages of the peace process, ranging from direct negotiations to postagreement implementation. As such, getting the civil society process right is

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where he has worked as a consultant for various organizations, including the United States Agency for International Development. As a consultant to the JMST, he participated in consultations among Darfuri refugees in Chad and attended Doha 2. He also acted as an expert in Darfur civil society consultations held by Concordis International in the United Kingdom in 2008. He holds a doctorate in African studies.

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more important than rushing to meet artificial deadlines driven by the government-rebel negotiations.

- After the first Doha civil society conference, organizing the civil society track of the peace process became the responsibility of the United Nations African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID). Donors should do what is necessary to ensure that UNAMID has the resources and capacity to undertake this complex and important task.
- The work of various international actors on the civil society track must be well-coordinated. A close and effective working relationship among the Joint Mediation and Support Team, the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) for Sudan, and UNAMID is vital.

Introduction

Until recently, the peace process in Darfur has focused on an elite dialogue between the Sudanese government and rebel movements. The idea has been that these parties would agree to a classic power- and wealth-sharing deal, and local reconciliation initiatives and development projects would help tidy up the remaining difficult issues. Although international diplomats have publicly lamented the absence of a broader range of Darfuri stakeholders in the peace process, many privately regard their inclusion as infeasible. The deterioration of many of the rebel movements since the process began and the refusal by one of the most important groups to even come to the table has exposed the fallacy of this view. Indeed, the absence of viable track-one actors in Darfur—and the presence of track-two actors with genuine influence—demands a rethink of the process.

Little more than lip service has been paid to civil society involvement in the peace process by most donors and diplomats since Darfur hit the headlines in 2003. To its credit, however, the African Union–United Nations Joint Mediation Support Team (JMST) for Darfur began to bring together various civil society peace efforts, such as those initiated by Sudanese individuals and local and international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and since mid-2009 (following plans developed in 2008) has been running the primary civil society track parallel to the government-rebel track.

While the participation of civil society is crucial, the design and management of this process presents dauntingly complex questions. First, how can civil society in Darfur be defined? Second, how should participants be selected and who should manage this selection process? Third, what should civil society's precise function be in the overall process and how should it relate to the government-rebel negotiations? By reviewing civil society's place in Darfur and examining the dilemmas involved in the current civil society process, this report explores answers to these questions.

A Brief History of Civil Society in Darfur since 2003

The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), which in 2005 halted two decades of war in Southern Sudan, was signed only by the two main armed parties—the government and the rebels of the mostly southern Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement (SPLA/M)—with “extremely limited” civil society involvement.¹ Designed even before the CPA was signed, the Darfur peace process was based on a similar government-rebel framework, although it was already evident that other armed parties, in particular the Arab communities armed by the government as part of its counterinsurgency strategy, were not fully represented in the process. All suggestions to include “civil society” members were dismissed by the armed parties, in particular Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) faction leader Minni Arku Minnawi, with

the common argument that “those without guns don’t have power.”

This view was shared by many on the mediation team as well as in the international community more broadly, and it continued to be the predominant view after the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) was signed in Abuja in May 2006. By 2007, however, as rebel groups fragmented and it became clear that the DPA was a failure, many commentators began to assert that working with civil society could offer an alternative to dealing with fragmented and obstinate rebels. Opinions on the subject both among the rebel movements and those in the international community have remained divided, with some continuing to advocate a pure track-one approach.

Ironically, it was during the early stages of the conflict in 2003–04, when civil society was largely excluded from the negotiation process, that civil society was at its most dynamic. One of the main initiatives in 2004 was the foundation of the Darfur Forum for Dialogue and Peaceful Coexistence, better known by its Arabic name Minbar Darfur. Its leading founder and first chairman was Ibrahim Suleiman, a retired general who had served as minister of defense and, between 2001 and 2003, as governor of North Darfur. Suleiman was known to have been in favor of negotiations with the rebels until they attacked El Fasher airport in April 2003, after which he was dismissed as governor and the government changed its approach toward violent counterinsurgency.² Although Suleiman remained a National Congress Party (NCP) member, he managed to include in the forum Darfuris from all political parties and ethnic groups. Even though the forum was dominated by Khartoum-based elites, this diversity made Minbar Darfur an ideal organization for the international community to support. International support, however, made it more visible and subject to external interference as well as internal divisions.

In 2004 and 2005, members of Minbar Darfur and traditional leaders from various Darfur tribes participated in several meetings in Libya that succeeded in challenging the distrust that many rebels had of the Darfuri elite, particularly the traditional leaders whom they viewed as government stooges. The government, concerned by this rapprochement, created a rival organization, the Forum for Peace and Development, headed by another retired general and former governor of South Darfur, Adam Hamid Musa. An Arab from the Abbala (camel-herding) Zeyadiya tribe, General Adam Hamid is seen, in contrast to the “dove” Ibrahim Suleiman, as a “hawk” and as one of the leading inspirers of the government’s Janjaweed militia strategy. The two retired NCP generals thus played out their disagreement on the government’s counterinsurgency strategy within the civil society arena. Eventually, however, Minbar Darfur collapsed due to its own internal conflicts. Its members, many from different political strands within the Umma Party, were unable to overcome the divisions dictated by their various political affiliations.

The possibility of having influence as a civil society activist independent of a political party or rebel movement all but vanished during this period. Civil society was sidelined at the DPA talks, and as a prominent Darfuri intellectual writes, the refusal of the government to give seats to civil society representatives in Darfur’s three legislative assemblies as part of the DPA “meant that the Darfuri elites who were not aligned with either party [government or SLA-Minni Minnawi]—notably the group headed by General Ibrahim Suleiman—were entirely shut out from representation in Darfur’s interim structures.”³

After the failure of further government-rebel talks in Sirte, Libya, in October and November 2007, Darfur’s civil society, including Minbar Darfur members, suddenly became relevant once more. Three notable initiatives were held outside of Sudan in 2008: one by the Max Planck Institute in Heidelberg, Germany; one by the United Kingdom-based Concordis International; and one by the Switzerland-based Darfur Relief and Documentation Center, which held meetings in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Participants were mostly diaspora and Khartoum-based intellectuals dominated by members of the Minbar Darfur (most of whom

were Umma Party members) and overlapped across these different initiatives. They were ethnically diverse, however, and a significant number of the participants seemed to express positions specific to their tribe rather than to their political party. For others, political affiliations seemed equally important to tribal ones. Despite the divisions, these meetings showed the ability of the participants to reach consensus on major issues, such as land, coexistence, and security.⁴

Although these initiatives produced strong declarations, follow-up was uneven. Political, ethnic, and personal rivalries among Darfuri participants as well as competition between the international organizations involved made attempts to unite the various initiatives through a larger conference difficult, with some of the participants competing to get international support in order to reinforce their influence.

In 2009, the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, an NGO founded by Sudanese billionaire Mohamed Fathi Ibrahim to support good governance in Africa, revived briefly the idea of uniting these competing initiatives. It planned to organize a conference in Addis Ababa for more than three hundred delegates from Darfur civil society, including at least one hundred women. It used a very broad view of “civil society,” one that included the diaspora and all Sudanese political parties, including the NCP. But this was not enough to prevent the government from raising obstacles that finally obliged the foundation to cancel the conference.⁵ Some believed that the interest regarding the Darfur lobbies in the United States and Europe may have been a factor in Khartoum’s hostility.

The Heidelberg Darfur Dialogue Group, a relatively small-scale initiative of exchange among Darfuri intellectuals chaired by Prof. Al-Tayeb Haj Ateya of Khartoum University, has continued to meet since its establishment in 2008 and has issued a document that contains “Draft Proposals for Consideration in a Future Darfur Peace Agreement.” The document has strong similarities to the Doha Declaration (discussed later in this report), notably in its proposal to restore the “native administration” and the traditional land-tenure system under the supervision of a council of elders. But it is less conciliatory with the government on the issue of justice, claiming in particular that “there can be no sustainable peace in Darfur without bringing to justice the most senior persons responsible for grave acts of violence.” In proposing a mix of solutions for addressing questions of justice, the Heidelberg group recommends the use of the International Criminal Court (which is not mentioned in the Doha Declaration), traditional courts, and transitional-justice mechanisms, as well as the hybrid courts proposed by the African Union High-Level Panel on Darfur (AUPD), discussed later in this report.⁶

In parallel to the civil society meetings held abroad, official initiatives were being pursued within Sudan. The purpose of these initiatives was to show more sensitivity to the government’s concerns in carrying out its work. In addition to lower-level locally managed initiatives, the official international lead on civil society fell to the Darfur-Darfur Dialogue and Consultation (DDDC), a body established by the DPA.⁷ The DDDC held consultations with civil society in Darfur, but after the DPA agreement failed and in the absence of a new peace process, it lacked a political conduit into which it could feed results. In 2009, the DDDC organized several rounds of civil society consultation aimed at establishing consensus on “common-ground” issues—including land and natural resources, administration and democracy, identity, recovery and development, reconciliation, and security. These activities were pursuant to its original mandate under the DPA and fed into the work of the emerging JMST-led Doha civil society initiative and the African Union High-Level Panel on Darfur.⁸

As the official lead on mediation in Darfur, the JMST established a civil society track in addition to the government-rebel negotiations in Doha. Its first achievement was an “inaugural” civil society conference (Doha 1) that gathered some 170 delegates in Doha, Qatar, November 16–19, 2009. It was by no means perfect. Many of those who attended, as well

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as many of those who refused to attend or had not been invited, criticized the fact that a number of delegates had been chosen by the government. Even so, those “government people” were unable to prevent others, in particular, the internally displaced persons (IDPs) and the youth, from speaking freely. As a result, the conference’s final declaration, known as the Doha Declaration, was surprisingly strong. Even among those who were not happy with the selection process, many acknowledged the quality of the declaration. For their part, government officials seemed less content with it.⁹

An earlier and shorter “final declaration” issued by the conference insisted in particular on the importance of civil society, “which represents the broad base and the silent majority of the Darfuri community. . . . Negligence of the civil society role in the peace process is one of the factors that led to failure of the previous peace resolutions as negotiations were only confined between the [government] and the armed movements.”¹⁰ The Doha Declaration, meanwhile, demanded the restoration of a powerful and depoliticized native administration of the traditional land system; the return of IDPs to their original land and the evacuation of settlers; the promotion of major development projects, in particular the long-promised road from Khartoum to El Fasher; and increased education, notably, the reintroduction of boarding schools, which are particularly important for the nomads. The declaration omitted neither the difficult issue of justice, dealing with it in terms acceptable to all sides, nor the importance of commemorating the victims of the war “for future generations and the invigoration of their memories.”¹¹ As with previous initiatives, there was uncertainty on the follow-up. The “temporary follow-up committee” of forty people (ten from each of the three Darfur states and ten from the Darfur community in Khartoum) that was chosen was considered illegitimate by some of the participants.

In July 2010, a second civil society conference (Doha 2) gathered some 340 participants in Doha. Progress was made in that refugees in Chad were represented there, as were a few IDP participants from previously abstaining blocs. But on issues of substance, little new ground was covered in the resulting declaration; an exception being the focus on the issue of the Darfur region. Discussion here centered on the difficult issue of the reunification of the three Darfur states into one region. Although a large majority seemed in favor of this, consensus could not be reached. When the point was nevertheless included in the final declaration, it provoked a protest by the Abbala Arab participants, who also disagreed over wording that referenced “newcomers” and “Janjaweed.”

In February–March 2010, primary responsibility for the civil society track had passed from the JMST to the United Nations African Mission in Darfur (UNAMID), revising JMST’s role to that of an adviser. As JMST’s role receded on the civil society track, that of the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) for Sudan ascended.¹² The AUHIP, having throughout the previous year jockeyed to be the lead in Darfur mediation, appeared by June–July 2010 to have secured enough support for the mediation to be transitioned to its auspices. The AUHIP’s mediation plans, in particular, supporting a “domestication of the peace process”—that is, relocating it to Sudan—feature civil society as a major component. This move may lead to greater influence on civil society by the political parties, including the NCP. Those among civil society who are refugees in Chad or among the diaspora will need to be included through alternative means. Both the AUHIP’s political process and the Doha process depend on cooperation with UNAMID to carry out activities on the ground in Darfur.

Between Government and Rebels: What Role for Darfur Civil Society?

Influence of the Government on Civil Society

To be considered part of civil society, organizations and individuals must theoretically be autonomous from the state. However, as Nelson Kasfir states, “the ubiquity and importance of patronage for maintaining African governments raises serious questions about the ability of civil society organizations to maintain their autonomy from the state.”¹³

This is true in Sudan and particularly in Darfur, where the government has often created its own civil society organizations (CSOs) in an effort to increase its control at the grassroots level. According to one United Nations Development Program (UNDP) report, “A conspicuous feature of present Sudanese CSOs is the blurred dividing lines between governmental and non-governmental organizations as processes of political manipulation are quite visible and apparent.”¹⁴

Traditional leaders, too, who comprise one of the main categories of Darfur civil society, have been government clients since colonial times when the British made them a tool of their system of indirect rule, under the name native administration (*idara ahliya*). A part of the Darfuri educated elite is also suspected of being pro-NCP, as many supported its forerunner, the National Islamic Front regime, believing that the Islamists would give equal treatment to all Sudanese Muslims.

Beyond the government’s links to various civil society figures and organizations, the government also involved itself directly in civil society processes: either by organizing its own or seeking to provide input into the formulation of international-led efforts.

In October 2008, the government launched its own civil society conference, the Sudan People’s Initiative, which gathered those parts of civil society considered acceptable by the government and was chaired in Khartoum by the NCP’s vice president, Nafi Ali Nafi. IDPs were notably absent from the conference.¹⁵

Concerning the government’s influence on the international processes, a main criticism of the Doha civil society conference in November 2009 was the alleged presence of many government participants. One blogger quoted an anonymous UNAMID worker as saying that “civil society representatives were selected ‘in consultation with the government.’”¹⁶ Others criticized UNAMID Civil Affairs, which was in charge of the selection process in Darfur, for allowing the governor of North Darfur to withdraw and add participants to both Doha 1 and 2.¹⁷ JMST claims to be unaware of any withdrawal and argues that to allow the conference to happen, JMST had to show the lists to the government, so that “the government didn’t block anybody from coming to Doha” (in the event some were actually prevented from traveling). JMST also notes that it “agreed to include people” in the Doha 1 list, at the suggestion, directly or through intermediaries, of various intellectuals and politicians, some of whom are believed to be close to the government. One of those was General Abdallah Ali Safi AL-Nur, an ex-governor of North Darfur believed to be one of the leading inspirers of the violent counterinsurgency of 2003–04 and a member of the government delegation in Doha, who “really begged the mediation to [include] some of his people” but who was apparently not satisfied by the representation of his Abbala Arab kin.¹⁸ Including these controversial figures was not just a sop to the government. On the contrary, the JMST, rightly held that involving even controversial people, especially representatives of the Arab communities that form the bulk of the so-called Janjaweed, is a necessary component toward creating an inclusive civil society approach.

Having the government represented, through affiliated Darfuris or otherwise, is not just a concession to its sovereignty, but a necessary aspect of the civil society process. Some NCP-linked individuals also represent local constituencies in Darfur; their government affili-

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ation does not preclude this. Using this line of reasoning, many NCP members attending the Doha conferences, particularly the traditional leaders, did not always necessarily maintain the official government positions; many of them preferred to speak primarily on behalf of their communities.

Influence of the Darfur Rebels on Civil Society

In the early stages of the conflict, the rebel groups generally rejected civil society, seeing it as either progovernment or unsuitable to include in negotiations. After Abuja, however, their approach changed and the rebel groups started trying, like the government, to extend their influence by creating their own civil society representatives. Both the government and the movements—the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) and the Liberation and Justice Movement (LJM)—invited civil society delegates to Doha, but to the track-one negotiations rather than the track-two talks. The two main rebel groups—JEM and the SLA faction of Abdelwahid Mohamed Ahmed Nur (SLA-AW)—opposed the separate Doha civil society conferences. It was speculated that JEM took this line because it wanted to maintain its monopoly of representation of Darfuris, while SLA-AW's position was consistent with its strategy of refusing engagement until preconditions had been met, a strategy it had employed since the 2006 Abuja talks. However, the various civil society meetings have shown that on the main issues of the conflict, civil society positions are much closer to those of the rebels than to those of the government.

Support for JEM and SLA-AW remains very strong in the camps, both in Darfur and in Chad.¹⁹ Rebel movements have attempted to build on this popularity by creating or supporting certain spokesmen for the displaced. In February 2009, JEM formed its own union of refugees, picking representatives in all twelve Chadian camps. Its chairman, Dr. Mustafa Mahamat Ali, himself part of the Zaghawa diaspora in London, and several refugees went to Doha in April 2010 to participate in track-one negotiations. According to JEM chairman Khalil Ibrahim, “when we go for peace talks, we want to be sure we’re representing all people in Darfur. . . . [and that] the agreement will be accepted by the people, that we can sell them the agreement.”²⁰

Similarly, Abdelwahid manages to maintain power and influence in the Darfur camps, particularly among the Fur IDPs living in camps close to Nyala, including, most notably, Kalma, but also Kas, Zalingei, El Fasher, and Kebkabiya. The architecture of this system of control dates back to the early days of the Darfur conflict. In 2001, the Darfur Liberation Front—later to become the SLA—formed a student union called the United Popular Front (UPF), some members of which were trained by the SPLA. In 2006, more than a hundred UPF members were sent to Darfur IDP camps, where they have since been accused of intimidating—and sometimes killing—those who do not follow the line of the Fur rebel leader. The consequences of this influence in the camps is clear: IDP leaders refused to participate in the Doha conferences—some out of conviction, but many for fear of retribution by these cadres. However, following the more recent Doha 2 meeting of civil society, there has been some signs of a loosening of control, most notably in the Kalma camp. The ramifications of this precedent-setting divergence from the party line are still being played out at the time of this report’s writing.

Beyond the IDP camps, rebels use traditional leaders as another important aspect of civil society. Traditional leaders of all ranks have been recruited to form a native administration in the rebel areas, in the refugee camps in Chad, and sometimes in the negotiations themselves. The blurred line between rebel groups and civil society has also been aggravated by the repeated attempts of some members of the educated elite, particularly in the diaspora, to become leaders of rebel groups. For example, Tijani Sese, a Darfur governor in the 1980s

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and diaspora intellectual, transformed himself from civil society figure to rebel leader when in February 2010 he became the chairman of the LJM, a new coalition composed of various small SLA and JEM splinters. Sese's name was initially proposed by General Ibrahim Suleiman, together with other close members of his Minbar, as well as by Libya, which has been trying to reunite some factions. With little strength in the field, the new group has been labeled by Khalil Ibrahim as a "civil society group armed with water pistols."

Sese's sudden metamorphosis into a rebel leader has provoked mistrust over his intentions and spurred some Darfuris to suspect the designs of the international community. Some refer to Sese as "Little Hamid Karzai" due to the particularly apparent U.S. support he enjoys, and there are various reports of international mediators, in both Darfur and Doha, "encouraging" IDPs and refugees to support LJM.²¹ JEM in particular accused the JMST and UNAMID of encouraging IDPs to support "a specific Darfur figure," namely Sese, who, seemingly is encouraging this perception that the international community's civil society efforts were aimed at building his base. Sese addressed the civil society participants in Doha 2 as "our supporters."²²

Role for Civil Society in the Darfur Peace Process

A spectrum of views exists on the role of civil society in the Darfur peace process. In the minimalist interpretation, civil society represents "the people" whose presence in the eaves of the negotiation bestows legitimacy on the result. Though only an observer, civil society is expected to act as the conscience of the process, actively encouraging the parties to look beyond narrow self-interest and work with goodwill toward compromise. In terms of legitimacy, many take the lesson from the failure of the Abuja agreement that civil society's presence at the negotiations can decrease the likelihood of any future agreement's rejection on the ground. If it is part of the process, civil society can help "sell" its result.

Others propose a slightly more active role, with civil society helping ensure that the core issues of the conflict are addressed. In this more robust interpretation, civil society still acts as observer, but it is mandated to contribute issues to be included in the negotiations.

In the maximalist interpretation, civil society serves two functions: it fills the gap created by rejectionists, pressuring them to join for fear of marginalization and becoming irrelevant, and negotiates directly on certain issues. In its first function, civil society stands for those actively opposed to the peace process. Given Abdelwahid's refusal to come to the table, a civil society process that reaches a critical mass of popular support and brings in some of his Fur constituency may eclipse Abdelwahid's claim to speak for large swathes of Darfur. The effect of this process may result in pressure on Abdelwahid to engage or, in his continued absence, allow representatives of this critical mass to speak on behalf of Abdelwahid's presumed constituency.

The need to fill the gap left by absent track-one parties leads to the most expansive and maximalist interpretation of civil society's role, or its second function—negotiating substantively on the issues. Fundamental to this approach is the view that the Darfur conflict is more than a clash between the armed movements and government. Most Darfuris seem to place primary importance on the interconnected issues of land, return, and security, which means addressing, among other things, the disarmament of the Janjaweed. Accepting that this militia will not be adequately represented by their perceived sponsor—the government—dictates that a negotiated settlement is required that directly involves this community.

Not all civil society actors would bear the same influence in this negotiating role. Representatives of the key Fur ethnic group, and as yet absent representatives of the Janjaweed, should be engaged as principals in this kind of dialogue. This is not to say the negotiation

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should be solely between these two groups, because the issues affect all of Darfur's ethnic communities. But without the credible participation of these two critical blocs, substantive progress toward a resolution will be impossible.

Within the various JMST-assigned civil society groups, and in Darfur more broadly, there are disagreements on what the extent of civil society's role should be. While the Doha Declaration favored a minimalist approach, calling on civil society to be "a principal partner" in negotiations, the question of civil society's role was not clearly defined during Doha 1 and remained controversial among participants themselves. Some returned from Qatar with the idea that they were observers, while others saw themselves as full negotiators.²³

The Composition of Darfur Civil Society

For the purpose of the Doha meetings, the JMST divided civil society into six categories: CSOs, traditional leaders, IDPs and refugees, women, youth, and nomads. In reality these categories often overlap—a civil society actor can easily fit into multiple categories simultaneously. Closer examination of these categories demonstrates the challenges in categorizing civil society, the importance of selecting participants based on a sound understanding of local dynamics, and the dangers in rushing this process.

Civil Society Organizations

For international actors, CSOs can seem an obvious place to start when trying to identify civil society voices. In Darfur, CSOs tend to reflect existing power structures. More than groups of individuals with various ethnic and political backgrounds, they are often linked to a strong leader and his (generally ethnic) following.

A 2009 UNDP study estimated the number of CSOs in Darfur at no less than 241, with an additional roughly 230 Darfur-related CSOs based in Khartoum.²⁴ Those figures take into account only the CSOs registered by the Humanitarian Affairs Commission (HAC) and exclude trade unions and professional associations, cultural groups, faith-based organizations, and sport associations.²⁵

Tribal affiliation most dominantly delineates the identity of Darfur CSOs.²⁶ Every Darfur tribe has its own NGO, but these rarely work effectively across tribal lines. For example, those active in intertribal reconciliation rarely cooperate with organizations linked with other tribes, posing a fundamental challenge to prospects for success.

CSOs tend to overrepresent educated elites. Predominantly urban-based, these have limited contact with their rural constituencies. This is even truer of Khartoum-based organizations.²⁷

CSOs also tend toward politicization, falling roughly into categories of progovernment or antigovernment, the latter being a mixture of CSOs sympathetic to the rebels or to other opposition political parties. Some are very blatantly in the progovernment category, like NGOs linked to prominent NCP members such as General Safi Al-Nur or Zaghawa presidential adviser Hasan Borgu, while others are led by opposition politicians, in particular from the Umma Party. Local CSOs, especially the most newly registered ones, are generally suspected of being pro-NCP.²⁸

Given this complex web of affiliations, the engagement of CSOs in the civil society process must be based on a strong understanding of how these organizations fit with local political and ethnic dynamics. Aware of the prevalence of the NCP's influence with many CSOs, the JMST has not envisaged a leading role for CSOs in the civil society process.

Traditional Leaders

Darfur's traditional leadership—dynastic in nature and often based on tribal and family interests—is inconsistent with the common perception of civil society. However, it is “the earliest form of civil society institution” in Darfur,²⁹ and it still has links with and influence on all the other, more modern categories of civil society.

Darfur's traditional authority structure historically represented tribal power. The conflict has fundamentally altered this structure. The government has removed traditional leaders who were critical of its strategy and appointed new ones. The armed movements, including the Arab militia, absorbed or replaced many of the traditional authorities as the de facto local authority in many areas. The present war has also separated many traditional leaders from their people in the camps or countryside, often displaced to government-controlled towns. Beyond the clear NCP affiliation of some leaders—largely a pragmatic necessity based on the need to mobilize resources from the central authority—this patronage is often the main reason why the native administration is considered biased toward the government.

Those who did not join the armed movements, or move to government-controlled areas, ended up in IDP camps. There they found their influence reduced by new authority structures that prioritized different skills, such as the ability to negotiate with international aid agencies, or by the presence of the armed movements and their independent power structures in the camps. Those who joined the armed movements based in their former territories continue to retain influence, though it is limited by the more powerful sway of the rebel leadership.

The more modern components of civil society, such as the educated elite, youth, and IDPs, generally portray the native administration as archaic, linked to the central government, and detached from the population. Nevertheless, the various civil society consultations that have taken place have generally insisted on the restoration of the power of traditional leaders, including on important issues such as land and security. The Doha Declaration stressed the need to “restore the role of leaders of the Native Administration at all levels including inside IDP Camps.”

Beyond their controversial political affiliations, traditional leaders have played and can continue to play an important role in the civil society track of the peace process. Traditional leaders can reach consensus among themselves and the rest of the civil society because they are often the only ones with real experience with traditional reconciliation mechanisms and issues such as land.³⁰

To date, only paramount traditional leaders living in government-controlled areas have been represented in the civil society track of the peace process—although the main leaders from North and West Darfur were absent from Doha 2. Some of those living in rebel areas or in refugee camps in Chad were invited by the rebels to attend track-one negotiations, but they could possibly play a more constructive role as part of the track-two process, along with fellow traditional leaders from the government areas.

IDPs and Refugees

The displaced are drawn predominantly from certain tribes—namely, the Fur, Zaghawa, and Masalit—and constitute a core constituency of the rebel movements. Their representatives are largely from new power structures that have replaced the traditional authorities. Since the camps no longer fall exclusively under the structures of traditional authority, government, or armed movements, they represent a distinct pillar of civil society that is tribally defined and influential.

Traditional leaders can reach consensus among themselves and the rest of the civil society because they are often the only ones with real experience with traditional reconciliation mechanisms.

Some of the camps established political structures supporting the armed movements, in particular, SLA-AW. These popular wings of the armed resistance have dealt predominantly with civilian issues, such as acting as interlocutors with humanitarian agencies, but also serve military functions, such as recruiting and fundraising. The allegiance of particular camps to rebel movements, and the degree of control, varies according to their location and ethnic composition.

These links have made the IDP leadership a crucial though challenging target for involvement in the peace process. When some rebel leaders rejected the peace process, bringing affiliated IDP representatives into the negotiations became a means of pressuring the rebel leadership to participate and also compensating for their absence. In the case of SLA-AW, the movement's strength was seen as nearly totally dependent on this popular support. Some within mediation circles believed that bypassing the leadership and connecting directly to the base would serve as an effective way to circumvent the rejectionists.

Results were mixed. In the words of one JMST official interviewed by this study's authors in April 2010, "Inclusion of the IDPs [in mediation] is a big failure." Though IDPs from Darfur did attend, the abstentionist IDP leaders from the pro-SLA-AW camps refused to attend Doha 1. But more recently there has been positive movement. For the first time, Doha 2 saw ten IDPs from the Kalma camp travel to Doha (though the delegation did not include the most prominent camp leaders). This progress was not universal nor without cost. At the end of July 2010, upon the delegation's return to Darfur, serious clashes between pro-Doha and anti-Doha (or pro-AW) IDPs ensued in Kalma, as well as in Hamidiya camp near Zalingei. The fact that some of the Kalma IDPs who went to Doha were actually rebel dissidents from SLA-AW who had taken refuge in Kalma after being kicked out of Jebel Marra in January 2010 indicates that those clashes might also have been a continuation, inside the camp, of the inter-SLA struggle that took place in Jebel Marra in early 2010. The government's ensuing ultimatum to UNAMID to deliver six IDP leaders accused of being involved in the Kalma clashes, all of whom were anti-Doha and pro-AW, is another challenge to UNAMID's neutrality.³¹ The eventual success or failure of bringing on board the pro-SLA-AW IDPs remains to be seen as civil society efforts continue.

The displaced population seems trapped between the idea that it has to avoid disloyalty to the rebel movements to get a better peace agreement and the feeling that it is not fully represented by the movements. Although objective data for the IDPs are unavailable, data collected from refugees in Chad indicate this tension. Despite widespread support for the rebel groups, 96 percent of the refugees feel "that their individual interests were not represented in past peace negotiations."³² The refugees in Chad had not been included in the peace process until JMST organized consultations there in March and April 2010. Fifteen refugee delegates from five different camps attended Doha 2.

Women and Youth

Creating specific categories for women and youth speaks to a debatable Western belief that these voices are generally more progressive, and thus more committed to peace, and that these categories are necessarily the primary victims of the conflict.

This predilection for advancing women and youth as peacemakers challenges established traditional Darfuri reconciliation mechanisms—and the possibility of transferring them into the civil society arena. The most accepted of those mechanisms—*judiya*—has as main actors old men bearing the title of *qjawid*, an Arabic term that is often translated as "elders."³³ Faced with this traditional underrepresentation of women and youth in Darfur, as in other parts of Africa, the international community pushes for affirmative action.

This predilection for advancing women and youth as peacemakers challenges established traditional Darfuri reconciliation mechanisms—and the possibility of transferring them into the civil society arena.

In IDP and refugee camps, women's issues have become the domain of *sheikha*. These female leaders have become the privileged interlocutors of the humanitarian community, but it is unclear to what degree they can play a specific role in the peace process, beyond raising gender issues.

Trying to address women's underrepresentation and to find influential women, various international organizations have shown a specific interest for the *hakkama*, women war singers who commemorate past victories and encourage fighters for upcoming battles. All ethnic groups have their singers, but the Arab *hakkama* are particularly famous for their presence during battles, mounted either on horses or camels. As early as the 1990s, government programs attempted to reorient the *hakkama* toward "peace singing." Today, notably in IDP camps, some NGOs encourage women singers to promote new messages, for instance in favor of hygiene, while others involved in peacebuilding have proposed that influential singers be included in civil society meetings. Finding a more peace-oriented role for the *hakkama* will not be easy, however. Not only does this constitute a break with their established social role, but it is also debatable whether their songs express their own views or merely reflect the sentiments of their community or its male leaders.

The "modern" part of Darfur civil society also includes educated women, including many who work for CSOs. These women are close to the male elite—most had access to education because they belong to big, influential families or are daughters of traditional leaders or intellectuals. Many are also government functionaries, making the woman category, as well as the youth category, relatively open to government interference. Among the main government-backed civil society organizations are the Sudanese Women General Union, the Sudanese Youth National Union, and the Sudanese Students General Union.³⁴

The youth category is also subject to tensions between the international community and the traditional Darfuri understanding of youth. International actors seeking to engage civil society generally view this category as representing a generation that has come of age during the war and is alienated from the old social structures in Darfur. Youth are seen to encompass better-educated individuals who neither fall into the intellectual category, nor the IDP or traditional leadership strata.

This is only partly true. Male youths (*shebab* in Arabic), as men of fighting age, are naturally mobilized as fighters in times of war—in the past into traditional militias or "self-defense groups" or, in contemporary Darfur, into rebel groups or government militias. In the camps, IDPs recreated this traditional structure by choosing youth leaders who were often very close to the rebels, if not their representatives.

Thus, while it has been hoped that their voices would be progressive, in practice they can prove to be among the most radical. Their positions are often hard-line, sometimes more influenced by ideology than pragmatism. Lacking experience of prewar Darfur, they are also less informed about the preexisting social and legal agreements governing relations among tribes in Darfur, leading their views to be disconnected from the practicalities of key issues, such as land, security, and return.

Intellectuals

Darfuri intellectuals are generally seen as important because of their potential to contribute constructive ideas toward the peace process, and have played a prominent role in various civil society peacebuilding initiatives. As many observers have noted, neither the rebels nor the government thought in detail about the core issues of security, return, and land. In general, the educated Darfuri elite have been viewed with some hostility by both the government and rebels and largely left out of past negotiations. However, keen to participate in the peace process, they have brought with them knowledge and ideas on managing a future Darfur.³⁵

The category of intellectuals overlaps with the other defined categories of Darfur civil society, particularly with CSOs where many educated Darfuris earn their living. Some traditional leaders can also be placed in this category, as many intellectuals belong to the families of tribal chiefs, who are able to send their children to school in larger numbers than their “subjects.”

Despite many attributes that would enable intellectuals to play a leading role in peace efforts, the main problem with placing educated elites at the center of civil society efforts are that they are somewhat divorced from the grassroots level. For some years they had met, despite tribal divisions, in what was seen as a vanguard for the type of intercommunal dialogue required for a future solution in Darfur. But the majority of intellectuals are part of the internal diaspora based in Khartoum or are part of the Darfur diaspora living in the Gulf, Europe, and the United States. Having sat out the conflict, they are generally viewed cautiously by those remaining behind in Darfur. These intellectuals advanced ideas marked by their more developed discussions across tribal lines, but these ideas went far beyond the comfort level of the more directly affected communities in Darfur in terms of reconciliation. Articulate, often English-speaking, and easily accessible in Khartoum, the intellectuals and their ideas became the main interface for the international community.

The gap between the rarefied Khartoum circles and those within Darfur began to emerge for all to see during the Doha process. The Khartoum group advanced themselves and their ideas ahead of the pace of discussions budding in Darfur, which led to a serious rift at Doha 1 between the three delegations from Darfur and the large delegation of Darfuri intellectuals based in Khartoum. Most of the Khartoum delegates, having participated in past civil society meetings abroad, often without delegates from Darfur, were keen to play the same role as they had in those past meetings—that is, as full participants. But the Darfur delegates forced them to remain as facilitators and experts, the roles that had been allocated to them by the mediation.

This tension was aggravated by the competition for supremacy on the civil society track between the JMST, which was closer to the Khartoum delegation, and UNAMID, which was in charge of the selection process in Darfur. Consequences of this divide were felt well after the conference, when the presence of Khartoum members in the follow-up committee was questioned.³⁶ At Doha 2, UNAMID had invited only eleven Khartoum delegates. JMST meanwhile invited all those who had been present at Doha 1, but many of the Khartoum delegates, notably members of the Doha 1 follow-up committee, boycotted Doha 2.

In the end, it became clear that the civil society leaders whom the international community had placed stock in—the Khartoum-based intellectuals—did not have the support required for them to exercise a leadership role. While it is clear that intellectuals can contribute important knowledge and vision to a process, their lack of grassroots links means that it is necessary to be cautious about giving them too central a role in future meetings.

The Selection Dilemma

Elected or Selected?

Darfuris have continually demonstrated that the question of representation is of primary importance. The rejection of the Abuja peace agreement is cited by many as proof of this, where the majority of Darfuris rejected the agreement not on the basis of its content but on the basis of who signed on and who did not. Equally for the civil society process, should a critical mass of Darfuris become convinced that the representatives selected in the civil society process are unacceptable, its results would likely be fatally damaged before they could be taken forward. Conversely, if the participation of certain communities and their

representatives could be secured to an acceptable degree, this could form a critical mass.

The important question is, who has influence in Darfur society? Despite the long-established presence of the international community in Darfur, this remains largely unknown. With no fixed criteria and an imperfect understanding of who was sought, the international community had to venture into untrodden territory as it developed the civil society track in the lead-up to Doha.

Seen as essential for the purposes of pressuring and circumventing rejectionists among the rebel movements—namely, Abdelwahid—are the Fur IDPs who form their constituency. Similarly, failure to bring in the Arab populations, especially their armed elements, would negate the possibility of civil society negotiating meaningfully on the essential issues of land, security, and return.

However, integrating the Fur IDPs is complicated by the challenge of overcoming the opposition of their political leadership. Bringing in the Arab communities is a sensitive subject as far as the Sudanese government is concerned, and it is further complicated by a lack of mapping and contacts.

Within the camps, the process of selection has been simplified by letting camp residents self select. While this proved to be a way forward, taking such a hands-off approach holds risks. Given that the camp power structures often replace the traditional leadership structure, empowering the camp leadership to decide its representatives further entrenches this shift. Furthermore, this approach can marginalize ethnic minority groups within camps. The dominant camp ethnicity can choose not to include any representatives of the minority ethnicity.

Outside the more organized camp structures, selection has been less about having representatives chosen by influential communities—such as the Fur IDPs—than about securing the participation of influential individuals themselves. UNAMID criticized the JMST's first lists for Doha 1 as being undemocratic and opted for self-selection during consultations for Doha 2. There was no secret vote, however, and it has been argued that the presence of local authorities during the consultations easily allowed them to mobilize NCP members and influence the selection. UNAMID was also criticized by civil society members for drawing lots to select delegates, notably in North Darfur for Doha 1 and South Darfur for Doha 2.³⁷ As fair Darfur-wide elections to select civil society delegates do not seem realistic, selection has to remain the work of international actors, who will need detailed mapping to understand the power dynamics and political tendencies within influential groups.

Strategic Targets

Civil society members, especially the educated, are often reluctant to mention their ethnicity and prefer to be presented as being from North, South, or West Darfur, or simply as Darfuri. However, most know the ethnic origin of the other members. It is also important for the international community to have an idea of ethnic balance and to target certain strategic communities. Chief among these are the Fur, which constitute the main ethnic group in Darfur and the majority of the IDPs, and the Abbala, which constitute the bulk of the government militias. According to one JMST official, "Success will have to be judged by the inclusion of Arabs and IDPs," as well as the Zaghawa, who played a key role in facilitating rebel support from Chad and in providing numerous rebel leaders and fighters. As one Chadian Zaghawa official in charge of the Darfur file points out, "The Fur say that without them there would be no Darfur, the Zaghawa say that without them there would have been no rebellion, and the Arabs say that without them there will be no peace."³⁸

Within the camps, the process of selection has been simplified by letting camp residents self select.

Solving the Fur dilemma. The Fur have been well represented in most civil society meetings: at Doha 1 they constituted more than 23 percent of the participants, and at Doha 2 they probably accounted for an even larger percentage.³⁹ Although they were well represented among CSOs and traditional leaders, they were not among the IDPs, as the main Fur camps refused to participate in the process. Indeed, a large gap exists between the elite, who live mostly in government-held towns, and the rural population, who are largely displaced in the camps. Although Abdelwahid is in exile in France and his fighters have not been very active in the field, many Fur, in particular those in the camps, still recognize him as their leader. For years, his popularity has paralyzed the Fur elite, whose members, afraid of losing their traditional constituencies, rarely dare to challenge Abdelwahid's authority, despite pressure by the international community to do so.

Since Abuja, the international community has employed three different approaches at various times in order to solve the Fur dilemma: convincing Abdelwahid to join the peace process; convincing Fur IDPs to join the civil society track against Abdelwahid's wishes; and replacing Abdelwahid with another Fur rebel leader. The two first approaches have failed, while the third has foundered for lack of a charismatic Fur figure who would be accepted by both Fur IDPs and fighters in the field. Throughout 2009, U.S. special envoy General Scott Gration sought to bypass Abdelwahid's abstention from the peace process through direct engagement with Abdelwahid's field forces. Working directly with SLA-AW field commanders and Fur members of civil society critical of Abdelwahid's position, General Gration encouraged them to desert Abdelwahid and to reunite under Tijani Sese's leadership. What resulted initially was a further splintering of SLM-AW groups, though some of these splinters coalesced in a tenuous coalition headed by Tijani Sese. As of this writing, Sese's coalition has achieved no greater cohesion. Indeed, the international community's wish for a Fur civil society that challenges Abdelwahid and ensures the acceptance of an agreement by IDPs faces serious obstacles—namely, the unpopularity of the Fur elite in the IDP camps and the Fur rebel areas and the fear among the Fur that breaking away from Abdelwahid would weaken the rebellion and divide it into splinter groups rather than unite it behind a new leader.

This tension is played out in the reluctance of SLA-AW dissidents to join Tijani Sese's LJM. Commanders have strongly criticized the choice of a civil society figure instead of a field leader to chair the new movement. Although its international backers see Sese as a respected Fur intellectual, his rebel group had no Fur faction among its components until Ahmad Abdeshafi—himself viewed by many Fur as an exiled politician—joined its ranks in April 2010. Sese risks facing the same stigma attached to the diaspora elite by those in the field. In addition, the Fur hold mixed views on his record as governor of Darfur during the Fur-Arab war of 1987–89.

The international community is aware of these handicaps. But given its difficulties in reaching Fur IDPs, it hopes Sese will be able to establish direct contacts with them and maybe include IDP representatives in his negotiation team, so as to better sell a peace agreement to the camps. No doubt this strategy will be opposed by SLA-AW and JEM, as well as by members of civil society who had placed their hopes in an inclusive track-two process. For both the LJM rebels and their international backers, as well as for civil society's unity, such a strategy is a very risky bet.

Getting the Janjaweed on board. The emergence of nomads as a category at Doha 1 reflects the fact that, in the humanitarian community in Darfur, the term nomads has become a label for the Arabs, particularly the Abbala Arabs. The idea behind this nomad component is to include those Abbala communities that served as a recruitment pool for the Janjaweed. Engaging them has not been easy. Although the more neutral Baggara (cattle-herding) Arabs

of South Darfur were well represented in both Doha 1 and 2, notably by their paramount traditional leaders, only ten to fifteen Abbala delegates were present.

One difficulty is that both the government and rebels claim to represent the Abbala. In Abuja, they were supposedly represented by the government, but left with the impression that the government was ready to abandon them on important issues, including those related to disarmament, land, and justice. This triggered a growing autonomization of the Abbala militias and communities, and the multiplication of local negotiations between them and the rebel groups, following which some ex-Janjaweed joined either SLA-AW or JEM. Both movements also held direct negotiations with major militia leaders, such as Musa Hilal and Mohamed Hamdan Dagolo, "Hemmeti."⁴⁰ This yielded mixed results, partially due to the government's success in enticing dissident Janjaweed leaders away from the rebels with new promises of support, but also due to the mismanagement of the issue by the rebels, who were unable to inculcate these erstwhile enemies convincingly into their movements. Even Abbala leaders in the rebel movements acknowledge that the rebels cannot fully represent their communities.⁴¹

As the Abbala's demands have not been fully represented during the track-one negotiations, despite their being a major actor in the conflict, integrating them in the civil society track may be the only option. If militia leaders cannot be included, traditional leaders can be, as can intellectuals from the Abbala's small but growing educated elite.

Exactly which traditional leaders, intellectuals, and elites to include is more controversial. Some tribes are perceived as having been less involved in the Janjaweed than others. For instance, the Mahariya, an Arab tribe, are usually more accepted by the non-Arabs than Musa Hilal's Mahamid. Khartoum-based Abbala politicians such as Generals Adam Hamid Musa and Hisein Abdallah Jibril, considered to be fully progovernment, are widely rejected by both non-Arab civil society members as well as Abbala leaders based in Darfur.⁴²

Potential Abbala representatives could be divided into three broad categories. The first would comprise local leaders, in particular, traditional leaders who are generally accepted by non-Arab civil society. The second category would comprise those who left the government and participated in local dialogue with both rebels and non-Arab communities. They could play an important role in enlarging those local initiatives toward a Darfur consensus on major issues. The third and most controversial category would comprise the Abbala's "big players," many of whom had been involved in recruiting militias and whose standing is questionable, both among the government and their cadres on the ground.

Although individuals in this latter category were generally rewarded with government positions, they do not necessarily believe that their tribal and personal interests are well represented by the government and are keen to participate directly in the peace process. Moreover, they could easily act as spoilers if they are not integrated in some way. Some of them might be easier to integrate in track-one negotiations, and others in track two, either directly or through representatives. For instance, one of Musa Hilal's sons attended Doha 1. The selection of such individuals needs to navigate possible opposition from government, rebels, and non-Arab civil society, as well as tribal and individual competition among Abbala leaders themselves. For instance, powerful militia leader Hemmeti was not pleased with the presence of Abdallah Mustafa Abu Noba in Doha, his rival for the leadership of the Abbala Mahariya in South Darfur.⁴³

Nevertheless, many Arab participants in the Doha conferences viewed them as a positive step. "Two years ago, if people like Abu Noba would have come to such a meeting, the others would have fought," noted a Baggara Arab intellectual. "It did not happen. It's a major step towards reconciliation."⁴⁴

Remembering the Zaghawa. The underrepresentation of Fur IDPs and Abbala Arabs in the process has been widely acknowledged, if not solved. The need to include Zaghawa civil society has had far less consideration from mediators. It is estimated that the Zaghawa accounted for 8 percent of participants at the Doha conferences. However, many important members of the Zaghawa elite were missing, and the fifteen or so Zaghawa leaders and intellectuals who did attend are widely considered to be progovernment and to have little influence among their grassroots constituencies.

The Zaghawa are generally considered to be sufficiently represented in the peace process by their rebel groups—JEM and various SLA and JEM splinters. However, Zaghawa refugees in Chad are almost unanimous in their belief that their interests were not represented in previous peace negotiations.⁴⁵

The two scenarios for progress in the peace process, in the minds of most diplomats, would leave little space for Zaghawa civil society. The first scenario—the possibility of an agreement between the government and JEM—would be an elite power-sharing deal that would be worryingly similar to the Abuja agreement. A second scenario—a deal built on an alliance between the Fur and the Arab components of Darfur civil society—would also risk overlooking Zaghawa concerns. Both scenarios would risk giving a platform to existing anti-Zaghawa feelings among most Darfur communities, which are fearful of what they see as the Zaghawa’s political and economic ambitions.⁴⁶

Conclusions and Recommendations

The importance of civil society’s role in peacebuilding in Darfur is clear. It has the potential to bring excluded ethnic groups into the process, to address social and political issues on which the rebels are not well placed to negotiate, and to generate much needed momentum in what has been a long and difficult process. Civil society as a player in the peace process can no longer be treated as an afterthought. Although integrating it into a larger peace process is a challenge, it is increasingly clear that this is no longer optional—peace cannot be brought without it.

Some continue to see civil society as essentially an add-on to the government-rebel negotiation. The more recent investment in the track-two process that led to the Doha Declaration only came about due to mediators’ frustration with the lack of progress in the track-one talks. Even so, track-two risks receiving less priority once more if there seems to be a chance of progress in the rebel-government negotiations.

This strategy of advancing the government-rebel talks and then inserting civil society only at the last minute as a means of making the process comprehensive is problematic for two reasons. First, although civil society actors welcome participation in the peace process, they will not accept being an afterthought. Should their role be merely an epilogue to the main government-rebel talks, there is a risk that civil society actors—and their constituencies—will reject the process. Second, the progress of the government-rebel track has been erratic and subject to collapse. Once assembled, the civil society vehicle would likely be more stable and have the potential to advance consensus on the issues even if the government-rebel talks stall.

Progress—or lack thereof—in the government-rebel negotiations does not lessen the need for a strong and autonomous civil society track, which should be conceptually linked to the government-rebel process but allowed to progress independent of it. Should a government-rebel agreement occur in the interim, it is important that civil society still be allotted a role and that the agreement not be portrayed as final and exclusive. For example, one possible permutation sees the government-rebel negotiations yielding a framework agreement, with civil society filling in some of the details.

Civil society as a player in the peace process can no longer be treated as an afterthought.

The civil society approach is a long-term, labor-intensive process. It requires widespread, intensive contact in Darfur, eastern Chad, and Khartoum, as well as with the Darfur diaspora. Facilitators require a strong grounding in the political and ethnic geography of Darfur and a diplomatic sensibility to engage civil society actors on a wide range of sensitive topics. The actual process of engagement is crucial. For example, securing ten IDP participants from a certain camp may actually be detrimental if the selection process lacks legitimacy. Success cannot be evaluated in terms of numbers of participants or locations. The benchmark will be how widespread the perception of inclusion is within civil society and whether the participation of key groups has been secured.

Success will require long-term investment in the civil society track. UNAMID, which currently leads civil society efforts, has the advantage of being present throughout Darfur. It needs to invest appropriate resources into leading the initiative. Given the vastness of the task, UNAMID should be prepared to draw on external resources to bolster its role, and donors should prepare themselves to support this.

The tension among the roles of JMST, UNAMID, and AUHIP requires attention, because the success of the civil society track going forward will depend in large part on the ability of these organizations to find a constructive synergy. Effective cooperation and coordination among international actors is more important than ever. AU-UN hybrid institutions and countries that could potentially place leverage on Darfur rebel leaders and intellectuals, such as the United States, Great Britain, France, and Qatar, as well as neighboring countries, should make the civil society track a priority in their efforts.

For the international community, the first lesson to learn from previous civil society initiatives is that, although complex, this track might be much more rewarding in the long term than the track-one negotiations between the government and rebel leadership. But seizing this opportunity will require a real culture change on the part of international mediators.

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22. JEM leader Suleiman Jamous, interview with authors, N'Djaména, Chad, March and April 2010; "JEM Directs Heavy Criticism at Darfur Mediators and UNAMID," *Sudan Tribune*, April 14, 2010, www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article34751.
23. Authors' interviews with various participants at Doha 1, Sudan, November–December 2009.
24. There is some overlap between both categories. UNDP, "Mapping," 3.1.
25. *Ibid.*, 1.3.
26. *Ibid.*, 5.4.
27. *Ibid.*, 3.1.
28. Authors' interview with CSOs, Khartoum and El Fasher, November and December 2009.
29. UNDP, "Mapping," 2.4.6.
30. Victor Tanner and Jérôme Tubiana, "The Emergence of Grassroots Security and Livelihood Agreements in Darfur" (unpublished report for the U.S. Agency for International Development, 2010), 27.
31. "Disturbance in Darfur's IDP Camps," HAND, August, 13, 2010.
32. 24 Hours for Darfur, *Darfuran Voices*, 22.
33. Adam Azzain Mohammed, *The Darfur Crisis: Three Conflicts, Not One* (Khartoum: Public Administration and Federalism Studies Institute, University of Khartoum, June 2008).
34. Salmon, *Drivers of Change*, 11.
35. Azzain Mohammed, *The Darfur Crisis*.
36. Authors' interviews with various participants of Doha 1, Khartoum and Darfur, November–December 2009.

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37. Authors' interviews with civil society members and international officials, El Fasher, December 2009, and Doha, July 2010.
38. Authors' interview with Chadian Zaghawa official, Chad, April 2010.
39. It is estimated that the Fur constitute around one-third of Darfur's population.
40. Tanner and Tubiana, *Divided They Fall*, 62–64; Tanner and Tubiana, "The Emergence of Grassroots Security and Livelihood Agreements in Darfur"; Jérôme Tubiana, "Seule une tortue peut mordre une tortue": accords entre groupes rebelles et communautés arabes au Darfour," *Politique Africaine* 118 (2010): 205–24.
41. Authors' interviews with Abbala leaders in JEM, Chad, March–April 2010.
42. Authors' interviews with civil society members and Abbala militia leaders, Khartoum and Darfur, November–December 2010.
43. Authors' interview with Hemmeti, Nyala, December 2010.
44. Authors' interview with a participant of the Doha Conference, Khartoum, December 2010.
45. Unpublished information provided by 24 Hours for Darfur.
46. Jérôme Tubiana, "Land and Power: The Case of the Zaghawa," *Making Sense of Sudan*, SSRC Blog, May 2008, <http://blogs.ssrc.org/sudan/2008/05/28/land-and-power-the-case-of-the-zaghawa/>.

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