



Note¹ from the Sudan Humanitarian Workshop on 2 May 2014

A practical-oriented technical workshop for invited participants was convened by People4Sudan and hosted by Columbia University in the City of New York, with support from the University of Manchester in the United Kingdom to address the following objectives:

1. Take stock of the current humanitarian and human rights situation of marginalised populations inside Sudan, and of Sudanese refugees, in order to prepare a best estimate of the overall needs and current circumstances; and
2. Identify the key parameters and suggest methodological approaches for the design of a Sudan Humanitarian and Human Rights Observatory.

Introductions

Key introductory points included the importance of tackling root causes to find sustainable solutions for the longstanding problems of Sudan, the vital necessity for impartial humanitarian access and assistance, the lack of effective civilian protection, and the fundamental requirement of justice and accountability to improve the current situation in Sudan, which will not occur without regime change.

The People4Sudan (P4S) initiative was introduced: the concept was in direct response to opposition leaders, who asked for a new approach that centred on Sudanese ownership and leadership, and organised in a way that emphasized capacity building, self-reliance and mutual solidarity. The request was made because the present policies of the international community (including UN and regional bodies, government, NGOs) were seen as fragmented and unprincipled. Thus they were neither protecting the most vulnerable and marginalized people, nor reaching the most needy with essential humanitarian assistance.

For there to be real improvement and ultimate change in Sudan, it must come from the Sudanese people themselves, working together within their own local and global communities. Hence unity of effort is important – rising above narrow personal and institutional interests. The role of the Sudanese diaspora – perhaps over 1 million strong – needs a paradigm shift: instead of short-term objectives limited to their communities, long-term approaches to help all the peoples of Sudan are urgently needed. Without unity between the marginalized populations, and among the organisations that seek to help them, Bashir's strategy of divide-and-rule will continue to prevail.

People4Sudan would eventually be registered as a non-profit and meet all legal and financial accountability requirements and best standards of transparency and accountability. However, it is not intended to be another traditional NGO – but to

¹ *This Note may be freely shared. The workshop itself was conducted under the Chatham House Rule that reads, "When a meeting, or part thereof, is held under the Chatham House Rule, participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed."*



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provide a platform for, and add value to other organisations working in this area. For additional information on P4S visit:

- Website: www.people4sudan.org
- Facebook: www.facebook.com/people4sudan
- Twitter www.twitter.com/people4sudan

For correspondence, contact can be made via people@people4sudan.org.

An expert background paper, “*Humanitarianism and Operationality in the Context of Sudan: Inherent Constraints & Imposed Challenges*,” had been prepared and circulated beforehand. The author introduced its main conclusions. Informed by the workshop discussions, the report will be updated and made available.

Taking stock of the humanitarian and human rights situation

There are snapshots of information available from many sources but, in the absence of systematic aggregation by geography and other variables, it is difficult to monitor trends and obtain a precise, useful understanding of underlying causes and prevalent needs, so as to develop more effective advocacy and assistance. The fragmentary information exposed the need for a systematic approach utilising expertise in epidemiology, statistics, geographical mapping, and quantitative information.

Due to obstruction by the Government of Sudan, humanitarian workers and observers were unable to operate and report freely. Many NGOs and journalists had been forced to leave Sudan and UN agencies had been silenced too or their reporting censored by the authorities. Thus it was difficult to make an objective and verifiable assessment of the destruction committed by air and land attacks, or to confirm the identity of the attackers. Without more widely sourced data from the ground, the gap in crisis management will only grow wider.

A region-by-region review elicited some data from participants, highlights of which are listed at annex 1.

Designing the Observatory

The goal of the Observatory is to be the main source of regular, reliable, and objective information about Sudan. Examples to learn from include similar initiatives in Syria, and earlier in Iraq, and from the methods used in other sectors such as epidemic tracking and public health. New communication and information technologies also made it more feasible nowadays to get primary data from the ground. It is important to understand the transformation process from *data* to *information*, and then its interpretation through nuanced *analysis*.

Useful discussion involved the nature of the primary sources and channels; their credibility; means of verification; protection and security of sources; and the need for a trained network. Participants also discussed the “failures” of information collected and reported to date to mobilize effective international responses.



The Observatory will not replace or duplicate existing channels but seek to collate and connect them and to enhance their value through a synthesizing approach. Thus, good partnerships are needed to build on the efforts of persons and institutions that are already monitoring and recording information now. Also, emphasized was the independence, and hence credibility, of the Observatory. Its product could be used by politicians, advocates and humanitarians – but the Observatory itself was only to be an objective provider of information.

Notes from a brainstorm of some more detailed considerations on the Observatory are at annex 2.

Other discussion

Participants' views were invited on some of the resourcing and organisational aspects of People4Sudan. Useful suggestions were made on both aspects as well as suggestions from people willing to contribute their skills and resources for the different functions that will be necessary in the further development of the initiative. All suggestions were gratefully received. Participants are requested to continue dialogue with the founder of People4Sudan who expects to follow up with further arrangements over the next few weeks, after additional consultations with stakeholders who were not at this workshop.



Annex 1: informal stocktake on the humanitarian and human rights situation in Sudan

NB: This was an informal stocktake – all numbers quoted have not been checked and should be taken only as a guide.

- Darfur
 - o Population 6 million in 2006.
 - o 300,000 refugees in Chad: freedom of movement limited. Conditions poor.
 - o 1.9 million IDPs in 2012, 3 million IDPs earlier
 - o At least 1/3 or 1/2 the population displaced
 - o Total 4 million population today, 3 million IDPs
 - o Some 137 “camps” for IDPs
 - o 280,000 in Kalma camp, 19 girls raped this year (an under-estimate)
 - o UN figures sanitized by GoS; UNAMID is an unreliable source
 - o Darfuris in South Sudan need protection; there could be more attacks as in Bentiu

- Nuba Mountains
 - o 2 million population of South Kordofan – 1.2 million (?) in Nuba
 - o 2010 government census shows less; government prevents the ability to determine needs (including promptly categorizing refugees from internal Sudan fighting as citizens of South Sudan).
 - o 40-70K IDPs in Khartoum
 - o 2012: refugees in Yida 72,000; in South Sudan could be around 100,000
 - o From Yida people move deeper into Unity State
 - o Displaced 375,000 – old number; 90,000 recently displaced; some have set up new homes and farms.
 - o Some refugees in Yida starting to return to Sudan because of fighting in South Sudan.
 - o Able to track battles, go to each village.
 - o Areas where no fighting before in last war have no coping mechanisms. They are not doing well. They don’t know what to do. No access to Yida refugee camp. Health deteriorating fast, no food and no food in the black markets.
 - o In rebel controlled areas, 4 hospitals with 1 that can do surgery.
 - o In government controlled areas, not getting food but many have families outside the area that are helping.
 - o Government goal is to lure people to the “peace camps”.
 - o In the Nuba Mountains, 75% of geography controlled by SPLM-N
 - o As of April 2012: 1,572 bombs dropped in Nuba Mountains – verified by witnesses and tagged by GPS.
 - o Antonovs, MIGs; cluster bombs – not working as well, not exploding upon impact; Sukhoi – 500 lb bomb, devastating; Iranian long-range rockets
 - o Inside Nuba Mountains, indigenous NGOs get some assistance – more last year than this year.
 - o 400 students average for elementary school class; secondary education non-existent. Some schools but under trees.
 - o In Yida, no UN organization supporting education – just small NGOs.
 - o UN using lure of secondary education to move people – several hundred in high school.
 - o In Yida, 3,097 unaccompanied children, no family, no protection, just get a ration of food.

- Blue Nile
 - o Less known and more cut off.



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- Low-level cross-border activities – food, seeds and medicine.
 - A different social structure compared to the Nuba Mountains. Little infrastructure. Great needs
 - Approximately 200,000 in IDP camps, approximately 200,000 refugees in neighbouring countries.
- Khartoum
- People arrested and transferred to East and far North
 - Marginalized people particularly fearful and subject to persecution



Appendix 2: Brainstorm on Observatory

Potential indicators:

- Who is fighting; attackers; types of attack; are they targeting civilians; who is winning
- Consequences (# seriously injured; displaced; disabled; rapes; gender and age of those impacted)
- Movement of people
- Facilities/resources available
- Deaths due to causes other than by weapons
- Bios on certain individuals in government; events #; how is this information passed through to government officials
- IDPs not in camps
- Attacks on aid workers & peacekeepers
- Psychological implications including for people in the diaspora
- Sexual slavery; human trafficking
- Orphans
- Destruction of farms
- Attacks on livestock
- People imprisoned, abducted, “disappeared” → where are they from, what ethnic group, profession
- Recruitment of child soldiers
- Hate speech
- Arms movement
- Access to education

Possible information sources:

- Indigenous people on the ground who are trusted and trust the Observatory; news must benefit them
- Radio Dabanga
- Nuba Reports
- Compare UN reports to Observatory reports over a period of time
- Women’s groups (need for sensitivity re reporting rapes)
- Human rights lawyers, including Darfur Bar Association
- Journalists fired by Sudanese news agencies
- Girifna
- Tribal/community leaders
- Students
- Marketplaces/traders
- Sudan Tribune
- Eric Reeves’ reports
- Sudan Change Now
- Massalit International Organization

Possible Methods:

- Rapid assessment surveys that will lead to indicators, currently done through sms and smartphones
- Smartphones, satellite phones
- Detailed technology discussion needed with experts.