

Stuck in Change

Faith-based Peace-building in Sudan's Transition

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October 2006



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List of Abbreviations

AIC	African Inland Church
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CEAS	Church Ecumenical Action Sudan
COC	Coptic Orthodox Church
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
CRU	(Clingendael) Conflict Research Unit
DPA	Darfur Peace Agreement
ECS	Episcopal Church of Sudan
GOSS	Government of Southern Sudan
HAC	Humanitarian Aid Commission
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
JAM	Joint Assessment Mission
MB	Muslim Brotherhood
MFA	(Netherlands) Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NCP	National Congress Party
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NIF	National Islamic Front
NSCC	New Sudan Council of Churches
PCOS	Presbyterian Church of Sudan
SAF	Sudanese Armed Forces
SCOC	Sudan Church of Christ
SCC	Sudan Council of Churches
SIC	Sudan Interior Church
SPLM	Sudanese People's Liberation Movement
SRCS	Sudanese Red Crescent Society
UNMIS	UN Mission in Sudan
WCC	World Council of Churches

Summary

Over the last five years, Sudan has become a priority concern for many international donors. The end of the North–South conflict and the outbreak of the Darfur crisis have drawn the attention of the international community to Sudan, triggering substantial investments supporting national actors to achieve a lasting peace. Despite this engagement, the multifaceted reality of Africa’s largest country creates many dilemmas for outside supporters of the peace process. One of these dilemmas relates to the role of faith-based actors in the national peace-building process.

Sudan is a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society, and in the past, this diversity has been both cause of conflict and source of peaceful co-existence. The academic discourse acknowledges the importance of religious actors in conflict and post-conflict settings and calls for more integration of faith-based actors in peace-building. The preliminary study of international faith-based actors carried out by the Netherlands Institute of International Relations, ‘Clingendael’ (Bouta, Kadayifci-Orellana and Abu-Nimer 2005) underlines this need and provides a first insight into how international faith-based actors contribute to national peace processes; it lays the groundwork for the present case study, which aims to shed some light on the impact of national faith-based actors in Sudan’s transition.

Since the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in January 2005, Sudan has found itself in a political transition that encompasses all aspects of society. The Government of National Unity has laid out an ambitious plan to ‘make unity attractive’, and to create a peace dividend for the Sudanese population, after 21 years of civil war. However, implementation of the CPA appears to be a hard nut to crack. Not only the ongoing violence in Darfur, but also unresolved political, cultural, ethnic, religious and economic problems have meant that numerous deadlines have passed without the hoped-for progress. As actors on this socio-political playing field, religious groupings affect the current changes within Sudanese society.

The question is whether, and if so to what extent, religious groupings do in fact opt to engage in the peace process. In order to embrace the wide spectrum of religious communities in the country, this study uses a limited definition of a ‘faith-based actor’: **national, faith-based organization or an individual religious person with an organization-like network in Sudan**. This led to the exclusion of traditional religions and their various communities, as their operations are highly decentralized and have little or no effect in Khartoum and Juba. In total, this study is based on a sample of 24 faith-based actors.

Notwithstanding the stated intentions to unify Sudan as one single country, in reality, today’s Sudan is de facto separated into (mainly Muslim) North and (mainly Christian) South. The northern National Congress Party (NCP)-led government is reluctant to implement the CPA where it endangers its political control, and the semi-autonomous Government of Southern Sudan (GOSS) is excluding the NCP, in active pursuit of an independence agenda. This split is also reflected in the way faith-based actors organize themselves and operate on the ground: the situation in Khartoum is markedly different from the situation in Juba.

In Khartoum, there is a plethora of national faith-based actors who compete for resources and influence. These actors include private foundations, churches, religious leaders and other semi-public (umbrella) organizations, and they engage in a wide range of activities, in various parts of the country. A good overview is hard to obtain; it is particularly difficult to distinguish between philanthropic aims and political ambitions, and between private and public funding schemes. This ambivalence leads the present report to conclude that it is – and will remain – hard for external actors to keep up with the various alliances between the different players.

There are far fewer faith-based actors in Juba than in Khartoum. The limited infrastructure and the history of the town (as a garrison town under the military control of the North during the civil war) make it a difficult setting for faith-based actors to operate in. Christian and Muslim actors both struggle to organize their communities in the capital of the autonomous South: Muslims fight increasing marginalization by the new political elite, and the Christian churches find themselves in a process of transition, from providing relief aid towards more sustainable engagement in the peace process.

Despite the differences between North and South, there is a national trend towards more active involvement by religious actors in Sudan. Even though many actors are reluctant to take an overly proactive stance at a time when the CPA represents fragility rather than consolidation, there is a tendency to anticipate future activities taking place concurrently with the CPA process: some plan to expand their operations and build new communities in other parts of the country, or they look ahead to specific challenges to which they will have to respond. Others, however, remain passive and maintain a wait-and-see attitude. This report therefore makes a distinction between active promoters, constrained contributors, silent supporters and potential spoilers. It identifies six actors within the first category and five in the ‘constrained’ contributors category. Six actors fall within the category silent supporter and three can be labelled as potential spoilers.

An analysis of the four categories leads this study to a concluding discussion on a number of both challenges and opportunities. On the one hand, it is important to note that Sudan’s current political landscape has an impact on the transition process that should not be underestimated: religious activities are subject to political agendas and have to deal with restrictions orchestrated by the authorities. In addition, it is clear that the fragile peace process is far from encouraging a nuanced, reconciliatory tone among and between the various religious actors. The CPA text is seen as implicit confirmation that the South is to be autonomous by 2011, and Christians and Muslims both tend to disregard members of the other faith when publicly expressing their views on how the peace process should proceed. On the other hand, Sudan’s transition does not entail only challenges. Faith connects people in their wish for peace, and can elicit very strong commitment among a large group of followers. In their work on a community as well as a political level, faith-based actors (organizations as well as individual leaders) can actively engage in advocacy on various issues and play a valuable role in facilitating a sustainable dialogue among and between religions.

In conclusion, this report indicates that Sudan’s faith-based peace-building landscape has consequences for international engagement. Faith-based actors have a rich history in shaping the societal process in the country and will continue to do so for some time to come. In order to facilitate a first step towards policy options in this regard, this study suggests possible entry points for international actors to engage with each of the four identified categories. Regarding

the category of **potential spoilers**, it seems important to facilitate the establishment of an environment that is more conducive to constructive criticism. The same applies to **constrained contributors**: external actors can work towards a situation where critics can voice their concerns without doing harm. Potential contributors who are willing but unable to be active could be assisted in finding alternative ways of engaging in the peace-building process. As far as **active promoters** are concerned, emphasis could be placed on encouraging these actors to include other parties in their activities, i.e., broadening the constituency that openly supports them. Finally, faith-based actors in the category **silent supporters** can provide useful networks that can help to facilitate dialogue with other marginalized groupings.

Engaging with faith-based actors in Sudan has to be decided on a case-by-case basis. The report shows that international actors cannot afford to ignore the religious constituencies and their nationwide networks when working in the country, and that these actors are not a monolithic group with one single goal. As Sudan's transition will continue to be shaped partly by the active involvement of religious actors, a more political approach may be needed. Even if at the end of 2006, faith-based peace-building seemed to be 'stuck in change', a wait-and-see attitude is likely to give way to more determined engagement by faith-based actors who may not always be aiming at supporting the CPA or stability. By taking account of Sudan's diversity, as suggested in this study, international actors can address these challenges in their efforts to facilitate implementation of the CPA.

This report closes with some concrete recommendations for the Netherlands. In order to make best use of faith-based actors in their support of the CPA's implementation, which is a key objective of Dutch policy in Sudan, it is suggested that work should be undertaken along two parallel tracks. First, it is necessary to generally increase the capacity and credibility of faith-based actors. This is crucial in order to facilitate a less restrictive, less manipulative environment for faith-based peace-building. Second, external actors should engage with selected actors in areas where they can already make a difference – and where they can facilitate the CPA implementation today. In the medium term, this two-fold strategy is likely to pay off in terms of stability, good governance and socio-economic development.

1 Religious actors in peace-building

Introduction

There is no doubt that greater international attention is now being paid to the role of religion in conflict. The most prominent cases have been linked, directly or indirectly, to the aftermath of '9/11' and include major arenas of conflict such as Afghanistan, Iraq and, more recently, Somalia. In this context, religion – and the various interpretations of different faiths – is often viewed as a source of tensions and as part of the problem. Popular perceptions about religious fundamentalism have led, over the last five years, to both a widening gap between different religious communities and to an increasing awareness among (secular) policy-makers that religion can play an instrumental, potentially problematic role in local, national and international conflicts. At the same time, there is a growing appreciation among practitioners of the fact that religious actors also have great potential to resolve conflict and decrease tensions. This holds true particularly for post-conflict settings, where religion can contribute to a wide range of peace-building activities. In other words, the combination of moral authority and the ability to create genuine commitment to peace among large parts of the population makes many international policy-makers regard religious communities as important 'drivers of change' in peace-building.

This argument reflects the current academic discourse. An increasing number of scholars in the field of international relations have come to devote their attention to phenomena such as 'the global resurgence of religion and the transformation in international relations' (Thomas 2005), 'faith-based diplomacy' (Johnston 2003) and 'the return from exile' (Petito and Hatzopoulos 2003). For example, as Thomas argues: "a global struggle for authenticity and development is taking place, and learning how to take cultural and religious pluralism seriously has become one of the most important aspects of foreign policy in the twenty-first century" (Thomas 2005). More specifically, many recent academic writings describe religion as a key factor for peace-building: religious actors have some distinctive features that make them particularly valuable as peace-building agents. In her edited publication, *Bridge or Barrier*, ter Haar argues that "... religious actors tend to enjoy institutional legitimacy, have an available methodology, and possess the structures and networks necessary for the mobilization of people" (Ter Haar and Busuttil 2005). In addition, she expresses concern about the fact that insufficient attention is paid to the non-material aspects of social change: "[t]he spiritual dimension of peace-building is largely neglected by secularists, who consider this more as a technical process" (ibid.). Religious actors can therefore play a positive role in a post-conflict setting by combining spiritual guidance with organizational capacity.

However, religious peace-building is far from being a monolith exercise. Appleby (2003) emphasizes that there is a clear ambivalence: on the one hand, it is important to note that "with the advent of [...] coalitions across religious, cultural and geographic boundaries, unprecedented possibilities arise for developing the peace-building skills of religiously inspired actors." On the other hand, "too many religious leaders continue to pursue narrow sectarian or ethnic agendas, think only of the needs and rights of their own people and fail to oppose the demonization of the other". The literature therefore seems to suggest that religious

actors should be considered with some caution, but policy-makers should also acknowledge the potential for religion to build a sustainable peace.

A recent study by the Netherlands Institute of International Relations ‘Clingendael’ and the Salam Institute for Peace and Justice, entitled *Faith-Based Peace-Building: Mapping and Analysis of Christian, Muslim and Multi-Faith Actors* (Bouta, Kadayifci-Orellana and Abu-Nimer 2005), took these notions as a starting point and confirmed the need to take into account the role of faith-based actors in peace-building. It shows that a number of international faith-based actors have contributed positively to peace and observes that these actors have been engaged in a wide range of peace-building activities in both ‘religious’ and ‘non-religious’ conflict settings. The study concludes that faith-based actors tend to have certain specific, although not unique, strengths and weaknesses in terms of peace-building, and urges donor agencies to increasingly recognize and utilize their peace-building potential. It further recommends conducting more specific case studies in order to create better insights into the possible peace-building contributions of national faith-based actors. The present study is based on this recommendation.

The choice for Sudan

In line with the above findings, this follow-up study aims to conduct a mapping exercise on faith-based actors in Sudan’s peace process. In the context of Sudan, there is little doubt that these actors¹ play an important role in the socio-political playing field. However, detailed information on their impact on the ongoing peace process is limited, and there is a need for more in-depth knowledge about the situation in Sudan.

On 19 January 2005, the (northern) National Congress Party (NCP) and the (southern) Sudanese People’s Liberation Movement (SPLM) signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). After years of negotiations, the parties had produced a 300-page document, which currently provides the ‘road map’ to a sustainable peace in Sudan. It entails a pre-interim period (which was up to August 2005), and a transitional period of six years with national elections due in 2008, and a referendum in the South in favour of or against separation in 2011.

At the time of writing, some 18 months into the peace agreement, major issues remain unresolved and political tensions are far from over. Political struggles at the top level (in Khartoum, and to a lesser extent in Juba) centre on the speedy implementation of the CPA, including the distribution of government positions and the functioning of the various joint monitoring missions. In addition, there is growing concern about the safeguarding of the peace agreement. Distrust reigns on both sides, and the signatory parties are increasingly working along parallel rather than joint lines. The NCP is dragging its feet about all major provisions that yield power to the SPLM, and in turn the SPLM is busy creating a fully separate state apparatus in the South, including an independent network of diplomatic missions abroad. Joint action is restricted to a minimum, and where it does happen, there are significant sections within both parties that strongly disagree with it.²

¹ For the purpose of this report, the terms ‘faith-based actors’ and religious actors’ are used interchangeably.

² For example, Vice-President Taha attended the commemoration service for the late Dr Garang in Khartoum on 30 July 2006, as the only representative of the NCP. On the SPLM side, the public statements regarding Darfur made by their own Foreign Minister, Lam Akol, do not represent the official SPLM view.

Even though very few voices dismiss the notion that the CPA is the cornerstone of the peace process in Sudan, there is the risk that political leaders will increasingly ignore the agreement in a bid to preserve the status quo. It is in this context that religion comes in as a current and potential factor. In a country where the vast majority of the population is actively religious, how do religious communities and their spiritual leaders deal with a society that is in the midst of political transition? How do these communities and their networks affect the peace process, and how can they contribute to making peace bring real benefits to the people?

Objectives

This study aims to provide insights into the role that faith-based actors can play in the ongoing peace process in Sudan, and has pursued four objectives: first, to identify and briefly describe the main religious actors (and their activities) in Sudan; second, to analyse whether and why these religious actors have (or have not) been involved in the Sudanese peace process; third, to assess their activities' impact on the peace process; fourth, to present recommendations as to how donors should approach the wide spectrum of religious actors in the country.

Research perspective

The study is based on the need for greater in-depth knowledge about a certain type of actor in the Sudanese peace process. As stated earlier, the presence of numerous religious actors in post-conflict settings provides a relevant starting point for research into these actors' involvement, impact and potential contribution to peace. However, one qualification should be noted regarding the research perspective. When studying post-conflict settings, one needs to take into account two key options for international engagement. On the one hand, donors can opt to support positive elements within a peace process – in which case research needs to be carried out to identify entry points at the supporting end of the continuum. Alternatively, donors can choose to focus on the containment of (potential) spoilers in order to safeguard peace implementation. In the latter case, research would focus on the spoiler end of the continuum.³ This research is based on the first, and aims to answer the given questions in the light of a supportive policy.

Methodology

The present study was carried out by the Conflict Research Unit (CRU) of the Clingendael Institute, in collaboration with the University of Khartoum. The project itself is part of a larger research programme for the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). From the outset, this study was supposed to be limited in both (geographical) scope and time. The research project was furthermore designed as a combined desk and field study. Together with the University of Khartoum, the Clingendael Institute prepared an initial overview of key religious actors in Sudan. For this purpose, the research team selected a representative sample of the faith-based actors in Sudan and conducted a total of 24 personal interviews with their representatives. Both in Khartoum and Juba, the selection was based on the need for diversity: in order to produce a valid mapping report that would provide sufficient insights into both current and potential developments, and the research team strove to include as many different types of faith-based actors as possible. The selection was therefore based on: size (staff,

³ As, for example, with post-9/11 anti-terrorism research.

members, followers), importance (influential, opposition-minded, pro-dissident) and target groups (refugees, youth, women, own constituencies). Thus the sample enabled analysis of a broad range of actors within the Sudanese peace-building landscape. In order to validate the information obtained from the respondents, the research team held an additional 13 interviews with ‘non-aligned’ professionals working with or in the field of religious peace-building.⁴ The field visit, which took place from 26 July to 14 August 2006, generated substantial information on these religious actors and their involvement in the Sudanese peace process. A first version of this report was presented on 18 September 2006, during a meeting of the ‘Knowledge Forum – Religion and Conflict’ (a joint initiative of Dutch non-governmental organizations [NGOs] and the Netherlands MFA). Based on the comments received during that meeting, the report was then further revised and finalized.

Scope of the study

The selection of actors is a key aspect of this study. Given the inter-connectedness of religion with most other aspects of Sudanese society, there is a need to clarify what kind of actors we are talking about. For the purpose of this study, a ‘religious actor’ is defined as a **national, faith-based organization or an individual religious person with an organization-like network in Sudan**. According to this definition, this study is limited to faith-based NGOs and individual religious leaders operating at the country level.⁵ The study *does not* include religious actors that only operate at the local or communal level; religious parties, individual religious politicians, and state institutions dealing with religion and religious affairs were also excluded from the sample.

Limitations

Given the above definitions and the scope of the study, it is important to keep in mind some of the consequences when reading the findings of this report. First, this study is based on a sample of actors in Khartoum and Juba. Second, it proved to be difficult to properly separate religious actors from the political playing field; in reality, it is often impossible to separate religious actors from political actors. Third, the sample of respondents includes only those actors working with a peace-building mandate and therefore shows a bias towards a positive (supporters) rather than a negative (spoilers) impact on peace. Lastly, the study is largely based on secondary sources. The field research did not allow for visits outside the two capitals in order to independently confirm some of the data obtained.

Reading outline

This report consists of six chapters. Chapter 2 describes the main religions in Sudan. Chapter 3 presents the key religious actors and gives an overview of how each of the actors relates to

⁴ The following independent experts were interviewed during the field research: Einas Ahmed (Centre d’Etudes de Documentation et Economiques – CEDEJ), Rania Hadra (UN Mission in Sudan – UNMIS), Dr Paul Wani (Khartoum University), John Young (independent), Fabienne Hara (UNMIS), Noah Solomon (PhD candidate), George Kinga (Presidential Adviser to GOSS President Salva Kiir), Dr Haroon (Presidential Adviser to Bashir), Jerome Surur (Norwegian Church Aid), Philip Jada (Presidential Adviser to GOSS President Salva Kiir), Diane de Guzman (UNMIS Juba), Kamuhira Hussien Ahmed (Islamic Relief).

⁵ As a national mapping exercise, focusing on Sudan, this research project excludes international faith-based actors such as Islamic Relief Worldwide, Organization for Islamic Da’wa (MDI) and Christian Aid.

the CPA peace process.⁶ Chapter 4 discusses the impact of the selected religious actors on the peace process. Chapter 5 highlights some of the main challenges and opportunities. Chapter 6 then presents donor considerations for dealing with faith-based actors in the Sudanese peace process.

⁶ For a detailed description of the various faith-based actors discussed in this study, please refer to Annex I.

2 Major religions in Sudan

Introduction⁷

At the present time, Sudan presents a religiously divided/pluralistic society. It is estimated that more than 70% of the Sudan's present population are Sunni Muslims. About 11% are practitioners of indigenous tribal religions and about 19% are Christians.⁸ The Muslim population is concentrated in the North, while the Christians and the practitioners of indigenous religions live in the South or in the Nuba Mountains and the Blue Nile areas in central Sudan.⁹ Importantly, the media's shorthand simplification of 'Muslim-Arab North, Christian-African south' is inaccurate. There are thousands of Muslims in the South of Sudan, and millions of Christians and believers in indigenous religions in the North. At least two million southern Christians have settled in northern urban areas as internally displaced persons (IDPs), as a result of the civil war. Also, there are long-established Coptic Christians who share urban space with Muslims in the North. Growing adherence to Christianity is reported among southerners, Nuba and other groups in Sudan.¹⁰ Such growth could have been at the expense of the indigenous religions. Statistics on religion show, on the one hand, a continuous decline in the percentage of adherents of the indigenous religions, from 20.8% (of the total population) in the 1970s, to 16.7% in the 1980s, and to 11% since the 1990s. The percentage of adherents of Christianity, on another hand, has risen continuously, from 7.2% in the 1970s, to 8.3% in the 1980s, and to 19% since the 1990s. The adherence to Sunni Islam has fluctuated between 70% and 75% since the 1970s.¹¹

Approximately 90% of the Muslims live in the North. The remainder live in particular along the historical dividing line between Arab and Nilotic ethnic groups in the South. Most Sudanese in the South are Christians or, to a decreasing extent, practise indigenous religions. It is important to note that figures will continue to change: firstly because of the increasing influx of Christian returnees (both from within and outside Sudan) to the South, secondly because of the growing number of both Christian and Muslim converts from among people of the indigenous faiths.

Islam

The Muslim population is almost entirely Sunni, but is divided into many different groups. The majority adhere to either 'Sufi' or 'non-Sufi' doctrines. The Sufi doctrines, which are followed by all the Sufi groups – the Khatmiyya, the Tijaniyya, the Gadriyya, etc. – are more historically

⁷ This introduction is based on: *The Dynamics of Interpretation of Textual Islam in Northern Sudan: Case Study among the Rural and Urban Population of Shendi Province*, PhD thesis, University of Khartoum (2004), and: *Fifty Years After Independence: Sudan's Quest for Peace, Stability and Identity*, paper presented at the 7th International Sudan Studies Conference in Bergen, Norway, 6–8 April 2006.

⁸ It should be kept in mind, however, that all estimates are unreliable and subject to the political agenda of the respective source.

⁹ <http://www.persecution.org/Countries/Sudan.html> (accessed: 8 April 2004).

¹⁰ <http://www.sudanupdate.org/DATA/stats.html> (accessed: 8 April 2004).

¹¹ <http://www.religionstatistics.bravehost.com/afrelen.html>; http://www.adherents.com/adhloc/Wh_310.html (accessed: 8 April 2004).

and socially rooted in the area than the non-Sufi doctrines. They are older, have more followers and have had a more profound effect on the communities where they prevail. The non-Sufi doctrines are peculiar to the Ansar Al-Mahdi, whose numbers are currently falling. They are peculiar also to various small groups that have emerged in recent times but are now rapidly expanding, such as the Ansar El-Sunna and the Islamic Movement.¹²

Christianity

Christians account for some 19% of the total population. There are sizeable Christian communities in northern cities, principally in areas where there are large numbers of IDPs.¹³ Moreover, there are small but long-established populations of Greek Orthodox and Coptic Rite Christians around Khartoum and some other northern cities. Among the Christian denominations, Catholics estimate their membership at 5 to 7 million; Episcopalians estimate they have 4 to 5 million followers. The Presbyterian Church is the third-biggest denomination and is currently expanding its activities all over Sudan. The Coptic community believe that its members in the past numbered between 400,000 and 500,000, mostly located throughout the north in Khartoum, North Darfur and the Nuba Mountains but, mainly for economic reasons, most have left the country or converted to Islam. The Copts currently estimate there are some 20,000 followers all over the country. The Greek community, once 25,000-strong, has been reduced to approximately 500. The African Inland Church and the Sudanese Church of Christ are worth mentioning, owing to their significant support bases in the Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile Region respectively. There are also other Christian groups with smaller followings, including the Armenian Apostolic, Ethiopian Orthodox, Evangelical, Lutheran and Pentecostal Churches.

Indigenous religions

Most adherents of local religious systems live in southern Sudan and make up an estimated 5–10% of the total population. Even though numbers are on the decrease, it should be noted that indigenous belief systems still enjoy a large degree of authority in virtually all parts of Sudan and therefore have significant influence at the local level. This holds particularly true for issues regarding healthcare, etc. However, they are not centrally organized and indigenous practices seldom reach beyond regional boundaries.

¹² Ali, Osman M. Osman (2004) *The Dynamics of Interpretation of Textual Islam in Northern Sudan: Case Study among the Rural and Urban Population of Shendi Province*, pp. 7–8.

¹³ Because of displacement, it is suggested that about 6 million Christians live in the South (out of an estimated total of 8 million).

3 Religious actors in Sudan's peace process

Religious diversity in Sudan: living apart together?

Religious activities abound in Sudan. NGOs, semi-governmental organizations, political groupings and individual leadership personalities all use support from religious communities. Following the definitions used for this study, there are a total of 131 national NGOs with a religious identity working in the Sudan.¹⁴ In addition, many Muslim leaders and Christian authorities can rely on and make active use of a network with an organized structure. As explained in Chapter 2, traditional religions do not feature in this research's overview, owing to the different nature of their organizational structures.

In Sudan, peace has various meanings. Some 18 months after the peace accords were officially signed by the SPLM and NCP, there is little doubt about the impact that 21 years of war have had on the country. Religious identity is certainly of fundamental significance in relation to a lasting solution to the conflict, but nonetheless it is also central to the causes of conflict. Religious discrimination contributed to the war and led to deep feelings of mistrust between the various communities, especially (but certainly not exclusively) in the case of the Christian–Muslim divide. These feelings have been nurtured and utilized over the years by both sides and it is unlikely that they will subside in the short or medium term. Rather, for many, peace in Sudan entails the freedom to live apart, rather than together with 'the others': in the North, Christians and Muslims seldom mingle and they live in separate spheres; in the South, Muslims are generally viewed with anxiety and mistrust. Notable exceptions can be observed in regions close to the border between North and South Sudan, where a multi-religious environment has led to the different communities mixing together over time.

This reality stands in sharp contrast to the reconciliatory tone of the peace agreement. In theory, the CPA strives for unity in Sudan, and emphasizes religious diversity right across the country. It is therefore no surprise that – on a governmental level – inter-religious dialogue is very much in vogue. Most religious leaders take a conciliatory stance and actively engage in inter-religious meetings and workshops. However, the question remains: do they just 'talk the talk' or do they also 'walk the walk' of creating a more inter-religious society? Does the merely take the form of a polite exchange of contradictory religious-political convictions? Apart from a current trend – and dire need – for reconciliation within Sudanese society and between the different religions, there is another reason for examining the range of faith-based actors: their networks and resources address the needs of their communities all over the country – ranging from water, sanitation, education and childcare to mediation between conflicting parties.

¹⁴ All NGOs have to register with the Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) in Khartoum. However, there are one or two examples of organizations that are not registered. For example, the registration of Sudan Aid expired in 1984, and the strict conditions under which registration had to be renewed made the Catholic Church decide to operate without registration. Another notable exception is the Organization of Islamic Da'wa (MDI).

Mapping and a short description of selected religious actors

The following sections present a short description of the actors included in the sample, and Table 1 gives an overview of the presented data. Reflecting the above considerations regarding the separate developments in northern and southern Sudan, the mapping section of this report is divided into two parts. It discusses the situation in Khartoum and Juba respectively, and addresses the activities of nationwide actors where relevant. For a more detailed description of the individual actors, please refer to Annex I.

The situation in Khartoum

Religious actors in Khartoum cover a wide spectrum and represent an extensive socio-political network, including government elites, opposition movements, and religious groupings that have affiliated faith-based NGOs. As for the latter, there are three types of faith-based NGOs. First, there are government-funded or government-supported NGOs ('GONGOs'), established to work on religious and/or humanitarian projects. Second, every major political (Islamic) opposition party has an affiliated organization that serves as its humanitarian wing ('OPPONGOs'). Despite the fact that most of these NGOs are, on paper, independent, the political aspect of their activities should not be underestimated. As described by the representatives of one of the major opposition-linked NGOs: "these are our tribes, members, voters!"¹⁵ Third, there are a number of Christian NGOs ('CHRONGOS') that are directly linked to one or other of the major church communities. Most of them have been providing externally funded humanitarian services for IDPs in Khartoum or for communities in southern Sudan.

The relationship of religious actors in Khartoum with the political arena

The Islamist Agenda of the ruling NCP has had a significant impact on the religious landscape in Khartoum. Given its stated goal of Islamizing the entire territory of Sudan, there has never been any doubt about where the authorities saw their natural partners in governance. Many Muslim religious authorities are part of, or advisers to, the government, and popular Muslim orders are represented through high-ranking officials in the government apparatus. As a consequence, Muslim orders and their individual leaders have always played a central role in shaping public opinion and political decision-making regarding the ordering of society. Most of them are based on or have links with religious communities and make active use of their religious constituencies in political debate. The countless opposition movements – be they religious or secular – are struggling to have a say in national politics and suffer from the effects of the current 'appointee-ism'. Christian communities remain a minority and have been working hard (and far from successfully in many cases) to secure their followers' freedoms and rights. In this web of religious actors and their stakes within the political playing field, tacit support and tactical allies are of crucial importance. The NCP regime has set the tone by setting up supportive networks, and other movements have followed suit. Today, Khartoum has a highly diverse array, and unknown number, of religious and semi-religious groupings, which cover anything from relief work to proselytism. Yet not all of these organizations are genuine; sometimes they merely serve as a means of achieving a

¹⁵ Interview with the authors, 2 August 2006

different goal.¹⁶ Objectives, funding, mandates and activities are not always clear-cut and supposedly ‘hard data’ should be considered with caution.

The situation in Juba

The southern capital is radically different from Khartoum. A medium-sized town with virtually no infrastructure¹⁷ and only an estimated 200,000 inhabitants, the city and its surroundings have a far smaller number of religious actors, as the variety of Christian churches and Muslim orders is limited – far more so than in the metropolitan capital of the North. The religious groups active in southern Sudan can be divided into two types of actor. First, there are those operating in the territories formerly under the control of the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) (such as Juba, as a garrison town). Second, there are those that have been working in areas that were liberated by the SPLM during the war. As far as the latter are concerned, NGOs used to operate from outside Sudan, especially in Nairobi or Kampala. In the case of these organizations/networks, numerous efforts are under way to shift operations to South Sudan’s new capital. National faith-based NGOs are particularly active in the field of emergency relief, but are trying adapt to the post-conflict needs of the communities. As one respondent put it: “The national NGOs are in a transition from relief to more sustainable engagement; however, this is a very slow process.”¹⁸ For the time being, there is still a great need for relief work and, given the expected volume of returnees, it is reasonable to assume that assistance to these home-coming families will become more central to the work of many faith-based NGOs. In terms of reconciliation and healing, religious communities can – and do – play a role in both inter-religious dialogue (especially in major towns like Juba where Muslims are perceived to have been collaborators with the enemy) and inter-tribal dialogue (especially in rural areas). It should be noted that interaction between Christian and Muslims is at a bare minimum level at the time of writing this report; however, the above-mentioned initiatives to set up a National Inter-Religious Council might lead to a more structural inter-faith dialogue in the South.

The relationship of religious actors in Juba with the political arena

The Christian communities are prominent players in southern Sudan. Despite the official separation of state and religion, there is no doubt that informal structures and personal linkages form a vast web of political and religious power-brokers. The major Christian communities – the Catholic and the Episcopal Churches – take an active stand in promoting the CPA along with the SPLM leadership and its pro-CPA rhetoric. Unfortunately, this does not always work in favour of an open, reconciliatory atmosphere between Christians and non-Christians. In particular the Muslim community in Juba feels neglected and discriminated against. Public prayers at times even openly attack Muslims and tend to encourage a new, Christian South Sudan. In fact, many Muslims feel that they are being treated as northerners,

¹⁶ In case of the government, many NGOs have been founded and are funded by the NCP. Their activities reportedly include anything from genuine charity to financial assistance to para-military groupings. For the opposition, establishing NGOs in many cases can serve as a pretext for political activities in several regions, and as a means of evading strict government control.

¹⁷ For example, Juba currently has only one major tarred road, electricity cuts are frequent, and general access to water supplies is limited.

¹⁸ Interview with the authors, 3 August 2006

as the former enemy.¹⁹ In addition to their difficult situation in daily life, Muslims are not being consulted during political decision-making: government positions have seldom gone to Muslims and the Department of Religious Affairs²⁰ has appointed only non-Muslims as staff members, while at the same time various prominent Church activists have been given positions in the new government.²¹ In addition, it should be noted that Christian denominations are often based on and make use of people's ethnic origins, notably the Presbyterian Church (Nuer) and the Episcopal Church (Dinka).²² All in all, Juba today reveals a rather exclusionary attitude on the part of the SPLM cadres towards their non-Christian compatriots, and the Christian communities play their part in encouraging pro-Christian, rather than genuinely reconciliatory attitudes.

Revisiting faith-based peace-building in Sudan: who does what?

This section gives an overview of the main areas of involvement for the various actors. Even though this study draws on the categorization introduced in Clingendael's earlier mapping exercise, it presents some new aspects to faith-based peace-building. In order to reflect the situation in Sudan, the research team modified the original list of activities (see numbers 1–6, below) by adding three other types, namely: **proselytizing**, **preaching** and **relief services** (numbers 7–9). On this basis, the following typology was adopted for the present study:²³

1. **Advocacy:** Religiously motivated advocacy is primarily concerned with empowering the weaker party(ies) in a conflict situation, restructuring relationships, and transforming unjust social structures. It aims at strengthening the representativeness and in particular the inclusiveness of governance.
2. **Intermediary roles/mediation:** These activities relate to the task of peacemaking, and focus on bringing the parties together to resolve their differences and reach a settlement. Intermediary roles played by faith-based actors generally focus on good offices, facilitation, conciliation and mediation, usually in some combination.
3. **Observing:** In a conflict situation, religious observers provide a watchful, compelling physical presence that can discourage violence, corruption, human rights violations, or other behaviour that is deemed threatening and undesirable. Observers can be engaged in passive activities such as fact-finding, enquiry, investigation, or research.
4. **Education:** Education and training activities aim to sensitize a society to inequities in the system, to foster an understanding of and build advocacy skills, conflict resolution, pluralism and democracy, or to promote peace, healing and reconciliation. For this study, the research team decided to expand this category into **educational and health services**. This was in order to reflect the active involvement of many faith-based actors in medical institutions and related services.
5. **Transitional justice:** Especially in the post-conflict phase, activities have been undertaken to pursue accountability for war atrocities or human rights abuses. Although faith-based actors may have been less involved in prosecuting individual

¹⁹ This situation reflects the status of Juba as a garrison town, where Muslims were generally regarded as collaborators. In other parts of southern Sudan, the relationship between Christian and Muslim communities has a different character.

²⁰ Part of the South Sudan Ministry of Culture and Gender.

²¹ This holds especially true for former staff of the New Sudan Council of Churches.

²² Even though the tribal link should not be underestimated – in particular when taking account of local peace-building processes – further elaboration of this aspect lies beyond the scope of this study.

²³ This section is largely based on Bouta, Kadayifci-Orellana and Abu-Nimer (2005) *Faith-Based Peace-Building: Mapping and Analysis of Christian, Muslim and Multi-Faith Actors*, p. 7 ff.

perpetrators or providing reparation to conflict survivors, they are often active in truth-seeking initiatives to address past abuse.

6. **Intra-faith and inter-faith dialogue:** While some dialogues take place in conflict settings and relate to peace, many others do not. Only those faith-based actors that organize dialogues with the aim of contributing to the national peace process are mentioned in this category.
7. **Proselytizing:** Many faith-based actors place great emphasis on their missionary role and structure their organizational capacity accordingly. Building churches and mosques in new areas, supporting new converts and reaching out to non-religious members of society are often important aspects of their work.
8. **Preaching:** To most faith-based actors (other than faith-based NGOs), regular prayers and related activities are a significant part of their identity. Preaching connects its members in their faith and elicits commitment within and for the community.
9. **Relief services:** During violent conflict, government structures collapse, and faith-based actors are often the only ones able to provide basic services. Many of them actively engage in relief services for people in need (medical assistance, food aid, etc.).

The case of Sudan reveals a diverse peace-building landscape. All of the selected faith-based actors are involved in multiple activities,²⁴ ranging from the more internally oriented (e.g., preaching to their community members) to outreach activities (e.g. advocacy). Among the total sample of 24 faith-based actors, 11 work in advocacy, 8 engage in mediation, 8 see themselves as observers and 12 are active in educational work. Regarding the category **transitional justice**, the findings of this follow-up research made it clear that in today's Sudan, there is limited or even no interest within religious communities in becoming actively involved in transitional justice: only one of the selected faith-based actors engages in transitional justice (the Burhaniyya Order; see also Table 1). As one respondent observed, "It is too early to talk about justice in Sudan."²⁵ Out of the selected actors, 9 conduct intra- or inter-faith dialogue and 10 pursue an expansionary agenda through proselytizing; for 12 faith-based actors in the sample, preaching plays a central role in their work; and finally, 9 actors provide relief services to the needy.

Considering the findings of this mapping, an ambivalent picture emerges. On the one hand, there is a tendency for faith-based actors to focus on activities aimed at the own religious community (9 out of 24; see also Table 1) and engage in related activities such as preaching (12 out of 24), educational work (12) and proselytizing (10). On the other hand, this sample also seems to suggest that few of the faith-based actors maintain a narrow focus and instead tend to embrace a number of different activities in pursuit of a wider social agenda.

²⁴ With the notable exception of the Red Crescent Society, which has a clear focus on providing relief services.

²⁵ Interview, 1 August 2006.

Table 1: Selected faith-based peace-building actors in Sudan

No	Name	Faith	Size / Staff / Budget	K/J ²⁶	Area of Operation	Primary Target Groups	Core Activities (9 types) ²⁷
1	Sudan Inter-Religious Council	Inter-faith	46 members in General Assembly (50/50 Muslim/Christian)	K	National, predominantly active in Khartoum	46 Council members	1,2,3,6
2	Sudan Council of Churches	Christian	12 member churches	K/J	Predominantly Khartoum and South, but also other areas in North	Member churches	1,2,3,6
3	Catholic Church	Christian	5–6 million followers	K/J	North and esp. South Sudan	Own religious community	1,2,3,4,6,7,8
4	Episcopal Church of Sudan (ECS)	Christian	4–5 million followers	K/J	North and esp. South Sudan, 24 dioceses	Own religious community	1,2,3,4,6,7,8
5	Presbyterian Church of Sudan	Christian	Third-largest Christian denomination in Sudan	K/J	Southern Sudan, Greater Upper Nile	Own religious community	7,8
6	Coptic Orthodox Church	Christian	10,000–20,000 followers	K	Khartoum and major urban centres in North	Own religious community	7,8
7	Al Hidaya Islamic Organization for Da'wa	Muslim	3 executive staff and 7 special secretariats plus volunteers and project staff	K	Active in 11 states of northern Sudan, including Darfur, Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan	Muslims and IDPs	4,7
8	Ansar Affairs Corporation	Muslim	Large group of followers, no estimate	K	Northern Sudan	Own religious community	1,3,4,8
9	Ansar Al-Mahdi Charity Organization	Muslim	Consists of 5 separate NGOs working in different sectors	K	Northern Sudan, expanding to South	Different according to organization: Muslims, women and IDPs	2,3,4,7,8,9
10	Sudan Red Crescent Society	Inter-faith	20,000 volunteers in Sudan, 400 in southern Sudan	K/J	20 states, 6 more in South to come in near future	Sudanese and people living in Sudan	9

²⁶ Operational presence in K=Khartoum / J=Juba

²⁷ 1=Advocacy, 2=Intermediary roles/Mediation, 3=Observing, 4=Educational and health services, 5=Transitional justice, 6=Intra-faith and inter-faith dialogue, 7= Proselytizing, 8=Preaching, 9=Relief and other services

11	Salsabeel Charity Organization	Muslim	About 50 staff members in Greater Khartoum	K	3 centres in and around Khartoum	Newly converted Muslims and orphans, 1,000 beneficiaries	4,8,9
12	Republican Brothers	Muslim	c. 1,500 active members	K	Urban areas in North	Intellectuals, wider public	3,8
13	Sufi (Sammaniya Order)	Muslim	Large group of followers, no estimate	K	Northern Sudan	Own religious community	1,2,6,7,8
14	Sufi (Burhaniyya Order)	Muslim	Large group of followers, no estimate	K	Northern Sudan	Own religious community	5,6,7,8
15	Ansar El-Sunna	Muslim	Large group of followers, no estimate	K	North and South	Own religious community	6,7,8,9
16	Ma'azin Women Women's Charitable Organization	Muslim	20 full-time staff	K	Khartoum and surroundings	IDPs in Khartoum	2,4,9
17	New Sudan Council of Churches	Christian	6 member churches	J	Southern Sudan, especially in 'SPLM-liberated territories' during the war	Member churches	1,4,6,9
18	CEAS	Christian	Consortium of 5 umbrella organizations	J	Southern Sudan	Local communities	1,4,5,9
19	Sudan Aid	Christian	Major operation in Khartoum, 30 full-time staff members in Juba	K/J	North and South	Local communities	1,4,9
20	Muslim Community	Muslim	Minority in South, significant presence only in major towns	J	Major urban centres in South	Own religious community	1,2,3,4,6,7,8
21	Nuba Mountains Organization for Development	Muslim	Considers all Nuba people to be members, 780 active council members	K	All states of northern Sudan, except 3 states of greater Darfur	Nuba people inside and outside Nuba Mountains area	4,7,8,9

4 Impact on the peace process

Introduction

Chapter 3 introduced a list of the various activities in which Sudanese faith-based actors are currently engaged. In order to assess the role of faith-based actors in the national peace process, this chapter looks in more detail at the impact of those activities. The previous *Clingendael* study identified “multiple contributions to peace-building”, (Bouta, Kadayifci-Orellana and Abu-Nimer 2005: 35 ff) clustered into nine broad categories.²⁸ However, this original clustering does not reflect the situation in Sudan.

First, because the ninth category (ability to connect with faith-based communities and others worldwide, see Annex II) specifically addresses an international aspect and therefore does not match with the objective to map national faith-based actors. Second, because the nine categories of ‘contributions to peace-building’ refer to the work of philanthropic organizations (such as international NGOs) and do not take account of alternative types of motivation that lead national faith-based actors to become engaged in peace-building: as Scott Appleby argues, religious actors are not necessarily religious peace-builders. The majority of religious actors will probably never be engaged in active peace-building; some will be indifferent to peace-building, and at the most will take a stand against extremist religious actors and against the use of violence in the name of religion. Some, however, will also remain against peace-building and in support of religious violence in situations of oppression and injustice. In other words, one can expect supporters, passive sideliners and spoilers (Appleby 2001: 821–840). This, to a certain degree, also applies to faith-based actors in Sudan.

For the purpose of this study, the original nine have therefore been modified into eight new categories in order to inform a more ‘neutral’ assessment. These eight categories are based on the notion of ‘impact on the peace process’ rather than ‘contribution to peace-building’, as illustrated in the right-hand column of the table below.

²⁸ For a more detailed description of these nine categories, please refer to Annex II.

	Clingendael Study 2005	Sudan Case Study 2006
	‘contribution to peace-building’	‘impact on peace process’
1	Altering behaviours, attitudes, negative stereotypes and mindsets of Christian, Muslim and non-faith-based participants	Altering behaviours, attitudes and stereotypes
2	Healing of trauma and injuries as well as rehumanizing the ‘other’	Dealing with post-conflict problems
3	Contributing to more effective dissemination of ideas such as democracy, human rights, justice, development and peace-building	Public dissemination
4	Enlisting committed people from a wide pool because of their wide presence in society and broad community base	Enlisting committed people
5	Challenging traditional structures, such as the perceived role of women in society	(New) interpretation of traditional structures
6	Reaching out to governments, effecting policy changes, and reaching out to youth	Reaching out to governments
7	Mediating between conflicting parties; encouraging reconciliation, inter-faith dialogue, disarmament, demilitarization and reintegration	Acting as intermediary between conflicting parties
8	Encouraging reconciliation, inter-faith dialogue, disarmament, demilitarization and reintegration	Facilitating societal processes around post-conflict state-building
[9]	Ability to connect with faith-based communities and others worldwide	[Not applicable]

For various reasons, Appleby’s categorization into supporters, passive sideliners and spoilers is problematic. Sudan’s ‘road map’ to peace – the Comprehensive Peace Agreement – is still in its early stages and nearly all faith-based actors acknowledge its potential value for a lasting peace. As a consequence, active spoiling is (still) almost non-existent, passive sideliners include potential spoilers and active supporters, and supporters express their positive attitude in numerous ways. It therefore seems appropriate to further refine the possible categories in the case of Sudan, and to divide Sudan’s faith-based landscape into four separate categories.

Some religious actors are deeply involved in the Sudanese process and employ various activities to support the peace process. These faith-based actors we could label **active promoters**. Not all religious actors, however, have the means to contribute to the peace process as they would like to; they struggle in their quest to translate a positive attitude towards the CPA into concrete activities. These actors can be categorized **constrained contributors**. Others show a positive attitude towards the CPA, yet do not have a significant track record in peace-building, and for various reasons have remained passive observers of the peace process: the **silent supporters**. The last category identifies religious actors that have legitimate or other reasons to oppose the peace process. While these attitudes exist, it is too early in the Sudanese context to talk about spoilers per se. Rather, this report points to some of the grievances and legitimate criticism that are likely to contribute to spoiling behaviour. This category is called **potential spoilers**. In accordance with this categorization, this chapter places each of the presented actors into one of the four categories and assesses the impact on the peace process per actor. Table 2 provides an overview of the analysis.

Active promoters

Various faith-based actors in Sudan are actively engaged in the national peace-building process. Their activities range from relief services to political mediation, and they regard the CPA peace process as a landmark agreement that needs swift implementation. As this category of actors regards the CPA as a necessary but not sufficient precondition for sustainable peace in Sudan, they define their role in promoting the agreement as complementary to political transition. This is not to say that faith-based actors separate their peace-building work from political considerations. Some of these **active promoters** have been involved in the year-long CPA negotiations and continue to see their engagement as a contribution to a new, post-agreement political playing field.

The **Catholic Church** and **Sudan Aid**, as a closely affiliated NGO, are two of the most prominent – and largest – actors in this category. Their networks are vast and in both Khartoum and Juba the Catholic Church is well known as an active promoter of the peace process. Catholic leaders have managed to establish good working relationships with authorities with the SPLM as well as – to a lesser degree – in the North; its NGO activities have successfully drawn material and personal support from the Catholic constituencies.

Ansar Al-Mahdi is an interesting player in Khartoum's faith-based peace-building landscape. Given its close ties with Umma Party, the largest opposition party, the Ansar religious community has both the political and the material resources to carry out a range of peace-building activities. It will be interesting to see in the near future whether Ansar Al-Mahdi can achieve a balancing act between the political ambitions of its religious leaders on the one hand, and the community's peace-building activities on the other.

Church Ecumenical Action in Sudan (CEAS) is an NGO with a credible track record in facilitating its member churches in peace-building work all over Southern Sudan. It enjoys financial support from both the Sudan Council of Churches (SCC) and the New Sudan Council of Churches (NSCC), allowing for substantial activities all over southern Sudan. In addition, its international funding sources guarantee sustainable engagement and successful continuation of activities in the years to come. As CEAS has a strong focus on facilitating other actors in the field, its success is highly dependent on the peace-building programmes of its member churches.

Closely linked to CEAS, the **New Sudan Council of Churches (NSCC)** is the strongest network in the South and combines operational capacity with a great deal of legitimacy among the Christian majority. The Council currently faces major a transition, from exile-based to nationally-operating network. There are two main problems to be tackled in a post-agreement environment. First, the NSCC must find a way to expand its scope to become a national player. Second, it must engage more proactively with non-Christians in the South if it is not to alienate Muslims in the South. The first challenge could be met by means of the (long-expected) merger with the SCC; the second through the creation of a National Inter-Religious Council. The NSCC remains one of the few bodies that could make a difference – if will and resources are geared towards genuine reconciliation. Its reputation was damaged, however, by its wielding of political clout and by past cases of mismanagement. In order to gain greater legitimacy among the various communities in southern Sudan, it would first have

to loosen its leadership's ties with party politics and open up towards other faith-based communities.

Another faith-based actor in this category is the **Ma'azin Women's Charitable Organization**. Even though its mandate is limited in scope and staff members adopt a conservative, rather than a moderate stance, this charity does contribute to peace-building through a range of empowerment activities. The particular interest of the organization in working with and for women; given this, coupled with expansion plans and a clear commitment towards the CPA, the Ma'azin is likely to continue being an active promoter among the faith-based actors in Sudan.

Constrained contributors

The most prominent actor in this category is the **Sudan Inter-Religious Council (SIRC)**. Despite the commendable ideas behind its establishment, the SIRC's activities have been limited and insufficient to create a credible organization; its contribution to the peace process is therefore more potential than actual. As a government initiative, the Council has a hard time convincing critics of its genuine potential to bring together Muslims and Christians on an equal footing; and it will have to work even harder if it wants to overcome the widespread perception of being an NCP-inspired tool only, established in order to prevent others from doing genuine inter-faith reconciliation work. The SIRC's recent efforts at working together with the NSCC and the SCC on the Council's proposed replacement with a National Inter-Religious Council might change this perception. Given the above assessments, however, it should be noted that such a new umbrella body would be regarded with suspicion by various actors. If a National Inter-Religious Council is to be successful, it will have to tackle two related issues along the way: the inappropriate Muslim representation within the current SIRC structure, and the internal problems of the SCC's executive secretariat.

Another important actor is the **Sudan Council of Churches (SCC)**. The Council has been one of the most active faith-based actors in the run-up to the Naivasha peace process and during the negotiations. At the time, its vast network and well-organized structure played a key role in bringing together belligerents from North and South to join talks in Kenya. Although this achievement is still fresh in the memories of most Sudanese, and the SCC community network is still as large and valuable as it used to be, the SCC has suffered a tremendous blow to its reputation due to internal mismanagement. Political games between the member churches and their SCC representatives are recurrent and prevent the Council from being actively engaged in the CPA peace process. A radical reorganization of the executive secretariat would be useful; and some fresh ideas are the minimum requirement for the SCC to regain (at least part) of its past reputation. In this regard, the anticipated merger with the NSCC might be a valid way out of the organizational dilemma; such a move would create an opportunity to reshape existing structures.

The **Republican Brothers** have a rich history in shaping moderate political debate about Islam and Sudanese society, yet they currently find themselves in a political struggle with the defiant NCP authorities. Unless the political context changes, with a more liberal environment for faith-based actors, the Republican Brothers are unlikely to make a significant contribution to the peace process. Rather, one could expect individuals within (or at the margins of) its network to become actively engaged in the public debate about religious and political affairs.

Despite its considerable reach in various parts of Sudan, the **Presbyterian Church of Sudan** has limited influence on Khartoum's political playing field. Current activities include commendable attempts to contribute to CPA implementation within local communities. Also, the Church has been making an effort to join forces with other Christian denominations. In order to sustain and expand their peace-building ambitions in the near future, the Presbyterians require more structural funding.

The **Al-Hidaya Organization for Islamic Da'wa** is one among many Sudanese NGOs struggling for adequate funding. If the organization's efforts to reorient its operations through a network of like-minded charities succeed, Al-Hidaya will become part of an extensive network of Islamic Da'wa (Islamic teaching). Whether or not the organization's activities will contribute to good inter-Sudanese relations remains to be seen.

With its clear focus on the Nuba people, the **Nuba Mountains Organization for Development** can count on support from a useful network in a key region of Southern Sudan. However, the organization is in need of more structural funding and will have to find a more feasible way of carrying out its activities. As government funding seems out of the question for now, private donations and maybe international support will make up the bulk of the organization's resources.

Silent supporters

A number of faith-based actors prefer to keep a low profile in today's Sudan. This category of actors does not have a particular interest in playing an active role in the peace process and instead they focus their activities on their own constituencies. This attitude does not stem from a rejection of the CPA; on the contrary, they emphasize the importance of the peace process and regard the CPA as a major milestone for Sudan. However, these **silent supporters** prefer to maintain a neutral stance with regard the recent changes in the country.

The **Coptic Orthodox Church** is a case in point. The Coptic religious community has kept itself on the sidelines ever since it settled in the country and maintains a wait-and-see attitude towards political changes. During the war, with a greatly diminished group of followers, this strategy paid off; however, if peace does endure, the Coptic community might grow again as economic prospects improve.

The **Ansar El-Sunna** are a little more active than the Copts; however, they refrain from engaging in open debate and give preference to consistent support for the NCP authorities. Even though this give the Ansar El-Sunna a rather conservative complexion, their recent, more pragmatic view of Shari'a represents an interesting turning point (as it entails a departure from the belief that the whole of Sudan should be governed by Shari'a). One could therefore argue that Ansar El-Sunna have the potential to become a more prominent supporter of peace.

The **Sufi Burhaniyya Order** also adopts a rather passive stance in relation to the peace process. With a wide international network of believers, the Burhaniyya focus on their own constituencies inside and outside the country, and do not give priority to active engagement in Sudan's current transition. At the time of writing this report, there are no indications to suggest a more active role in peace-building.

The **Salsabeel Charity Organization** occupies a particular niche and contributes to the CPA indirectly by supporting its student beneficiaries. The peace process does not play a prominent role in its work and nor does it have any impact on its daily activities. Even though it expresses its full support for implementation of the CPA, the Organization's future activities are not likely to directly contribute to peace-building.

The **Sudan Red Crescent Society (SRCS)** is a peculiar yet interesting actor in this category. As mentioned before, the organization does not consider itself as faith-based and emphasizes the strict impartiality of the International Red Cross/Crescent. With the SRCS expanding all over Sudan, however, it will be interesting to see how the organization deals with local authorities in the South, its relationship with the GOSS and its structural links with the northern authorities.

Potential spoilers

Some 18 months into the CPA, open criticism of the peace agreement is rare among the religious communities. War fatigue among the Sudanese people, international pressure to implement the CPA and general support for the peace process from all sections of Sudanese society prevent many from voicing concern about problematic developments. While Sudan's various media outlets foster an increasingly lively debate about the shortfalls of the peace process, there is a more reticent attitude among faith-based actors. However, there are legitimate or perceived grievances among various faith-based actors, and some issues are likely to increase the number of **potential spoilers** in the future.

The **Muslim Community in Juba** struggles with being a religious and political minority in the South. As the CPA is put in place, the SPLM is working on the new structure of the semi-autonomous Government of Southern Sudan. During this process, the Muslim community in Juba has been silent about any form of discrimination against its followers, but there is a danger that this might change in the not-too-distant future. In particular, during election campaigns, Muslim grievances are likely to turn into more open criticism and, if not addressed adequately, into violent opposition to the CPA.

Even though these grievances among Juba's Muslims are not exclusively due to tensions between Christians and Muslims, Christian attitudes do play a prominent role in Muslims' increasing perception of neglect. Juba's **Episcopal Church** has been taking an ambivalent stand in this respect. On the one hand, its leaders commit themselves to the CPA and call for "unity of our people and our churches",²⁹ on the other hand there are various reports about the Church's leaders in Juba encouraging aggression against Muslims in the area. Such statements can compromise the work of other religious leaders and should be addressed by the relevant Christian authorities as a matter of urgency.

On a more intellectual level, the **Sufi Sammaniya Order** features in this category as a critical player behind the scenes. It emphasizes the negative consequences of the CPA and feels that Sudan is being pushed into compliance by international pressure from the West. Even though the Sammaniya do not actively engage in the public debate and have no clear agenda for working against the peace process, in the recent past they have been lobbying against pro-

²⁹ See also the statement of the Sudanese Heads of Churches, 19 August 2006, signed by Bishop Nathaniel Garanga of the Episcopal Church of Sudan.

Christian attitudes within government circles. Their good relationship with the NCP, coupled with the perception of Muslims being disadvantaged compared with the Christian minority, could lead to more serious tensions in Khartoum, in particular as far as the status of non-Muslims in the northern capital is concerned.

Table 2: Summary of the analysis of selected faith-based peace-building actors in Sudan – Khartoum

Actor	Core Activities (see also Table 1)	Vision on CPA	Impact on Peace (9 types) ³⁰	Category (4 categories)
<i>Faith-based peace-building actors in Sudan – Khartoum</i>				
Sudan Inter-Religious Council	1,2,3,6	For the CPA, it is crucial to make unity attractive	3,6,8	<u>Constrained contributor</u>
Sudan Council of Churches	1,2,3,6	CPA reflects the contributions of SCC's work during the negotiations and must be implemented	2,6,8	<u>Constrained contributor</u>
Catholic Church	1,2,3,4,6,7,8	Preaching reconciliation	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8	Active promoter
Episcopal Church of Sudan (ECS)	1,2,3,4,6,7,8	CPA generally supported, but reservations about 'Darfurization' of the CPA	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8	<i>Potential spoiler</i>
Presbyterian Church of Sudan	7,8	CPA can only be implemented if there is awareness and a culture of peace	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8	<u>Constrained contributor</u>
Coptic Orthodox Church	7,8	CPA is a good process and should be supported	4,6,7,8	Silent supporter
Al Hidaya Islamic Organization for Da'wa	4	CPA offers opportunity for peaceful co-existence, Islam can help achieve this	3,4,8	<u>Constrained contributor</u>
Sudan Red Crescent Society	9	CPA creates opportunity to reach more people in the South	2,4,8	Silent supporter

³⁰ 1=Altering behaviours, attitudes, stereotypes, 2=Dealing with post-conflict problems, 3=Public dissemination, 4=Enlisting committed people, 5=(New) interpretation of traditional structures, 6=Reaching out to governments, 7=Mediating between conflicting parties, 8=Facilitating societal processes

Salsabeel Charity Organization	4,8,9	Non-political, but problem of CPA is 1) limited human capacity in Sudan and 2) no genuine interest on part of GOSS to unite	1,2,3,4,8	Silent supporter
Ansar Al-Mahdi Charity Organization	2,3,4,7,8,9	CPA not yet implemented as required – more work needs to be done	2,4,5,6,7,8	Active promoter
Republican Brothers	3,8	CPA is a good opportunity for peace	1,3,4,5,8	<u>Constrained contributor</u>
Sufi (Sammaniya Order)	1,2,6,7,8	CPA can be dangerous for sustainable peace in Sudan	1,4,6,7,8	<i>Potential spoiler</i>
Ansar Affairs Corporation	1,3,4,8	CPA must be implemented, but is not yet comprehensive and must be complemented	2,3,4,6,7,8	Active promoter
Sufi (Burhaniyya Order)	6,7,8	CPA can only be implemented with a focus on spiritual guidance	1,4,6,7,8	Silent supporter
Ansar El-Sunna	6,7,8,9	100% satisfied with CPA	1,2,4,6,7,8	Silent supporter
Ma'azin Women [Women's] Charitable Organization	2,4,9	CPA comprehensive. Islamic education is key to contributing to national unity	1,2,4,5,6,8	Active promoter
Nuba Mountains Organization for Development	4,7,8,9	Criticism of the CPA is counter-productive; any attempt to spoil must be countered	1,2,4,7,8	Active promoter
Faith-based peace-building actors in Sudan – Juba				
Catholic Church	1,2,3,4,6,7,8	In order to implement CPA, preaching reconciliation is crucial	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8	Active promoter

Episcopal Church of Sudan (ECS)	1,2,3,4,6,7,8	“CPA is a good guide to protect us from the people in Khartoum”	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8	<i>Potential spoiler</i>
Sudan Council of Churches (SCC)	1,2,3,6	Working closely with sister organization NSCC to support CPA	6,7,8	<u>Constrained contributor</u>
New Sudan Council of Churches (NSCC)	1,4,6,9	CPA is a result of past engagement, now consolidation of NSCC needed to implement CPA	2,3,4,6,7,8	Active promoter
CEAS	1,4,5,9	CPA being secular is a good thing. But main challenge is whether parties adhere to this spirit	2,4,7,8	Active promoter
Sudan Aid	1,4,9	CPA must be supported but has led to too many, too high expectations	2,4,6,7,8	Active promoter
Muslim Community	1,2,3,4,6,7,8	CPA works against the Muslim community in Juba	1,2,4,7,8	<i>Potential spoiler</i>

5 Discussion: challenges and opportunities

Introduction

Before we turn to more concrete considerations for international engagement, it is useful to reflect on the above mapping exercise and discuss some of its implications. In comparison with Clingendael's earlier study, this report has made it clear that at the national level, faith-based actors can be deeply embedded in the political aspects of peace-building. When assessing their current and potential role in building peace, one should acknowledge the complex interlinkages that connect faith-based actors with other parts of society (for a graphical overview, see Annex II). Unlike international agents, which can always opt to disengage from providing support to local counterparts, national actors have to carefully take into account their room to manoeuvre in the country. However, outside actors, provided they are aware of the specific challenges and opportunities in the local context, can benefit from engaging with faith-based actors in an attempt to support a national peace-building process.

This study, although far from comprehensive, shows that Sudan's peace-building actors make up a highly complex network of individuals and organizations. It becomes clear that religious actors are intertwined with politics, and politics in turn is deeply entrenched in religious authorities' thinking. This includes Islam – which has been part of Sudan's political landscape since the fourteenth century – as well as Christianity – which plays an increasingly political role in southern Sudan. In other words, faith-based peace-building in Sudan is part of the political power game. As a consequence, some might argue that religious actors should not be supported by outside actors in their peace-building activities, as they are likely to act according to their own political agenda. Others might see these interlinkages with the political landscape as an added value that should be taken into account when designing donor policies. This section presents major challenges and opportunities that should be considered in the case of Sudan.

Religious actors and the CPA – major challenges

The above concerns set the tone for some of the issues that require careful consideration when talking about or engaging with faith-based actors. The implementation of the CPA is a political process, and stakes are high. These range from financial gains through wealth-sharing arrangements to political power in a post-election environment, and make it difficult for religious actors to play a constructive role; one can identify four major challenges to the ability of faith-based peace-building to make a difference during Sudan's transition:

Challenge 1: Continued manipulation of religious initiatives

Religion in Sudan is part of the political power game. This has been the case in the past and is likely to continue in the future. Between now and 2008, Sudan's authorities will have to navigate through a number of highly contentious issues, and political forces are likely to mobilize every support available to them. In the North, for example, the CPA provisions include several high-profile commissions, and amendments to legislation and the introduction

of new public legislation. In the South, the GOSS badly needs to of create a peace dividend and must work hard to make non-SPLM forces accept its newly established rule. Overall, donor funding is crucial, as well as a final agreement on the distribution of the national oil revenue. Then there is still the border issue in Abyei, and continuing tensions in the East and the Greater Upper Nile region, not to mention Darfur. Sudan will furthermore enter an election campaign period in 2007, when preparations start in the run-up to the elections scheduled for 2008. All these issues are far from easy to resolve and require all political actors to gain public support for their cause. In a country where more than 90 per cent of the population is actively involved in a religious community, it is safe to assume that politics will aim to manipulate these constituencies through a range of faith-based organizations.

Challenge 2: Dealing with regime restrictions

Notwithstanding recent improvements, civil society organizations still have to struggle with a highly restrictive environment. Faith-based actors of all beliefs operating from and within northern Sudan are subject to stringent monitoring and have to play by the rules of the game, as set by the government in Khartoum. These rules can range from guidelines for choosing the name of the organization (see Nuba Mountains Organization), bureaucratic hurdles to receiving concessions for land property (Presbyterian Church) to arbitrary arrests of staff members (Republican Brothers). It is unlikely that there will be any major change in this state of affairs, given the track record of the NCP authorities in maintaining their grip on civil society. This, coupled with some of the current post-CPA developments, such as the introduction of Shari'a law in Khartoum or a GOS-dominated Government of National Unity, will have an impact on faith-based actors. Christian actors in the North are likely to either adapt to the new circumstances, or gradually move to the South.³¹ Muslim actors, on the other hand, have fewer options. In the North, pro-government operations will continue unabated, while opposition-minded activities will be subject to regime control. In the South, Muslim actors will generally find circumstances equally difficult for operating freely in a Christian-dominated GOSS. All in all, restrictions are likely to remain and faith-based actors will have to find ways to work around or under these conditions.

Challenge 3: Muslim and Christian exclusivity

Religious actors in Sudan have in the past contributed to creating a divided rather than a united country. In post-CPA Sudan, both Muslims and Christians still tend to focus on their own constituencies before considering or engaging with other faith-based groupings. There are numerous efforts to initiate and maintain dialogue across religious divides, but these activities are rather marginal. There are still few such activities compared with own-faith initiatives and there is no joint goal that would stimulate the building of inter-faith bridges. So far, the post-CPA context has not created any of the conditions needed for this bridge-building.

Challenge 4: Dealing with the fact that CPA favours separation

One of the greatest challenges, however, lies in the CPA itself. This study has shown that almost all religious actors are willing to contribute to a culture of peace, non-violence and peaceful coexistence. When doing so, they contribute positively to the CPA and should be supported by outside actors such as the international community. This positive note does not take away the fact that, at the same time, many view the CPA as promoting southern independence. The very limited amount of joint governmental responsibilities (many of which

³¹ For example, the Copts are likely to adapt to the situation unfolding in Khartoum in an effort to secure business and trade; the Presbyterian Church is likely to expand into certain areas of southern Sudan.

are only agreed upon on paper) and a growing separation between governmental action in north and south in fact leaves little incentive for Southerners to vote for a united Sudan in 2011. In addition, as stated above, very few religious actors display genuine support for a multi-religious Sudan by building bridges to other religious communities. Furthermore, the growing tensions between the southern Muslim communities and the SPLM leadership are likely to worsen rather than improve. And as the existing grievances are fuelled by growing neglect and public intimidation of Muslims this will certainly lead to bitter campaigning in the run-up to the elections in 2008. In order for faith-based actors to play a meaningful role in promoting unity and reconciliation, a clear commitment to a *joint* peace process would be useful.

Religious actors and the CPA – major opportunities

However, the situation is not all negative. For example, it should be underlined that the mapping exercise did not identify any spoilers actively working against the peace process. There might be various explanations for this. For one thing, this study looked only at peace-building NGOs. Another explanation could be found in the current environment, which encourages a wait-and-see attitude – after all, Sudanese society is in the middle of implementing a landmark peace deal, and people are reluctant to talk about the immediate future. It is no surprise that uncertainty reigns. The events of 30 July 2006 are a good illustration of this atmosphere: during the commemoration of John Garang's death one year earlier (after which 130 protesters had died in violent unrests in Khartoum), police forces were on high alert, offices were shut down and international agencies limited their personnel to 'essential staff' only. There were fears of renewed unrest, as the SPLM had organized a gathering in Omdurman stadium for the commemoration. Nobody had expected 90,000 candles, lit by a peaceful crowd, and Vice-President Taha delivering a speech alongside the Secretary-General of the SPLM. How can faith-based actors build on this foundation? On the basis of the data provided in this mapping exercise, five major opportunities can be identified:

Opportunity 1: Faith connects people in their wish for peace

Sudan has emerged from a 21-year civil war and its population longs for peace; there is ample reason for faith-based actors to play an active role in building this peace. Most respondents emphasized the need to strengthen the 'culture of peace', and were keen to prove their commitment to contributing to this effort.³² Given the urgent needs of the southern population, Christian churches tend to focus on relief services. Reconciliation and counselling also features high on the churches' agenda. For Muslim actors in the North, the priority is assisting the poor in the marginalized areas of the North, as well as Islamic education as a way of preaching peaceful coexistence. The immense moral authority of the various faith-based leaders over their constituencies places them in a unique position. Even if inter-religious activities are not on their agenda, they can make a difference by bridging divides between individuals, families and tribes.

Opportunity 2: Faith-based actors can make a difference in local communities

Even though this study did not look at the impact of faith-based actors outside the two capitals, it should be noted that most respondents expressed their confidence in the constructive role that faith-based actors played in certain local settings. More often than not,

³² Of the 21 faith-based actors selected for this study, 16 engage in promoting a 'culture of peace' through either intermediary roles/mediation or preaching activities (see Table 1).

religious actors are capable of organizing people around local issues and complement (or even replace) a struggling government system in rural areas. This holds particularly true for efforts around mediation and reconciliation, where faith-based actors draw from their moral authority to balance peace and justice. In various areas of southern Sudan, such as the three disputed areas, this aspect of faith-based peace-building could have an enormous impact. Religious mediation efforts could easily become a key element in preventing the outbreak of renewed violence. For a more detailed analysis of faith-based actors in a more local setting, however, there is a need for more in-depth information from the field.

Opportunity 3: Faith-based actors can make CPA work on the political level

Faith-based advocacy among the country's political elite has paid off in the past. The CPA itself is a result of – partly religious – lobbying efforts. Now that the agreement is in place, advocacy should be considered to be at least as important as it was before, if implementation is to succeed. Given the rich history of lobby work and the vast religious networks at their disposal, faith-based actors are the first line of defence when it comes to CPA 'whistle-blowing'. The international community should not be expected to be on full alert during the entire transition period, but national actors – and religious leaders in particular – have the means and duty to do so. Despite all the restrictions they face, faith-based actors are still the most appropriate watchdogs for Sudan's fragile peace.

Opportunity 4: Facilitating more sustained dialogue

Where politics and religion are as intertwined as in Sudan, dialogue among and between religious actors is crucial. Umbrella organizations can play a central role in initiatives to promote dialogue, which should be pursued whenever possible. However, for these efforts to succeed, three conditions must be met. First, networks have to be truly representative and independent. Second, they must concentrate on their comparative advantage in being able to conduct dialogue and advocacy with the government. Third, umbrella bodies must maintain a credible reputation and track record. Although these conditions are hard to meet in today's Sudan, there is some movement in the right direction, as illustrated by the ongoing discussion concerning the proposed National Inter-Religious Council.

Opportunity 5: Supporting individual religious leaders

While organizational structures are the basis of any functioning network, individual personalities can be just as effective, working either with or within existing networks. For many of the above-mentioned activities (e.g., advocacy, mediation or work with local communities), personal engagement often makes all the difference. Organizations tend to operate in public and are under bureaucratic scrutiny. Individuals can act faster, are more flexible and are less likely to suffer from the effects of mismanagement. However, the sole precondition for the efforts of individuals to succeed is not easy to find: mutual trust.

6 Considerations for international engagement

Introduction

There is no doubt that religious actors in Sudan have made a great impact on the national peace-building process. As argued above, the country is one of the religiously most diverse countries in the world and therefore has countless religious communities. People live in, with and around religious communities and religion plays a key role in societal change. At the same time, however, religions in Sudan have always been part of the political power play. As a result, any external support for faith-based actors is highly sensitive and should be considered with caution. The question then is how can international actors engage in today's Sudan without unleashing unintended consequences? Some of the following considerations might be useful in this regard.

Entry points for *potential spoilers*

Spoiling by faith-based actors in Sudan takes place in very subtle ways. The CPA is generally accepted as the best chance for peace, and even its sternest critics are reluctant to openly oppose the peace process. Even though the media and other propaganda outlets are increasingly becoming channels for voicing discontent, faith-based actors are generally careful not to attack the CPA as such. As argued above, spoiling behaviour on the part of faith-based actors is therefore more potential than actual. There are legitimate grievances about negative consequences of the peace process (e.g., among the Sufi Sammaniya Order and the Muslim Community in Juba), which can translate into open opposition if not taken into account. The overall aim of outside actors should therefore focus on **creating incentives to refrain from spoiling actions** by facilitating a more conducive environment for the CPA to be implemented; faith-based actors should be encouraged to trust the CPA process to have a positive impact. In this respect, possible entry points for international engagement include, for example: active support for activities designed to combat the oppression of marginalized communities; addressing current grievances that stem from insufficient or non-implementation of the CPA provisions; support for public education/dissemination of information about the CPA peace process and facilitating dialogue between its proponents and critics at local, state and national level.

Entry points for *silent supporters*

As many actors prefer not to become too actively engaged during a period of political uncertainty, wait-and-see attitudes prevail in the current environment. In the case of faith-based actors who have little to lose by maintaining a passive stance (such as the Copts or the Sufi Burhaniyya Order), there are few possibilities open to outsiders to alter this attitude. Rather, the emphasis should be on **making use of existing networks of silent supporters** in order to keep doors open for dialogue. Behind the scenes, silent supporters engage in dialogue, discussion and debate, and can play a supporting role through the mobilization of prominent individuals. Possible entry points for international engagement therefore include:

encouraging the participation of silent supporters in umbrella bodies; using their mediation potential as ‘neutral’ brokers; and, when appropriate, facilitating their role in advocacy efforts behind closed doors.

Entry points for *constrained contributors*

Various forms of restriction prevent many actors from organizing their work as they would wish. Owing to control by the regime, bureaucracy, international sanctions or even internal mismanagement, a number of faith-based actors in Sudan are struggling with the problem of inadequate resources. It is therefore important to **work towards a more conducive environment** in order to enable ‘willing’ actors to contribute to the CPA implementation. For this purpose, possible entry points for international engagement range from creating public awareness of existing governmental restrictions, to diplomatic dialogue with authorities on possible changes in legislation. In addition, constrained contributors can be supported in areas where they can make a difference in *present* circumstances; for example, through working with individuals (e.g., with representatives of the Republican Brothers or the Al-Hidaya Organization) or by supporting faith-based actors on a project basis in order to make use of their comparative advantage in having local or sectoral expertise. This could include the involvement of faith-based actors through mediating between parties in local conflicts or providing education services in co-operation with local authorities.

Entry points for *active promoters*

Active promoters generally receive sufficient support in order to maintain their peace-building activities. Most of the actors in this category can rely on a vast network of supporters and carry a certain weight in Sudanese society. Although this is one of the most convincing arguments for outside actors to engage with active promoters, it entails a risk that should not be underestimated. Religious actors who enjoy the broad support of elite groups and citizens in general – whether as individuals or as members of an organization – cannot be entirely separated from the political scene. In fact, faith-based actors can easily become entangled in the political game unfolding in today’s post-agreement environment. The exclusive character of some faith-based actors (e.g., the Episcopal Church, Nuba Mountains Organization or Ma’azin Charitable Organization) should therefore be kept in mind. Apart from taking a supportive attitude towards actors in this category, it is important also to strive to **encourage them to include other actors in their activities**, particularly from other religious communities. This can help to prevent marginalized actors from becoming frustrated by the CPA being unilaterally implemented. Possible entry points for international engagement therefore include: supporting existing network structures; encouraging expansion of these networks and working with active promoters to be aware of their political standing and how the public perceives this.

Conclusion

As a Sudanese presidential adviser has stated: “Religion is not an issue – the attitude is the problem!”³³ In Sudan, nobody doubts that religion is part of the solution – just as much as it is part of the problem. Nonetheless, it is important to note that religion itself should not

³³ Interview with the authors, 2 August 2006

necessarily be at the centre of attention. The Sudanese people have in the past managed religious coexistence in peace and harmony, and continue to do so in the most remote areas, under the most diverse circumstances. In today's Sudan, it is the attitude within and between religious communities and the behaviour of their leaders that lies at the heart of the problem. The culture of peace is essential for the CPA to be implemented, and peace can be sustained only if the socio-political environment is conducive. In other words: peace in Sudan is about creating a different mindset, a more reconciliatory attitude among all Sudanese citizens. Religious communities, even more than other sectors of society, have the responsibility to achieve this goal. Outside actors can support efforts in this direction if they take account of the following considerations.

There are various options for dealing with **potential spoilers**, **silent supporters**, **constrained contributors** and **active promoters**. However, most of these potential activities should be considered with caution. Given the highly complex landscape of religious actors and their close interconnections with the political playing field, there are limited possibilities for outsiders to support single actors. Sudan is too diverse for outsiders to engage with individual organizations at national level; it is too large for single actors in Khartoum or Juba to have a valid overview; it is too difficult to monitor; and support for individual stakeholders too difficult to balance. Although valid from a civil society perspective, such initiatives are highly sensitive in Sudan's current political landscape. For a bilateral partner, for example, most of the avenues suggested above would, if followed, risk being perceived as biased towards one or more stakeholders.

As a consequence, **two main tracks** are emerging for constructive engagement by outside actors. First, it is suggested that the focus be on supporting a more conducive environment for the various faith-based actors to engage in peace-building activities. This is a crucial precondition for all four categories discussed in this report. Any of the current concerns around legitimate grievances (potential spoilers), wait-and-see attitudes (silent supporters), governmental restrictions (constrained contributors) or non-inclusivity (active supporters) would benefit from a sustained effort to create a context in which faith-based peace-building can genuinely contribute to the CPA peace process. This is an honourable goal, but achieving it is a formidable task. It might not be the most promising avenue for international actors to follow. Second, international engagement should not target individual organizations with support. Rather, they should aim to facilitate dialogue between the different groupings – religious as well as non-religious. In this regard, the most appropriate objectives for international engagement include offering support to umbrella organizations and making use of their ability to aim their lobbying activities at the higher echelons of both the religious and the political leadership that shape the political process. Advocacy is of central importance in this delicate environment, and a crucial element in the process of getting the various groupings to talk to each other. Religious umbrella organizations therefore offer a promising way to support the political process through religious actors. However, the present study has shown that in Sudan, these organizations often struggle to achieve credibility, owing to factors such as inappropriate sponsors (government, opposition parties or external donors) and mismanagement. They can succeed only if they genuinely represent the key actors and are generally perceived to do so.

At local level, there is a third track that entails good prospects for international engagement. In order to make best use of religious actors' comparative advantage – their moral authority over large constituencies – international support could direct material assistance (directly or

by proxy) to certain peace-building projects in certain provinces, for example, in the disputed areas. However, this aspect goes beyond the scope of this research project. A more detailed study of local communities could provide interesting insights in this regard.

7 Recommendations for the Netherlands

Policy priorities for the Netherlands in Sudan

The Netherlands is a prominent player in the Sudanese peace process and is determined to continue its support in the medium and long term. In line with its overall policy on Africa and post-conflict reconstruction,³⁴ the Netherlands recognizes the complexity of providing assistance in conflict-affected areas. It follows an integrated approach towards security and stability, governance and socio-economic development. At national level, this approach implies co-ordination of all Sudan-related efforts by the various ministries, in particular Foreign Affairs, Development Co-operation, and Defence. At international level, the Netherlands intends to harmonize its own Sudan policy with that of others, such as the United Nations, World Bank, European Union and regional organizations.

There are two main policy priorities for the Netherlands in Sudan. First, supporting implementation of the CPA; second, facilitating a sustainable solution to the Darfur crisis. Reflecting the findings of this report, the recommendations presented in this final chapter address the first objective only. As argued in previous sections, faith-based actors are crucial to Sudan's transition and can contribute to the CPA peace process if taken into account in the design of donor policies. Chapter 6 highlighted more general entry points for international donor engagement with the four categories of faith-based actors.³⁵ This chapter presents recommendations as to how faith-based actors can contribute specifically to the implementation of the CPA, and how they could be supported in doing so.

Parallel action required

External support to faith-based actors in Sudan remains a sensitive issue and should be considered with care. As discussed earlier, the current situation is full of serious challenges and does not offer the easiest starting point for international donors to engage with faith-based actors. In order to unleash the potential of faith-based peace-building, it is therefore recommended that the Netherlands works along two parallel tracks: 1) generally increase the capacity and credibility of faith-based actors; this is crucial in order to work towards a less restrictive, less manipulative environment for faith-based peace-building; 2) engage with selected actors in areas where donors can already make a difference – and where they can facilitate the CPA implementation today. In the medium term, this two-fold strategy is likely to pay off in terms of stability, governance and socio-economic development. The section below discusses these two parallel tracks in more detail.

³⁴ Key policy documents that relate to Dutch policy on Sudan include: 1) 'Aan Elkaar Verplicht', memorandum on Dutch development co-operation in general 2) 'Sterke Mensen, Zwakke Staten', Strong people, weak states, 3) 'Africa memorandum', 4) 'Hoorn van Afrika Notitie', memorandum on Horn of Africa, 5) 'Wederopbouw na Gewapend Conflict', post-conflict reconstruction memorandum and 6) 'An integrated reconstruction strategy for Sudan'

³⁵ The four categories presented in this report are: 1) active promoters, 2) silent supporters, 3) constrained contributors, 4) potential spoilers.

1) Supporting the role of faith-based actors in general...

The concluding section of the previous chapter presented three main tracks for international engagement with faith-based actors. Combined, these contribute to diminishing tensions and bridging divides between **active promoters**, **silent supporters**, **constrained contributors** and **potential spoilers**. As direct support in these areas might be difficult to realize, engagement should be by proxy (i.e., through the financing of (inter)national NGOs that target civil society in Sudan). Preferably, this type of donor support should be of a multilateral nature (i.e., through the Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Sudan).

- *Facilitate a more conducive environment*

The current climate for civil society organizations, and faith-based actors in particular, is affected by governmental interference. This holds particularly true for the way the NCP rules in Khartoum, but the SPLM's tendency to tighten its grip on political opponents in the South should not be ignored. Faith-based actors are struggling with a post-CPA environment where the political elite interprets peace as a chance to 'live apart together' rather than 'make unity attractive'. The Christian-Muslim divide is growing, and both camps strive to keep critical voices at bay by all means possible. This issue must be addressed in order to ensure a genuine state-society dialogue on the CPA, and donors should make an effort to support existing efforts by actors – faith-based as well as secular – to bring about change in this regard.

- *Support umbrella organizations*

Sudan's transition is in dire need of genuine dialogue. In a post-conflict environment where there are deep rifts and the future remains uncertain, mistrust runs high. Sustained contact between different groupings is therefore essential in order to create a lasting support for the still very fragile peace process. Here, too, faith-based actors are in a unique position to contribute. However, often it might be politically sensitive to limit support to selected actors. Preference should be given instead to supporting umbrella organizations that work under a mandate to bring together different actors. The most interesting actors in this regard are the Sudan Council of Churches (SCC) and the Sudan Inter-Religious Council (SIRC). It should be noted, however, that these two organizations are currently struggling with a lack of credibility, owing to, respectively, internal mismanagement and membership that is not properly representative of the various Muslim orders. In this regard, it might be worth supporting the planned establishment of a new, National Inter-Religious Council, on condition that it is committed to improvements in management and to more inclusive representation.

- *Support local peace initiatives*

At community level, faith-based actors have significant access to and leverage over their local constituencies. There are many cases of faith-based initiatives that address current grievances among and between various communities, and faith-based actors have been involved in peace negotiations in the past (e.g., the Ansar El-Sunna in Darfur). They often manage to successfully combine their religious message with traditional and modern conflict resolution methods. Donors should therefore consider supporting faith-based actors in their efforts to start local peace initiatives. This should be decided on a case-by-case basis and can include organizations such as churches, umbrella organizations or religiously oriented (Muslim or Christian) NGOs but, when appropriate, should also encourage individuals in their efforts to

resolve local conflicts. In addition, it might be useful to compile lessons learned and distribute the findings across different regions (through faith-based as well as secular networks).

2) ...and facilitate concrete contributions to CPA implementation

There are many aspects to the CPA and, in order to discuss its implementation, it is suggested that four aspects in particular are singled out. First, safeguarding commitment to the CPA; second, eliciting more support from non-signatories; third, creating a peace dividend; and fourth, dealing with major developments in the near future. These aspects are closely interlinked, and provide a useful framework for examining the possible contributions of faith-based actors to the CPA's implementation.

- *Watchdogs needed: safeguarding CPA commitment from both signatories*

To date, the CPA signatories and their respective constituencies have shown limited commitment to swift implementation of the CPA. The North is dragging its feet, while the South is working hard on maximizing its autonomy. The Government of National Unity faces impasses on various levels, and many doubt whether the spirit of the CPA will hold. Increased commitment to the CPA is crucial. Even more importantly, it is extremely important for donors to prevent former supporters from turning against the CPA; the consequences of this would put the peace process seriously at risk. Religious leaders and their vast networks, both in Juba and Khartoum, have significant leverage over policy-makers and can fulfil a useful role as watchdog in respect of provisions of the CPA provisions, especially on issues relating to religion (e.g., in Khartoum, Commission for the Rights of non-Muslims in the capital; in Juba, ensuring adequate Muslim representation in GOSS). They can also stimulate public debate on contentious issues (e.g., the working of the Civil Service Commission, wealth-sharing, etc.).

- *Enhancing support for the CPA*

The CPA still means different things to different people. Since the signing in 2005, limited awareness and vague provisions have created uncertainty rather than confidence in the peace plan. Public dissemination is crucial, at all levels of society and in all regions. The more that Sudanese people know about the CPA and its key provisions, the less the risk of local populations being manipulated by radical elements of society. The latter still thrive on popular grievances about the CPA's provisions (e.g., implicit marginalization of Muslims in Khartoum and in the South, the exclusion of non-SPLM opposition parties from political power-sharing, and a general perception of the CPA as an international attempt to create an autonomous South). Faith-based actors can reach large constituencies, both among the political elites as well as among the local populations. Donors should encourage faith-based actors to plan and execute campaigns to raise awareness about the CPA (i.e., individuals for lobbying local/national bureaucrats, and organizations/networks for broader awareness-raising initiatives).

- *Creating a peace dividend*

The Sudanese have suffered the consequences of a 21-year civil war and long for better times. This holds particularly true for the marginalized South, but does not exclude the regions in the North. For many, the CPA merits being called a peace agreement only if it has a positive impact on the quality of life. The authorities must work hard to achieve this peace dividend, and because of the country's extremely limited capacity to deliver even the most basic services, donors have put emphasis on capacity-building. This is expected to pay off in the

medium term. In the meantime, all efforts should be directed at ensuring the greatest possible improvements for the ordinary Sudanese. Non-governmental actors play a key role in compensating for the lack of governmental reach. Faith-based actors, especially in the South, have long been reliable suppliers of relief aid and are busy switching their operations from relief to more sustainable aid. Donors should support this ongoing transition and encourage active co-operation between local authorities and faith-based networks on issues such as education, medical services, reintegration, etc.

- *Anticipating major developments*

The referendum in the South, scheduled for 2011, naturally dominates the minds of most donors. However, national elections are due before 2009, and could radically shake up Sudan's political landscape, in the run-up, and during and after the election process. External actors must anticipate the impact that the elections might have in the coming 12–24 months. Voter registration will have to take place, voting districts and local election commissions will have to be set up. Highly contested issues (e.g., demarcation of Abyei, administrative boundaries between North and South and the rights of citizenship) will have to be addressed before voting can start in 2008. Insufficient preparations could easily lead to delay, and consequently to frustration and violent reaction. Faith-based actors play a key role in this. Political mobilization will include religious communities, and religious leaders will in turn participate in the political debate. Donors should aim to limit potential threats to a peaceful election by supporting faith-based (in addition to secular) initiatives designed to facilitate a smooth election process, especially in the critical regions (i.e., provinces along the country's borders, and major cities in North and South).

Annex I: Description of faith-based actors in Sudan

Khartoum's faith-based umbrella organizations

There are three major faith-based umbrella organizations in Khartoum: the Sudan Council of Churches, the Sudan Inter-Religious Council and the far less influential Al-Zikr-Wa-Zakreen organization of the various Sufi orders.

Sudan Council of Churches

The Sudan Council of Churches (SCC) is composed of 12 Christian denominations, among them Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant groups.³⁶ The SCC played a significant role in the peace negotiations in the 1990s, but its influence has decreased over recent years owing to internal disagreements, mismanagement and misappropriation of funds. Three denominations, the Catholic Church, the African Inland Church, and the Sudan Pentecostal Church, suspended their memberships of the SCC in early 2005, reportedly because of disagreements about the operations of the SCC.³⁷ These internal problems still persist, and there is little movement within the executive committee to take a proactive stand in carrying forward the needed reorganization of the Council's secretariat. The SCC's executive committee is still composed of the same members who had been responsible for the misuse of funds. According to one civil society expert in Khartoum, "The SCC's credibility suffered a fatal blow and is not likely to recover any time soon."³⁸ In an attempt to overcome the current impasse, two SCC member churches have reportedly been active behind the scenes in trying to replace the entire executive committee so as to revive the Council.³⁹ Because of this, funding proposals submitted to international agencies have so far not been approved, and few expect this to happen.

Despite these considerable problems, the Council continues to operate in Khartoum (under Episcopal leadership) and has a presence in Juba (see separate section below) and other parts of southern Sudan. Its programmes are implemented through its humanitarian wing, ERRADA. On the political level, the SCC still engages in dialogue with the authorities and acts as the voice of the 12 member churches. Given past experience, however, most member churches put the emphasis on their own initiatives regarding advocacy and project implementation. In an effort to resolve the impasse, the SCC is working to merge with its more successful sister organization in Nairobi/Juba, the New Sudan Council of Churches (NSCC; see separate section below). The latter is reluctant to merge with an ailing SCC organization and waits until changes in Khartoum provide for a better environment to merge. As one respondent stated, "You have to take a sick person to the hospital first."⁴⁰ The internal

³⁶ Catholic Church, Episcopal (Lutheran) Church, Presbyterian Church, Coptic Orthodox Church, African Inland Church, Sudan Interior Church, Sudan Church of Christ, Sudan Pentecostal Church (since 2002), Greek Orthodox Church, Ethiopian Orthodox Church, Greek Catholic Church, Sudan Presbyterian Evangelical Church.

³⁷ A major blunder occurred in 2003, when international funds for Darfur from Caritas and ACT (administered by Norwegian Church Aid) were unaccounted for.

³⁸ Interview, 1 August 2006.

³⁹ Catholic Church and Presbyterian Church. At one point, the Secretary-General was reportedly locked in his office for several days in protest at his management of the organization.

⁴⁰ Interview, 12 August 2006.

difficulties of the Christian communities' main umbrella body also have significant repercussions for ongoing efforts to encourage inter-faith dialogue. In Khartoum's traditionally hostile environment for the Christian minority, successful dialogue with Muslim actors (religious as well as political) is possible only if there is strong Christian representation. This not being the case, it is hard for bodies such as the Sudan Inter-Religious Council to expect their Christian members to play a constructive role. Despite all limitations, however, most people agree that the SCC is the only body able to mobilize a vast network of Christian communities all over Sudan. It continues to be the central organ for all major churches and connects the different communities through a well-structured (even if not well-organized) council. If any major peace-building efforts are to be orchestrated at national level in the future, the SCC cannot be ignored. In addition, there are many eminent authorities within the churches who have the experience and the will to build on the SCC's past successes.

Sudan Inter-Religious Council

The Sudan Inter-Religious Council (SIRC) is one of the most prominent, yet most controversial faith-based organizations in the country. It is well known among the political elite as well as civil society and has managed to attract foreign and national interest. Despite this, the SIRC to date has been unable to live up to expectations. The Council was founded by members of the Sudan Council of Churches⁴¹ and the International People's Friendship Council⁴² and began operations in 2003. It is organized as an independent NGO and consists of a General Assembly of 46 members, with equal numbers of Muslims and Christians. The General Assembly elects an Executive Bureau of 12 members, also equally divided between Muslims and Christians. Its Secretary-General, Prof. Al-Tayieb Zainal-Abdeen, is a central and powerful figure within the organization and has significant authority over the council's activities. The council's mandate centres on efforts to "make unity attractive to all religious groups"⁴³ and therefore includes the promotion of religious co-existence, facilitation of inter-faith dialogue, consolidation of peace and national unity, conflict resolution, and advocacy at the level of government on religious matters.

Since its establishment, the Council has engaged in various conferences and meetings (national and international), mediated in various cases regarding inter-faith issues in Khartoum and the establishment of the Committee for the Protection of Religious Freedom (CPRF). The SIRC also issued a publication entitled *Religion in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement* aimed at educating the public on the provisions of the CPA. This track record notwithstanding, the SIRC has continuously faced substantial scepticism from all sectors of society since it started its activities, for several reasons. First, members as well as non-members do not agree with the involvement of NCP cadres within the Council. All nominations are screened by the government authorities and there is no independent appointment procedure or popular vote for SIRC members. As one respondent comments with regard to the widespread mistrust of NCP-inspired initiatives: "Every time someone talks about dialogue, the government is there."⁴⁴ Second, the Council is not representative of the Muslim community: the NCP is over-represented in the General Assembly and the executive

⁴¹ At the time, Father Enock Tombe of the Episcopal Church was the acting Secretary-General of the SCC.

⁴² This organization was founded and run by the Sudanese authorities in order to establish and maintain cultural ties with friendly countries, in particular in the Islamic world.

⁴³ SIRC Information brochure, p. 3.

⁴⁴ Interview, 1 August 2006.

council,⁴⁵ and major opposition groups such as the Ansar Al-Mahdi are not properly represented in the Council.⁴⁶ Also, the Ansar El-Sunna, despite its alleged personal relationship with the SIRC's Secretary-General, claims to have never even heard of the initiative. Third, the Christian community does not have proper representation through the SCC, owing to its own weak internal structure and also to the fact that its representatives in the SIRC are highly unmotivated. The SCC's credibility problems therefore continue to be a major cause for dissatisfaction within the SIRC.⁴⁷ Lastly, there are doubts about the current secretary-general.⁴⁸ Given that he is a well-known reformist with a National Islamic Front (NIF) past, there are still major doubts about Prof. Al-Tayieb's intentions, which many do not believe are genuine. Pushing ahead with a reformist agenda therefore remains a major challenge for the SIRC under his leadership.

Owing to these criticisms, many regard the SIRC as a political 'rubber stamp' body, with little if any leverage for bringing about change. Despite these major limitations, however, some suggest that the SIRC should not be abandoned. Rather, it is worth supporting the Council for its co-ordinating role between the various Muslim and Christian communities. The question remains as to whether the SIRC will in the future be able to do more than that. It has so far failed to convince its critics that it can really act as an appropriate mechanism to solve inter-religious issues.⁴⁹ If the SIRC wants to create more confidence among members and non-members, its executive bureau will have to be demonstrably more proactive in Khartoum's political playing field. The SIRC's recent initiative to create a National Inter-Religious Council in co-operation with both the NSCC and the SCC should be considered a worthwhile effort in this regard.⁵⁰

Al-Zikr-Wa-Zakreen

This umbrella organization was set up by the Ministry of Religious Affairs (now the Ministry for Guidance and Endowments) as a government initiative. It encourages dialogue among the Sufi leaders and aims to bridge the differences between the different Sufi orders. Given the lukewarm response from the various Sufi orders and a limited range of activities in the past, Al-Zikr-Wa-Zakreen has so far failed to contribute to further Sufi integration. However, its members have in the past accepted joint meetings organized both by and on behalf of the government. Some suggest that the organization could, in the future, play a positive role in bringing Sufi orders closer together for the good of Islam in Sudan.⁵¹

⁴⁵ This is partly through organizations founded and funded by the NCP, such as the Sudan Religious Scholar Foundation and the Sudan Corporation for Advocacy of Religious Doctrine.

⁴⁶ Even though official documents refer to Al-Ansar Al-Mahdi's membership of the Council, this in fact concerns only the marginal faction of the order that recently defected to the government side.

⁴⁷ SIRC's Secretary-General reportedly asked the Catholic Church to provide "better" representatives for the Council in order to push forward the SIRC initiative. His major concern was that current members were not motivated and had poor management skills.

⁴⁸ It was expected that a new secretary-general would be elected in 2007.

⁴⁹ For example, it is interesting to note that the Nile Theological College of the Presbyterian Church has reportedly been denied the necessary documents required for its continuing operations – this despite the fact that the Dean of the College is one of the 12 executive bureau members. The Presbyterian Church is now considering moving the College to Juba.

⁵⁰ At a fringe meeting during the 8th World Assembly of Religions for Peace in Kyoto, 26–29 August 2006, the SIRC announced the plan to establish a National Inter-Religious Council. Both the SCC and the NSCC were reportedly receptive, and have requested SIRC to come up with a more detailed plan of implementation.

⁵¹ Interview, 2 August 2006.

Muslim actors in Khartoum

Sudan Red Crescent Society

The Sudan Red Crescent Society (SRCS) is active in 20 out of 26 states and has some 2,000 volunteers all over the country.⁵² By definition a secular organization, the Red Crescent Society values its neutrality and does not consider itself as a religious actor. This is reflected in the seven fundamental principles of the organization, as defined by the International Committee of the Red Cross/Crescent (ICRC).⁵³ Nevertheless, there are some important observations to be made regarding the SRCS and its charitable work in the country. Founded in 1956 by a governmental decision,⁵⁴ the Society has always remained close to the government apparatus in Khartoum. As the SRCS officially joined the National Islamic Movement in 1957, its past executives have usually been appointed by the national authorities,⁵⁵ and the Muslim Brotherhood has a visible presence at its national headquarters. Its current president⁵⁶ was appointed in 2003 and will serve until 2008.

During the war, the SRCS did de facto withdraw from SPLM-held territories and is now trying to re-establish national coverage. In order to do so, they recently signed a memorandum of understanding with the Government of Southern Sudan (GOSS) regarding humanitarian assistance and other operations in war-affected communities in southern Sudan. Being part of the ICRC family, their core activities naturally focus on humanitarian assistance, IDPs and more general health services; however, the SRCS also engages in education where needed, such as in remote regions. It currently works in collaboration with several UN agencies in the implementation of their assistance programmes. Additional funding comes from other UN agencies, Care International, the Arab League and non-Sudanese Red Crescent Societies. As the organization is in need of funding for its administration apparatus, it has engaged in negotiations with the government to provide the required capital. Currently, the SRCS is being assisted in its expansion by the official government watchdog for NGO activities, the Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC). Independent sources confirm that the SRCS's reputation suffered in the past from political patronage and dubious funding schemes. Recent information, however, indicates a rather radical change towards a more independent stance: field staff are less frequently linked to NCP/NIF patrons who operate, or are perceived to operate, from within the SRCS hierarchy.⁵⁷

Al-Hidaya Organization for Islamic Da'wa

As an organization, Al-Hidaya has seen better times in the past. Now a small NGO in terms of operational capacity, it works through a network of like-minded Islamic NGOs in 11 states of northern Sudan (including Darfur, Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile). After financial support from the government ceased, Al Hidaya had to downgrade in terms of housing and staff; the headquarters are currently housed in the premises of the Al-Rysala International Organization. In Khartoum, Al-Hidaya closed 10 of its centres in IDP camps; however, it retains an operational presence in North Darfur (3 centres), West Darfur (4), South Darfur (3) and Jazira

⁵² The majority are based in the North; this study estimates there are some 400 volunteers in the South.

⁵³ The ICRC's seven fundamental principles are: humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity, universality.

⁵⁴ In 1956, the Sudanese government decided by governmental decree to establish the Sudan Red Crescent Society.

⁵⁵ Interview with the authors, 1 August 2006

⁵⁶ A former career bureaucrat who served as minister of health in 1989. For more information see www.sudanembassy.org

⁵⁷ Email correspondence with independent expert, 2 August 2006.

(8). Some additional centres in South Kordofan and Blue Nile are jointly run by Al-Hidaya and Al-Rysala. The organization has an executive body of ten members,⁵⁸ which co-ordinates all activities: Islamic education, capacity-building and relief work. Even though Al-Hidaya denies any direct link with political forces within the current government, it has been suggested that there is some kind of affiliation with the Muslim Brotherhood.

The organization was involved in the preparatory stage of the peace process and attended several CPA workshops in Khartoum, at the invitation of the NCP. Today, it regards the CPA as an important paradigm for sustainable peace in the Sudan and emphasizes the need for a culture of peace. In its view, Islamic Da'wa can contribute to the implementation of the peace deal through the promotion of better understanding between Christians and Muslims on the one hand, and between other rival groupings in the country on the other. In order to do so, Al-Hidaya expects to establish more structural relationships with other organizations and networks⁵⁹ and, if opportunities rise, with Christian organizations.

Ma'azin Women's Charitable Organization

Ma'azin is a medium-sized NGO with clear ambitions to grow in the future. With some 20 (exclusively female) staff members, the organization has in the past focused on relief services to IDPs in Greater Khartoum. Beneficiaries include particularly women, children and orphans.⁶⁰ Even though there is no official affiliation with any of the Muslim orders, and staff members represent various Muslim backgrounds, it is likely that there are structural links with the Ansar El-Sunna.⁶¹ The Ma'azin Charitable Organization regards the CPA as a comprehensive document, and supports swift implementation.⁶² In order to support the peace process, Ma'azin emphasizes "contributing to national unity,"⁶³ and therefore focuses on promoting a culture of peace. It engages in religious education for Muslim men and women and conducts awareness-raising programmes on the CPA. The organization's work also facilitates inter-faith dialogue, even if only indirectly: it encourages all beneficiaries to engage also with non-Muslims. For some IDP-related projects, Ma'azin secured funding from the Kuwait Fund and co-operates with several national NGOs such as the Banan Charitable Organization, Ghanadeel Charitable Organization, Yanaby Organization and Al-Basari Organization for Research and Studies.⁶⁴ In the near future, the organization plans to expand its social services in Greater Khartoum to include the construction of health centres and pharmacies, water and sanitation services, and education. Also, there will be repatriation and reconstruction programmes outside the capital. For this purpose, Ma'azin has recently started to look for new funding sources,⁶⁵ and has strengthened its ties with international Islamic funding partners, in particular with organizations in the Gulf States.

Salsabeel Charity Organization

With a target group of some 1,000 individual students, Salsabeel is not a very large organization. However, its focused approach makes it an interesting player in Sudan. Founded

⁵⁸ Head of Al-Hidaya, General Secretary, Executive Manager and seven specialized secretariats: education, health, Islamic Da'wa, youth, women and children, social and cultural affairs, and public relations.

⁵⁹ Consultations are under way with Al-Radoam Charitable Organization, Al-Sijaya National Organization and Al-Rysala International Organization.

⁶⁰ In addition, Ma'azin occasionally provides counselling to female prisoners.

⁶¹ All three staff members interviewed are Al Sunna followers.

⁶² This is an interesting aspect, as it contrasts with the reaction of other Muslim actors who voiced particular concern about the CPA's inadequacies regarding women's rights.

⁶³ Interview, 3 August 2006.

⁶⁴ Whereas the first three organizations are women's NGOs, the last is a faith-based NGO.

⁶⁵ Currently, Ma'azin receives funding from private donations and international Islamic organizations.

in 1998 in response to the need to cater for the countless IDPs from the South, the organization finances needy students in Greater Khartoum, and more recently in Juba, Malakal, Wau and Renk. They provide student grants, food, clothes, study material and even pocket money. The selection criteria for beneficiaries are based on recommendations by the universities' own student unions; beneficiaries must either have no alternative income or else they have converted to Islam. Salsabeel also provides housing and food for orphans and their families from the South. The organization runs three main centres in and around Khartoum and to date has no significant presence in the South. It has some 55 staff members, some of whom are volunteers. It should be noted that, as a Muslim organization, Salsabeel has a missionary character and combines capacity-building with 'enlightenment'. Apart from financial assistance to students,⁶⁶ Salsabeel's activities include training (complementary to the university curriculum), income-generating advice to parents and accommodation for orphans.

Even though it offers some occasional courses on the CPA, the organization considers itself apolitical, and does not have any active involvement in the peace process. However, Salsabeel supports implementation of the CPA and invests in university students so that they will become Sudan's future (Muslim) elite. The organization is funded by individuals and local organizations and, according to its president, there has never been any kind of direct government funding for its operations. In the near future, Salsabeel does not expect any major changes in its operations, as most university students will first finish their studies before considering moving back to the South.⁶⁷

Ansar Affairs Corporation

The Ansar Affairs Corporation represents the Ansar Al-Mahdi Order, which is the largest Muslim community in Sudan and politically affiliated with the Umma opposition party.⁶⁸ Its political leader, Sadiq Al-Mahdi (who held the post of prime minister from 1966–67 and 1986–89), is also the religious authority for the entire order and should be regarded as a considerable (political) threat to the NCP authorities. With the Umma party as the biggest political grouping outside the NCP, Sadiq Al-Mahdi might resurface as a strong political opponent in the 2008 elections. Despite the order's influence in Sudanese society, the Ansar felt the consequences of tactical manoeuvring by the NCP cadres. In 2002, the party leader's cousin, Mubarak Al-Fadl Al-Mahdi (who was interior minister until 1989), defected to the government and now a new, pro-NCP faction of the Umma party.⁶⁹ Even though the breakaway branch remains small and rather insignificant in terms of religious followers, it currently serves as a political excuse for the NCP to prove the inclusive nature of the government. The split had a significant negative impact on the Ansar and its work, as both religious and political (opposition) followers now face various restrictions and subtle forms of discrimination. According to one of their political leaders, religious actors cannot make a significant contribution to the peace process unless there is a more liberal society: "Nothing will happen unless there is a free society."⁷⁰ Reflecting these developments, the Ansar religious movement has a very direct relationship with politics.

⁶⁶ Financial assistance includes clothes, food, tuition fees, pocket money and books.

⁶⁷ In 2006, there was no decrease in admissions to Salsabeel. Even though a major flight of IDPs back to the South could alter the way it carries out recruitment in the coming months, the organization does not expect any major changes.

⁶⁸ A popular axiom of the Al Ansar Al-Mahdi depicts this relationship: "All Ansar are Umma, but not all Umma are Ansar."

Interview with the authors, 31 July 2006.

⁶⁹ This reflects a more general, well-orchestrated pattern of divide-and-rule by the NCP leadership.

⁷⁰ Interview with the authors, 31 July 2006.

On the one hand, it considers its work to be part of the political struggle of the Umma party,⁷¹ on the other it stresses that there is a clear separation between religion and politics where the work of the Ansar Affairs Corporation and its five affiliated civil society branches is concerned (see separate section below):⁷² “We preach about politics, but we are not involved in the legislative or executive part of the political work.”⁷³ The corporation itself consists of eight separate secretariats⁷⁴ and focuses mainly on teaching and preaching. The Ansar claims to be an all-Sudanese movement⁷⁵ and is actively involved in the peace process. The various Ansar communities have been actively involved in conflict resolution initiatives between Arabs and non-Arabs in the past; they consider themselves ‘neutral’. As a representative Ansar organization, the Ansar Affairs Corporation considers the CPA to be a valuable and important step towards sustainable peace in Sudan; however, they make it clear that the agreement is far from comprehensive. The Umma party even goes one step further, claiming: “The CPA is merely a bilateral deal with some positive elements.”⁷⁶ In order to be sustained, the peace agreement needs more people to be involved, and a culture of peace to be consolidated throughout Sudan. In its view, the Ansar can contribute to preventing “religion being exploited by politics”.⁷⁷ Consequently, the Ansar Affairs Corporation places emphasis on preaching, reconciliation and humanitarian work.

Al-Ansar Al-Mahdi civil society organizations

Although these organizations are all officially part of the Ansar Corporation structure,⁷⁸ they are worth mentioning as separate entities. The secretariat acts as an umbrella body for the five (soon to be six) NGOs that work in the field of humanitarian assistance: Ana Omdurman for Social Development, Taksaboon Charitable Organization, El-Imam Al Mahdi National Women’s Charitable Society, Development and Peace Organization and Women’s Initiative Organization for Peace. The setting-up of these organizations stems from a decision taken at a major conference in 2002, where the Ansar leadership urged for a more intensive engagement with civil society organizations. The establishment of a small number of Ansar-affiliated NGOs is seen as an appropriate step towards operating successfully in the current context of globalization.

Ana Omdurman for Social Development was the only organization already active before 2002; the other four bodies have been founded since then and they, too have, been involved in the peace process, too. In particular, Ana Omdurman for Social Development and Women’s Initiative Organization for Peace contributed to the Naivasha negotiations as civil society representatives in the run-up to the signing of the CPA. Recently, both organizations have been active in Darfur by, for example, arranging various visits by Sadiq Al-Mahdi when he was acting as an intermediary. Ana Omdurman was also represented in the Joint Assessment Mission (JAM). Current activities include awareness-raising (conferences on human rights and democracy), building schools in various parts in Sudan and relief services in Darfur.⁷⁹

⁷¹ As one respondent stated: “These are our tribes, members, voters.”

⁷² In fact, the Deputy Secretary-General of the Ansar Affairs Corporation distanced himself clearly from any political involvement: “Politics is a dirty game.”

⁷³ Interview, 2 August 2006.

⁷⁴ These eight secretariats are led by a General Secretary (plus a Deputy General Secretary) and cover: preaching and advice, social affairs, women, media, co-ordination, civil organizations, youth, and foreign affairs.

⁷⁵ The Ansar symbol combines the (Muslim) crescent and (traditional African) spear.

⁷⁶ Interview, 31 July 2006.

⁷⁷ Interview, 31 July 2006.

⁷⁸ Co-ordinated by the secretary for civil organizations, Mrs Sumayyah Al-Khalifa Al-Bashir.

⁷⁹ The activities in Darfur are carried out in co-operation within a wider network of relief agencies.

With regard to funding, they rely on individual donations and income-generating activities.⁸⁰ Until now, none of the five NGOs relies on international sources for financial support. In the future, the secretariat expects to expand the number of its activities and of its branches in order to become more engaged at grass-roots level. Part of this effort is an active policy for encouraging the establishment of community-based organizations (CBOs).⁸¹ These small-scale NGOs are expected to focus on water/sanitation, education and health, through training, skills promotion and awareness-raising.⁸² According to the Secretary-General of the secretariat, there are also plans to increase the organization's coverage beyond the national borders, including the Horn of Africa, the Great Lakes region and possibly southern Africa.

Sufi (Sammaniya Order)

The Sammaniya Order is an influential movement in Sudan, but has always kept a low profile in Khartoum's political landscape. "We do not engage deeply in politics."⁸³ Its leaders have in the past played a role in advocacy and mediation (the late Sheikh was a government delegate at the Naivasha talks) and have maintained a good relationship with the authorities over the years. Now that the CPA is in place, however, the Sammaniya are reluctant to regard the agreement as a valid path towards peace. "In fact, it has a devastating effect."⁸⁴ This is primarily because the CPA in their view promotes separation and "splits the nation".⁸⁵ Another reason for Sammaniya criticism lies in the CPA's emphasis on the political level and neglect of the grass roots. This is where the Sammaniya see their prime contribution to peace in Sudan: mobilizing the grass-roots level through preaching the message of the order. In the near future, the Sammaniya expect to do this, thanks to the peace process, more and more in southern Sudan. In fact, government officials from the NCP have reportedly offered the order land in the South in response to a request to establish Sufi mosques there. The Sammaniya accepted the proposal and are currently developing plans for a Sufi presence in Juba.⁸⁶ In addition, the order works in the areas of education, mediation⁸⁷ and advocacy with the government.

As for their political standpoint, the Sammaniya currently regard the international situation with great anxiety. According to their leader,⁸⁸ the CPA was merely a Western plan pushed by the United States, in order to win the proxy war against China.⁸⁹ Also, they believe that correcting the image of Islam in the West is a major challenge and a precondition for sustainable peace in the Arab world. Sudan as a Muslim country should be part of this effort. The critical attitude towards the West is also reflected in the Sammaniya views on inter-faith relations. Although the order has been involved in several major initiatives for inter-faith dialogue (such as the Libya conference in 2006), scepticism prevails when it comes to the

⁸⁰ For example, both organizations have maintained a close relationship with the Babiker Badri Society (non-faith-based), with which they organized joint projects in the past. In addition, there have been several occasions where inter-religious activities designed to combat the practice of female circumcision have been planned and executed.

⁸¹ The sixth organization under the umbrella of the secretariat is being formed as a CBO: Al-Elayga Organization for Development and Human Rights.

⁸² Given its religious agenda, it can be expected that the Ansar will make active use of its educational branches to promote Islamic Da'wa.

⁸³ Interview, 2 August 2006.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ This was not confirmed by the leaders of the Muslim community in Juba. In fact, they have repeatedly been denied any kind of assistance from various Muslim orders in Khartoum for the maintenance and construction of mosques.

⁸⁷ At the request of the government and, more recently, the UN Mission in Sudan in connection with promotion of the Darfur Peace Agreement.

⁸⁸ Sheikh Mohammed H. Gariballa has recently taken over as Sammaniya leader, succeeding his well-respected late father.

⁸⁹ Interview, 2 August 2006.

Christian community. They suspect the government of favouring the Christian minority over the Muslim majority communities in Khartoum.⁹⁰ Also, they have only limited interest in the work of the Sudan Inter-Religious Council, and decided to freeze their membership of the SIRC's general assembly.⁹¹ The Sammaniya therefore have to rely on their own, exclusively Muslim networks⁹² in order to voice their concerns about the CPA and its shortfalls.

Republican Brothers

Owing to the restrictive political environment, the Republican Brothers do not have any active role in the peace process. Even though some 1,500 members are still working for the movement, major activities such as the publishing and dissemination of information have been kept to a minimum. Arbitrary arrests by the authorities have put additional restrictions on their work. Republican thinking can be traced back to the establishment of the Republican Party in 1945 in the early times of national struggle against colonialism. Despite their claim to Sufi identity,⁹³ other Sufi orders do not recognize them as such, because of doctrinal differences.⁹⁴ Pushed to the margins of political-religious life in Sudan, the Republican Brothers place their hope in a future regime with a more liberal approach to Islam. For the time being, they maintain their vast network, but refrain from operating in the open. The most visible contribution at the moment lies in the publication of newspaper articles. If the situation changes, the Brotherhood expects to be active in awareness-raising and intellectual work, in accordance with their vision of a Sudan where all human beings are free to live their lives as they wish.

Ansar El-Sunna Order

The Ansar El-Sunna Order is of fairly recent origin and has been a prominent player in Sudan's religious landscape since the 1960s. The order did not emerge out of a political party, and does not have direct links with any of the existing political movements; however, its Saudi origin places it in a very conservative light. Consequently, it takes a strict stance in terms of the application of Shari'a law in the North and views its role as merely supportive of the government.⁹⁵ Some of its followers have recently been appointed by the NCP to serve as ministers, giving the Ansar El-Sunna more political clout than before.⁹⁶ The order has been very active during the peace process and, according to its leaders, was instrumental in persuading SPLM Chairman Dr Garang to accept Khartoum as the national capital and Shari'a law for the North.⁹⁷

The Ansar El-Sunna communities were also involved in past workshops in the Blue Nile region and currently have 35 delegates working with the government on the mediation efforts in Darfur. They regard the CPA as something special, and a step forward in comparison with

⁹⁰ For example, the unequal distribution of electricity vouchers to Muslim orders and to Christian churches.

⁹¹ This is partly due to the fact that there is disagreement over the leadership of the Samaniyya. After the late Sheikh passed away, there was no clear successor to take over his generally accepted leadership role.

⁹² The notable exception are their personal ties with the Copts, partly the result of the current Sheikh's school education at a Copt school in Khartoum.

⁹³ The founder of the Republican Party was a Sufi, Ustaz Mahmoud Mohammed Taha.

⁹⁴ The Republican Brothers' concept of 'unity of existence' is not accepted by other Sufi orders, and they reject the belief that the first message of the Qu'ran as part of the real Islam (which includes Shari'a).

⁹⁵ However, they do claim an advisory role in order to correct the authorities when needed (when the government 'sins', it might be corrected, otherwise the good El-Sunna Muslim should not criticize the authorities).

⁹⁶ These nominations were made without consultation with or official approval by the Ansar El-Sunna leadership.

Nonetheless, the leaders accepted the appointments and regard them as a positive development.

⁹⁷ Interestingly, the Ansar El-Sunna by advocating a non-Shari'a solution for Southern Sudan, abandoned their conviction that Sudan must be governed in its entirety by Shari'a. They seem to have responded to a government request to negotiate Shari'a in Khartoum.

agreements: the CPA addressed the issue of state and religion right from the outset. Now that the agreement is being implemented, no major issues have been omitted, according to the Ansar El-Sunna leadership. The major concern for the order remains the correct application of Shari'a law in Khartoum, and it expects to provide appropriate guidance to the NCP authorities in order to achieve this. Another aspect of its work includes expansion into southern Sudan. Now that peace has come, the Ansar El-Sunna has been given land by the government and has built mosques in Juba, Malakal and Wau.⁹⁸ Even though the Ansar El-Sunna is deeply devoted to its religious cause and to spreading the message of Islam, it emphasizes that it regards itself as a national NGO, not very different from non-faith-based organizations: in addition to its preaching activities, the Ansar El-Sunna engages in awareness-raising and service delivery.⁹⁹ In order to do so, the order has established a small number of affiliated NGOs such as the Al-I'tisam Islam Society, Al-Hadith Charitable Organization, and Al-Islaah Charitable Society. These organizations do not receive any funds from the government and rely on donations from the Ansar El-Sunna community.¹⁰⁰

Sufi (Burhaniyya Order)

The Sufi Burhaniyya order is not involved in politics and restricts itself to preaching and educational activities. Its religious communities can be found all over Sudan, with major mosques in the North (urban as well as rural areas) and Zawias¹⁰¹ in the South (Juba, Wau, Malakal and Kaju Kaji). The Burhaniyya community also has a vast network of followers all over the world, including Europe and the USA.¹⁰² With a clear focus on preaching, the Burhaniyya order places emphasis on spiritual work, which, according to the order's philosophy, encourages peace within each individual, and leads to sustainable peace in society. Its members preach their message during prayers and lectures in mosques, schools, universities and other public places.

The order considers the CPA to be, even though not an ideal document, a valuable agreement with a good goal ("the elimination of hatred"). The only tools a follower requires for working on the peace process are continuous rituals; and the CPA offers a welcome opportunity to strengthen the inner peace of all Sudanese citizens. In the future, the Burhaniyya Order expects to be involved in projects including health and education services, as well as reconciliation and justice.¹⁰³ Its leaders do not show much interest in activities such as the Inter-Religious Council¹⁰⁴ or the Al-Zikr-Wa-Zakreen Organization. Reflecting this attitude, interaction with other Muslim orders, although it does occur, is limited, and the order's engagement with Christian communities also remains on an ad hoc basis.¹⁰⁵

⁹⁸ As in the case of the Sufi claim to be expanding into southern Sudan, the leaders of the Muslim community in Juba have not confirmed this.

⁹⁹ For example, construction of water wells, education, care of orphans, relief and medical services.

¹⁰⁰ The government does, however, provide funding for a different Ansar el-Sunna community and their NGO: Al-Kitab wa Al-Sunna Charitable Organization.

¹⁰¹ Zawias are small community centres, which serve as places of worship and meeting for Muslims. Zawias do not hold Friday prayers.

¹⁰² At the time of the interview with a Burhaniyya representative, the Sheikh was in Germany for a visit to one of the centres there.

¹⁰³ In contrast to other respondents, the Burhaniyya have a more philosophical, non-punitive, view of justice, based on equality, rights and obligations.

¹⁰⁴ In fact, they consider the SIRC to be too political, with insufficient emphasis on spiritual guidance.

¹⁰⁵ For example, according to the deputy of the Burhaniyya Sheikh, they have good relations with the Coptic Orthodox Church.

Nuba Mountains Organization for Development

In existence since 1986, the Nuba Mountains Organization for Development has in the past received government funding but currently depends entirely on donations from private individuals and from international Islamic organizations. According to its own judgement, performance has deteriorated in recent years because of lack of funds. However, it has an operational presence in all states of northern Sudan, except the three Darfur states. In each state, it operates through a separate governing council of up to 60 members and locally elected executive committees of 10 people. Nuba Mountains' core activities target the Nuba people (within and outside the Nuba Mountains region) and include education services (e.g., building Qur'anic schools), financial support, IDP services, Islamic Da'wa and training workshops for Imams. The organization regards the CPA as a key milestone towards peace and does not criticize its omissions. Rather, according to the representative in Khartoum, Agreement should be implemented to the letter in order to sustain peace in Sudan. The Nuba Mountains Organization believes it makes a contribution in particular through the Islamic Da'wa, and plans to concentrate on the peace process in the Nuba Mountains. These activities will focus on returnees and conflict resolution.

Christian actors in Khartoum

Catholic Church

Being the largest Christian church in the country, the Catholic Church has significant influence in Sudan. However, its main constituencies live in the South and its activities in the north are therefore marginal in relation to those of its Muslim counterparts. In fact, being a Catholic in the North has a radically different meaning; many Catholics once fled from the predominantly Christian South and settled as refugees in the North, becoming a religious minority. Consequently, Catholic leaders have found themselves not only preaching, but taking up an active political role in order to protect and care for their religious communities and lobby on their behalf. The Catholic Church has long struggled for the rights of its followers and continues to advocate for its fair treatment today. During the war, the then Catholic Archbishop, as an active member of the Sudan Council of Churches at the time, played a crucial role in facilitating the Naivasha process and contributed to its conclusion through intensive consultations with both the NCP and the SPLM.

With the CPA in place, the Catholic Church is again at the forefront of political lobbying of the Islamic elite. Whereas the rights of non-Muslims are in fact guaranteed on paper (Article 6.5 of the CPA), its implementation is still pending and will prove cumbersome at the very least. Every aspect of religious freedom, as constituted in the CPA, will have to be tested in daily life, and the question is whether the Islamic regime is willing to adhere to the letter of the Agreement. In the words of the Archbishop: "In order to implement the CPA we need to strengthen the ties with the government; however, strengthening these ties here in Khartoum remains difficult." But maintaining a good relationship with President Bashir is only one side of the coin; the Catholic leaders are determined to use their extensive experience to assist the SPLM in the Government of National Unity, and to ensure that its political leaders do not allow themselves to accept junior positions, and that they start insisting – rather than just requesting – that the CPA be implemented.

In addition to a radical change in its political role, the Catholic Church also faces a new era in relation to other aspects of its work. As a result, the relief services that the Church has been providing to IDPs in Greater Khartoum are now gradually being replaced by other forms of

support.¹⁰⁶ The Church expects that future activities will centre on education, preaching and reconciliation. The latter should become a matter of priority, as the Sudanese need guidance in healing the traumas of war. To this end, the Catholic Church encourages criticism and even protest, but rejects any form of violence.

Episcopal Church of Sudan

The Episcopal Church of Sudan (ECS) is the second-largest Christian church in Sudan.¹⁰⁷ It represents an active religious community throughout the country, in particular in the South. The ECS is organized in 24 dioceses¹⁰⁸ with some 1,300 priests.¹⁰⁹ Until a general assembly was held in 2005, the ECS had been struggling to streamline all its activities and found it difficult to present itself to the outside world with one voice. Synergy between the different dioceses has improved since then; however, structural funding remains a serious concern.¹¹⁰ In organizational terms, the ECS operates through ten commissions, including one dealing with humanitarian aid and development (see the separate section on SUDRA).¹¹¹ Like the Catholic Church, it was active within the SCC framework in the run-up to the Naivasha negotiations and lobbied hard to get the SPLM and the NCP to sign the final agreement. Today, in contrast, the ECS is far less active on the political front. Nevertheless, by working closely with the umbrella bodies SIRC and the SCC,¹¹² it does play a significant role in major debates with the authorities. In fact, the ECS considers it more important to be active at the provincial and local levels, now that the national agreement is in place.

In order to contribute to the CPA's implementation, the ECS aims to monitor and facilitate the six individual protocols through its community work in the various regions. Of key importance will be a wide range of activities that support the peace process and promote reconciliation: "The peace needs to be maintained." A precondition for this expansion is an adequate budget: the ECS is currently working on a five-year strategic plan and expects to solve the church's funding problems in the medium term.

Presbyterian Church of Sudan

The Presbyterian Church might not have an particularly impressive presence in Khartoum (seven church communities in Khartoum), but it represents a large community of Christian followers, in particular in the Greater Upper Nile area.¹¹³ With a broad base in this part of the country, the Presbyterian Church is well respected within the Christian community and participates in several commendable joint efforts. One of the most interesting activities in this regard are the so-called 'peace committees' which are being run jointly by the Catholic, Episcopal and Sudan Interior Churches. These inter-Christian committees have been sending mobile peace teams across the region for preaching and educational activities, with a focus on peace, democracy and the CPA. As part of this peace-building work, they also address

¹⁰⁶ This support is given either directly through the church communities, or indirectly through affiliated NGOs, such as Sudan Aid (see separate section)

¹⁰⁷ According to its own census carried out in 2005, the ECS has between 4 and 5 million followers. It is safe to assume that this figure is inflated and should rather be estimated at around 3 million.

¹⁰⁸ Sixteen of which are in war-affected territories

¹⁰⁹ Currently, the ECS is working on reorganizing the Church structure into seven clusters.

¹¹⁰ See Church Organizations Research and Advisory Trust (CORAT) Report 2006, in possession of the authors.

¹¹¹ 1) Education, 2) Health and HIV/AIDS, 3) Peace, Justice and Reconciliation, 4) Communication, 5) Theological Education, 6) Humanitarian Aid and Development, 7) Finance and Church Properties, 8) Worship and Liturgy, 9) Mission and Evangelism, 10) Ecumenical and Inter-faith Relations.

¹¹² The current Provincial secretary of the ECS, Rev. Enock Tombe, served as Secretary-General of the SCC for eight years (until 2004) and is co-founder (and honorary member of the executive bureau) of the SIRC. Also, the ECS occupies the current chairmanship of the SCC.

¹¹³ Other Presbyterian Church communities include Shendi, Kassala, Kosti, Dongola, Madeni and Dowieim.

tensions between local people and facilitate inter-tribal reconciliation. Following the successful launching of this formula, new peace committees are being established in Juba and Wau.

Compared with other churches in Sudan, however, the Presbyterian Church remains a marginal player with a significantly less effective organization and limited influence at the political level. Resources are limited and funding has not been forthcoming in the past; the Church depends on donations from within its own communities. Despite these limitations, the Church has managed to run a number of private schools in Kosti (8), Khartoum (23) and Malakal (1). One of the schools recently started to recruit Muslim teachers (30 out of 65 teaching staff), a concept the Church expects to copy elsewhere in the future. In order to adjust to the post-agreement environment, future activities of the Presbyterian Church will focus on returnees and related relief services. Proposals have been submitted to several donors, and at the time of writing, approval was still pending.

The Presbyterians' relationship with the Muslim authorities is somewhat ambivalent. On the one hand, they reportedly have good access to senior leadership within the NCP, which they use for advocacy on national issues, such as their recent and well-received appeal to 'Sudanize' the churches – an attempt to make the various churches a more integral part of Sudanese society. President Bashir reportedly responded positively to this suggestion. Also, they can count on the support of the Riek Machar and Lam Akol as members of the Presbyterian community. On the other hand, the Church is struggling to reach out to the authorities on a more pragmatic level: the Nile Theological College in Khartoum, for example, has been denied approval to operate; this despite the fact that the Dean of the College is a member of the Executive Bureau of the Inter-Religious Council. Overall, the Presbyterians do not claim to play a major role in the socio-political landscape: as 75 per cent of the population is Muslim they regard the Christian contribution to the peace process to be above all reactive rather than proactive.

Coptic Orthodox Church

The Egyptian origin of the Coptic Orthodox Church (COC) has always kept its followers on the sidelines of Sudan's mainstream society. The COC has a limited number of followers,¹¹⁴ who are known to be well-off in terms of economic wealth and clearly passive in terms of political engagement. Nevertheless, some regard this as a strength of the Coptic community: within the SCC, for example, the Copts are appreciated for their neutrality, making them in their own words "one of the most active members of the council". In fact, the COC has a track record of not becoming involved in politics. Maybe that is the reason why even the Muslim authorities at times ask them to mediate in difficult court cases. The Copts do support the CPA but tend to be not greatly bothered about its implementation. Not even the Shari'a or any other potential restriction for non-Muslims seem to be of concern to their leaders. With the notable exception of an ongoing initiative to secure funding from Oxfam Australia for the care of orphans, their activities are limited to education, observing and preaching, and are targeted their own religious community.

Other SCC-aligned churches

There are eight other, smaller church communities that are member of the SCC. These are the Sudan Interior Church (SIC), African Inland Church (AIC), Sudan Church of Christ (SCOC),

¹¹⁴ COC's own estimates put the numbers at about 20,000 followers, others put the total at half the size, owing to emigration during the war.

Greek Orthodox Church (GOC), Greek Catholic Church (GCC), Sudan Presbyterian Evangelical Church (SPEC), Ethiopian Orthodox Church (EOC) and the Sudan Pentecostal Church (SPC). Because of their limited organizational capacity, however, these churches do not play an active role in the SCC. Outside the Council's framework, their respective religious communities differ in size but should not be underestimated, as they have significant support at the local and provincial level. In particular, the African Inland Church and the Sudan Interior Church have large constituencies in Greater Upper Nile, Kordofan and Abyei. In Khartoum, the Pentecostal community has reportedly been growing significantly over recent months.

Non-member churches

There are two church communities that are not eligible for SCC membership, owing to their "non-Christian"¹¹⁵ doctrine repudiating the New Testament: the Adventists and the Jehovah's Witnesses. Whereas Jehovah's Witnesses are reported to have been growing in Greater Khartoum during the past year, the Adventists seem to play a minor role in Khartoum's religious landscape.

Christian NGO actors

Northern Sudan has only a limited number of Christian NGOs. Although the major churches run their individual humanitarian wings from Khartoum (Catholic Church: Sudan Aid and Episcopal Church: SUDRA), their activities are of greater importance in southern Sudan. According to Khartoum's central NGO registration office, the Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC), only a few minor Christian organizations are known to the authorities. Active or not, none of those Christian NGOs featuring in the sample has a visible/traceable presence in the northern capital.¹¹⁶

Key faith-based actors in Juba

Catholic Church

In Juba and in southern Sudan in general, the Catholic and Episcopal Churches are the two major churches; the former is assumed to be slightly bigger. Consequently, the Catholic Church is an active player in the daily life of the Sudanese. Many southerners are devoted to the Catholic Church and have close links with its communities and institutions (such as schools, church services, clinics, etc.). Their religious leaders regard the CPA as a clear result of earlier lobby work and are highly supportive of the peace process. Despite this positive attitude, however, Juba's Muslims perceive Catholic preaching to be rather exclusive. Although inter-tribal reconciliation features prominently on the Catholic agenda in all local communities, Muslim southerners seem to be excluded from major parts of the peace process. Instead of preaching and acting in favour of inter-faith dialogue, the Catholic Church seems reluctant to take a proactive stand in this matter.

Episcopal Church of Sudan

The Episcopal Church of Sudan (ECS) is a very active member of Juba's religious communities. It fully supports the CPA and its vision, and has a great number of followers in southern Sudan. Like the Catholic Church, however, the Episcopal Church in Juba has a

¹¹⁵ Interview with Dr Paul Wani, 30 July 2006.

¹¹⁶ The research team made an effort to contact representatives from the 1) National Council for Christian Youth Association, 2) Thought and Dialogue Organization, 3) Sudanese Sisterhood Organization, 4) Virtuous Women Society, 5) Saint Vincent de Paul Society and 5) Enlightenment, Rehabilitation & Development.

tendency to promote a rather exclusive form of Christianity, which applauds the recent victory over ‘the enemy’ from the North. In some reported cases, public prayers even included direct attacks against Muslims and encouraged mistrust of non-Christians.¹¹⁷ Reconciliation therefore tends to have a connotation of exclusivity and of promoting a Christian South Sudan. This phenomenon should not be considered as a general, or permanent, truth, as it relates very much to the particular area in southern Sudan. Nevertheless, it should be noted that especially in Juba, the current atmosphere of a win/lose relationship between Muslims and Christians in a post-agreement transition does call for continued attention.

Sudan Council of Churches

Even though the Juba branch of the Sudan Council of Churches (SCC) is far away from the problems at headquarters level, the struggle is not all that different for its 13 staff members. Suffering from its poor image, the SCC currently has limited means to co-ordinate all its activities. There is only one staff member responsible for the SCC’s humanitarian NGO wing, ERRADA. Without an approved budget for the coming year, activities are limited to spending remaining capital and co-ordinating some activities between the member churches. Despite the operational restrictions, the SCC displays a very pragmatic approach towards its sister organization, the New Sudan Council of Churches (NSCC). Although on the political level, a merger seems unlikely in the short term, the SCC has made available office space and facilities to the secretary-general of the NSCC. In August 2006, it flew in NSCC staff from Nairobi and organized joint strategic planning sessions in Juba over a one-week period. Also, there was a major joint conference in Nairobi involving all member churches in August 2006. The expectation is that, in the coming years, SCC and NSCC will develop mutually reinforcing programmes and adhere to a similar planning model, which will eventually lead to a natural merger. In terms of advocacy, the SCC is not very active in Juba and does not have a close relationship with the GOSS. In fact, both NSCC and SCC staff are concerned about the SPLM not having consulted the churches about any of the political appointments to the department of religious affairs.

New Sudan Council of Churches

Established during the civil war by the Catholic Church and seven other denominations in the South, the New Sudan Council of Churches (NSCC) is the most active of the faith-based umbrella organizations. Member churches include the Catholic Church, Episcopal Church, Presbyterian Church, Sudan Interior Church, African Inland Church and Pentecostal Church. During the civil war, it operated in areas not controlled by the government and operated out of Nairobi. With the CPA in place, the NSCC is planning to move to Juba very soon and to prepare a possible merger with the sister organization SCC.¹¹⁸ It currently has one member of staff in Juba, and 24 in total.¹¹⁹ In 2006, talks between the two Christian umbrella bodies came close to an agreement; however, the NSCC was reluctant to join forces with an organization that faces significant internal problems.¹²⁰ As a consequence, the NSCC remains a separate body for the time being. The NSCC is generally well known to people and organizations in the South and has a good reputation for its efficient operational capacity. International

¹¹⁷ On 31 July 2006 in Juba, during the commemoration service for the late Dr Garang, the Episcopal Bishop reportedly warned a crowd of 200,000 about Muslims training Mujahedeen in Juba.

¹¹⁸ At the Sudanese Heads of Churches meeting in Nairobi, 17–19 August 2006, the delegates of all 12 member churches “direct that the SCC/NSCC merger process be urgently completed”.

¹¹⁹ Before the NSCC got into funding problems as a result of disagreements with Nairobi-based funding partner *Pact Sudan*, the NSCC had 60 staff members.

¹²⁰ Interview with Dr Paul Wani, 30 July 2006; see also section on SCC above.

NGOs¹²¹ and UN agencies rely on the NSCC as an implementing agency when needed; in fact, it is one of the only faith-based organizations in Juba to be trusted by outside actors to implement major programmes.¹²² During the war, the NSCC was the only organized body operating in southern Sudan and was actively involved in pushing the peace process forward. It was responsible for the ‘people-to-people’ peace process (based on Christian, Muslim and traditional conflict-resolution techniques) and has gained significant trust among local communities. Today, the NSCC finds itself in a transition from providing relief services to more sustainable development assistance and has added some new aspects to its portfolio as a result: peace-building,¹²³ education, HIV, women and youth, radio programmes, water, schools and clinics. Also, the NSCC expects major needs for public education in the future, in particular in the light of the coming elections and the referendum. Without awareness about voting procedures, about the CPA and democratic principles, there will be no possibility of genuine elections in Sudan. The NSCC is determined to play a role in this.

In terms of the CPA, the NSCC is greatly supportive but does express concern about the level of inclusiveness.¹²⁴ “The CPA should not be of the government only.”¹²⁵ At the same time, some critics point out, the NSCC structures and its leadership remain very close to the SPLM leadership, impairing the Council’s credibility in playing a neutral role in respect of the communities they target. In the past, this has repeatedly led to significant tension during its work in several areas of southern Sudan.¹²⁶ Also, some independent peace-workers have doubts as to whether the various workshop and dialogue initiatives between Christians and non-Christians are of any significance: both participants and external observers note that there was little genuine commitment beyond the obligatory talk on peace and co-existence. In other words, none of these initiatives has so far contributed to increasing the Muslim community’s trust in a reconciliatory Christian agenda. Nevertheless, the NSCC remains the best-organized religious network in southern Sudan (if not the entire country). Any future national peace-building effort that includes faith-based actors should not bypass the NSCC.

Church Ecumenical Action Sudan

Founded during the civil war under the title SEOC,¹²⁷ Church Ecumenical Action Sudan (CEAS) is a consortium made up of the Lutheran World Federation, World Council of Churches, Caritas Internationalis, Sudan Council of Churches and the New Sudan Council of Churches.¹²⁸ Reflecting this set-up, it considers itself as a “Sudanese NGO with an international identity”.¹²⁹ Its activities centre on project management and capacity-building: it aims to facilitate its member churches to run their humanitarian programmes on a sustainable basis. During the war, CEAS’s work was limited to SPLM-liberated areas,¹³⁰ with a clear focus on relief. Like all other NGO agencies in southern Sudan, CEAS is in the middle of transition from relief work to development. The organization’s core activities currently focus

¹²¹ One of the core agencies working in the same sector is PACT, which used to fund the NSCC and also ‘poached’ some NSCC staff. Relations since then have cooled, but there are still some joint funding schemes, owing to the similarities in their work.

¹²² Even though they may use smaller NGOs to implement certain projects, they often rely on the NSCC to execute larger-scale programmes.

¹²³ Peace-building includes conferences, resolution of conflicts and advocacy with the government on CPA implementation.

¹²⁴ See also the statement of the Sudanese Heads of Churches, 19 August 2006: “We note with regret the isolation of the churches in the implementation of the CPA although the churches played a major role in bringing about the agreement.”

¹²⁵ Interview, 9 August 2006.

¹²⁶ Interview with Diane de Guzman, UNMIS, 10 August 2006.

¹²⁷ Sudan Emergency Operations Corporation.

¹²⁸ Both the SCC and the NSCC were integrated into the CEAS’s governing structure in 1996.

¹²⁹ Interview, 8 August 2006.

¹³⁰ This is the main reason why CEAS is widely perceived as the humanitarian wing of the NSCC.

on several partnership programmes in various regions,¹³¹ health, and emergency assistance to member churches and their agencies. In addition, it holds workshops and organizes training programmes ranging from project management to conflict resolution. Regarding the CPA peace process, CEAS takes a very clear stand. While regarding it as an excellent document, CEAS has doubts about whether it will be honoured by all stakeholders. Given the fragile environment in the South, it is necessary to be extremely careful not to neglect growing tensions among the local communities. Inter-religious dialogue therefore is an important element of peace-building in Sudan. Although CEAS does not have structural relationships with Muslim orders or organizations, it is open to potential co-operation with them: “This is a time of freedom. If they want to join, they can.”¹³²

Sudan Aid

Operating as a branch of the headquarters in Khartoum, Sudan Aid’s Juba office is far smaller but still of a considerable size, with some 30 staff members in Juba. Staff numbers in the dioceses in the regions of southern Sudan vary from one to the other, and it is difficult to obtain precise figures. The organization represents the humanitarian wing of the Catholic Church and receives the bulk of its funding through the Catholic structures and affiliated agencies (such as Caritas). In addition, Sudan Aid works closely together with the European Humanitarian Aid Organization (ECHO) and UN agencies as an implementation agency throughout Sudan.

Juba’s Muslim community

In contrast to Khartoum’s wide spectrum of Islamic believers, Juba’s Muslims all consider regard themselves simply as followers of Islam, irrespective of the range of orders that exists in the North. They are a clear minority in all aspects of society and, despite the fact that the southern Muslims, in being ‘southerners’, suffered during the war just as non-Muslim southerners did, many have a sense of defeat. In fact, some perceive the Christians as adopting a non-reconciliatory attitude, at times even as “taking revenge”¹³³ after the CPA brought them to power. Being neglected by the new political authorities in Juba, the southern Muslims would welcome support from Khartoum. Despite some initial efforts, however, none of the Muslim orders has been genuinely interested in responding to requests from the Muslim Sheikhs in Juba for financial assistance. The requested funds included money for a Muslim initiative to promote inter-faith dialogue in and around Juba. The Muslim community has participated in Christian-organized workshops on inter-faith dialogue and conflict resolution. However, the Muslims have voiced their concern as to whether the Christian churches are ready for genuine dialogue – and to follow up with action thereafter. This leaves the Muslim community in Juba in a rather passive state and little means of making their voices heard. There have been several occasions when Juba’s Muslim community has felt neglected,¹³⁴ a tendency that contributes to their determination to lead a political campaign against the SPLM in the forthcoming elections.

Other churches

The other member churches of the SCC in southern Sudan do not operate from Juba. The African Inland Church, Sudan Interior Church, the Presbyterian Church and the Pentecostal

¹³¹ See CEAS annual report for 2005.

¹³² CEAS official, interview with the authors, 8 August 2006.

¹³³ Interview with the authors, 7 August 2006.

¹³⁴ For example, the Qu’ran University in Juba’s Konja Konja district has not reopened since the end of the war, as the site was not given back to the Muslim community. Even though the national court in Khartoum ruled against this GOSS state decision, there has been no response up to now.

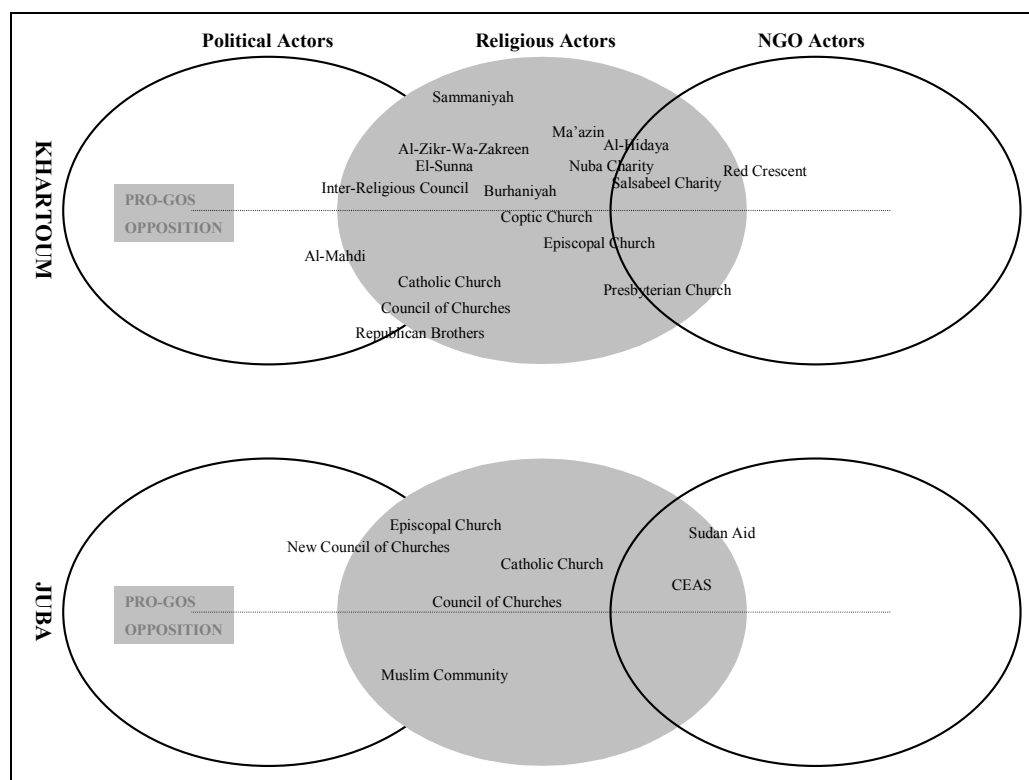
Church have limited involvement in political affairs in Juba and work mainly through networks in their respective constituencies.

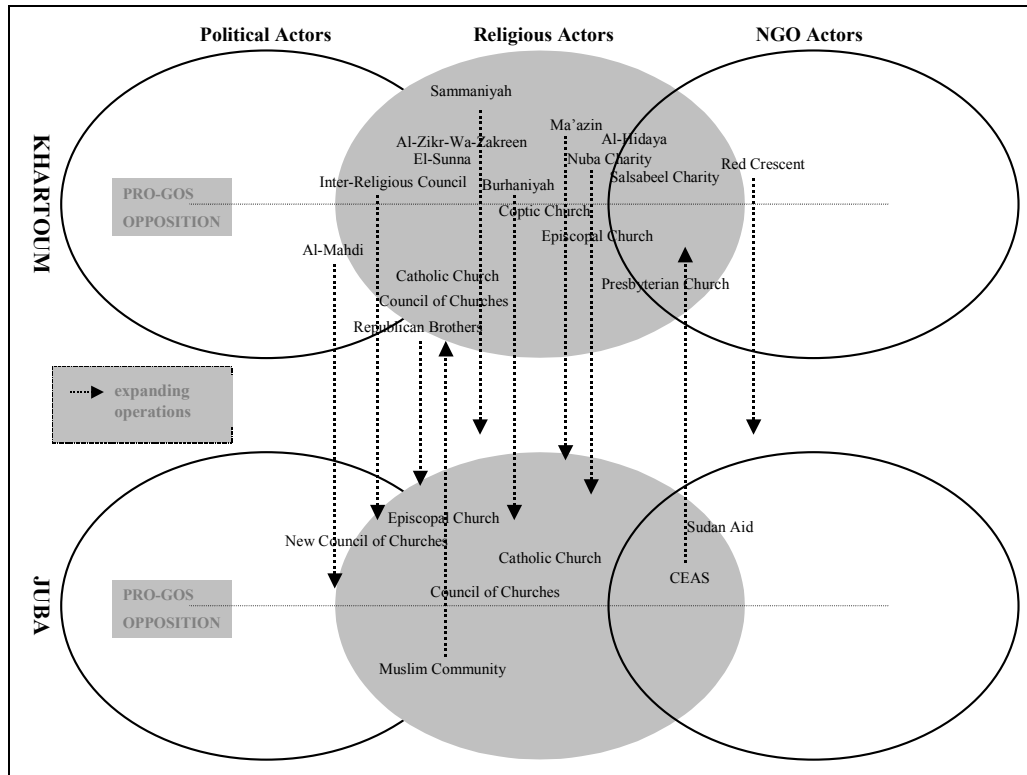
Other (potentially) relevant actors

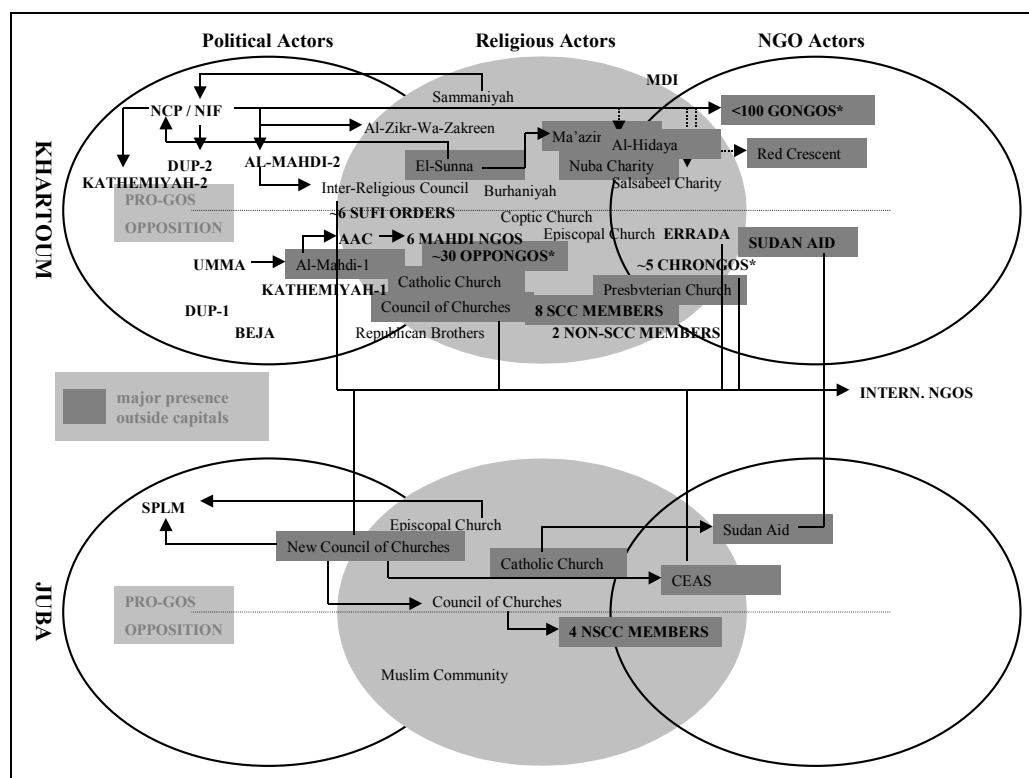
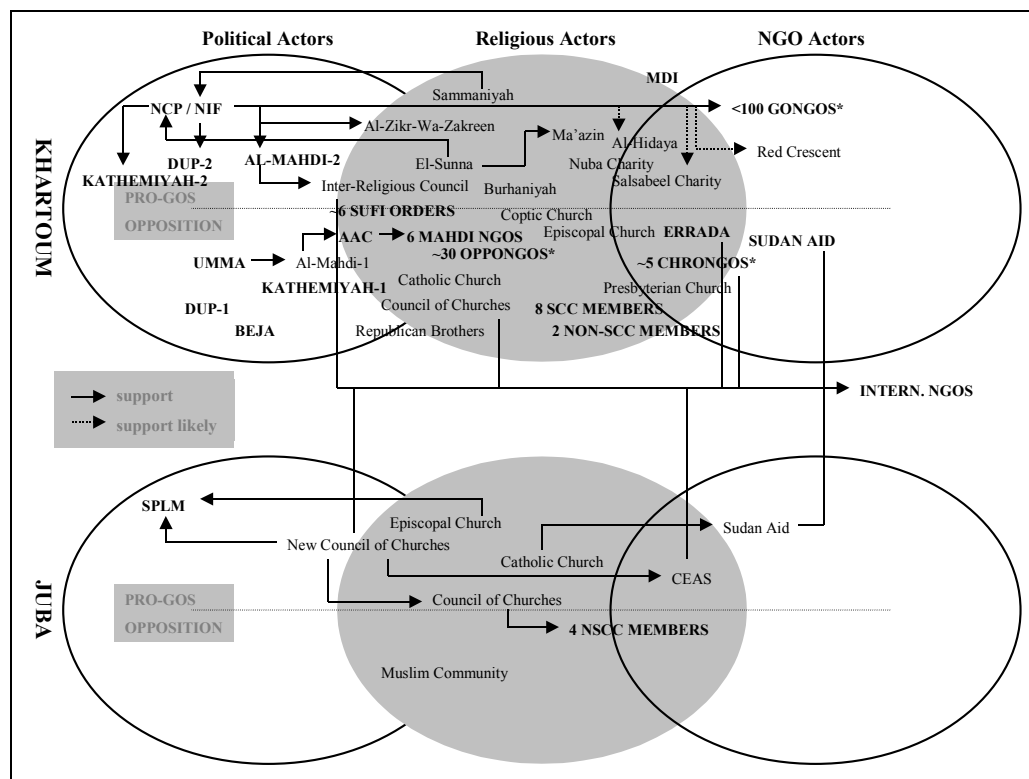
In Juba, things are changing fast. Some of the religious actors who – for various reasons – have not been in Juba in the past, are now starting up operations in the town. This process is far from over, and there are a number of likely candidates that could have an impact on Juba's faith-based peace-building landscape.

The individual Muslim orders of the North do not – yet – have a visible presence in Juba. However, they plan to expand and, given GOSS approval and no major restrictions might increase their activities in the near future. This will have a significant impact on the relationship between Juba's Christian and Muslim communities. In addition, there is the Organization for Islamic Da'wa (MDI). With its international headquarters in Khartoum, it has been very active in Sudan in the past and is currently restructuring its activities in southern Sudan, operating out of Juba. The MDI claims it does not receive direct funding from the government of Sudan, but this might change in the future. A third potential actor in Juba is the New Sudan Islamic Council. This inter-Muslim body is based in Nairobi and still works from within its network in Kenya. There are efforts under way to shift operations to Juba, but this has not materialized yet. Finally, the planned National Inter-Religious Council could make a valuable contribution to the work of Juba's faith-based actors, responding to the wishes of southern Muslims and enabling them to become part of the societal debate.

Annex II: Interlinkages between Sudan's religious actors







Annex III: Categories of contributions to peace-building¹³⁵

Altering behaviour, attitudes and negative stereotypes, and rehumanizing the ‘other’:

Willingness, commitment to peace and motivation are critical for resolving conflicts and building peace. Religion still plays a critical role in the lives of many people in the world today. In many cases, faith-based actors are greatly respected, have greater legitimacy and credibility than other actors, and thus play a prominent role in building peace. They may well possess unique leverage for reconciling conflicting parties and rehumanizing the image of the opponents. As a result they can mobilize and motivate their faith-based communities to change their behaviour and attitudes much more effectively than secular organizations. Many of the actors analysed during the research for this report seem to have contributed, in small or large ways, to altering behaviour. For example, the Life and Peace Institute, Wajir, the Coalition for Peace in Africa, the Acholi Religious Leaders’ Peace Initiative, the Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone, the Faculty of Islamic Studies in Pristina and the *Salam* Institute for Peace and Justice have all contributed to altering behaviour, reducing violence and rehumanizing the ‘other’ as a result of their involvement.

Healing of trauma and injuries:

Because of gross violations of human rights and excessive violence, communities involved in conflict are usually traumatized and have deep injuries. Painful memories of conflict, loss of loved ones and injuries suffered cause deep emotional and psychological stress. Healing these injuries and trauma becomes a major component of peace-building efforts, especially for reconciliation at grass-roots level. Religion can provide emotional, psychological and spiritual resources for healing trauma and injuries. Islam, Christianity and other religious traditions are usually an important source of healing in such cases. Among the peace-building actors analysed in this report, World Vision International, the International Association of Religious Freedom, the Mennonite Central Committee, the Centre for Justice and Peace-Building, and, in particular, the Inter-Faith Mediation Centre have been working on healing and reconciliation from a religious perspective.

Contributing to more effective dissemination of ideas such as human rights, justice, development and peace-building:

The moral and spiritual legitimacy of faith-based actors often provides them with a certain leverage for disseminating ideas among their constituents. The deep understanding that they usually have of religious texts, values and principles, as well as the role of religion in conflict and peace, places them in a position to share ideas on religion, human rights, justice, development, and peace-building. On the one hand this applies to religious leaders such as sheikhs, imams and pastors who through sermons and lectures can connect various issues to religious values and principles and thus influence their constituents. For example, the

¹³⁵ This section is taken from Bouta, T., S.A. Kadayifci-Orellana, and M. Abu-Nimer (2005) and therefore refers to some organizations described in their report.

involvement of Muslim religious leaders in Coalition for Peace in Africa seems to have contributed to the dissemination of ideas on democracy and human rights among the Muslim community. On the other hand, this also applies to local and international faith-based actors that are not run by religious leaders per se. For instance, actors such as *Salam Institute for Peace and Justice* and *Women to Women* also contribute to disseminating these ideas through education and by basing their claims on religious texts, values and principles, thus legitimizing these ideas from a religious perspective. Being Muslim and having the necessary training and background is crucial for their effectiveness. Moreover, Christians and multi-faith actors such as the *Centre for World Religion, Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution*, the *Centre for Justice and Peace-Building* and the *Kroc Institute* – through research, education and training – also disseminate ideas on issues related to religion, conflict and peace.

Ability to enlist committed people from a wide pool because of their wide presence in society and broad community base:

Because religion is deeply rooted in most societies and religious institutions are widely present, local religious leaders but also international faith-based actors co-operating with them are provided with entry points to reach out to people. Local religious leaders usually have a broad community base, which provides a wide pool for enlisting committed and unwavering staff. Staff can devote the necessary time to mediation, reconciliation or peace education as part of service to God. They also have access to community members through mosques, churches, community centres and educational institutions such as Qu'ranic schools. This allows them to reach out to larger numbers of individuals than secular groups could, and increases their effectiveness. The *Inter-Religious Councils of Sierra Leone* and of *Bosnia-Herzegovina* and of *Kosovo*, as well as the *Faculty of Islamic Studies in Pristina*, among others, have been able to utilize their broad base for peace-building work. The same applies to actors that are more international in scope, such as the *World Conference of Religions for Peace*.

Challenging traditional structures:

With their moral authority, and knowledge of sacred texts, and by providing successful examples, faith-based peace-building actors can reinterpret religious texts and challenge traditional structures. For example, by providing successful examples of reducing violence and of conflict resolution and by involving religious leaders and elders, *Wajir* and the *Sudanese Women's Initiative for Peace Network* were able to challenge and change traditional perceptions of women's role in society in general and in peacemaking in particular. The *International Fellowship of Reconciliation* and the *World Conference of Religions for Peace*, among others, also aim to strengthen the position of women in religion, as well as in conflict resolution and peace processes.

Reaching out to governments, effecting policy changes, and reaching out to youth:

Because of the legitimacy and moral authority they hold, but probably also because of the specific knowledge they may have about the role of religion in conflict and peace processes, faith-based actors could reach out to government authorities and contribute to policy changes at higher levels. This aspect of their contribution can be observed in *Wajir's* success in convincing the government to include peace-building in schools, as well as the efforts of the *Coalition for Peace in Africa* to identify and have an impact on policy changes.

Mediating between conflicting parties:

Their moral and spiritual authority, and their reputation as honest and even-handed people of God, may also place faith-based actors in a good position to mediate between conflicting parties. With regard to the Muslim actors described in this report, by employing traditional conflict resolution methods such as *suluh*, as was the case with Wajir, Coalition for Peace in Africa, Centre for Research and Dialogue, Acholi Religious Leaders' Peace Initiative and the Inter-Faith Mediation Centre, Muslim actors can contribute significantly to reducing violence and encouraging disarmament, demilitarization and reintegration. Islamic practices of conflict resolution such as *suluh* are important for the Muslim community because they are familiar with them, they are local, and thus are considered authentic and legitimate. In more general terms, several of the faith-based actors analysed have engaged in mediation between conflicting parties. For instance, Sant'Egidio was involved as a mediator in Guatemala, Kosovo and Mozambique; the International Centre for Religion and Diplomacy in Sudan; and the Mennonite Central Committee in Nicaragua.

Encouraging reconciliation, inter-faith dialogue, disarmament, demilitarization and reintegration:

The involvement of faith-based actors in peacemaking can contribute to changing attitudes and encouraging inter-faith dialogue and reconciliation, as was the case with the Islamic community of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Faculty of Islamic Studies in Pristina, Kosovo, Wajir, Inter-Faith Action for Peace in Africa, Centre for Research and Dialogue, Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone, Inter-Faith Mediation Centre, the Mennonite Central Committee and the Community of Sant'Egidio. Outside the realm of the official peacemaking process, however, various faith-based actors have also promoted reconciliation and inter-faith dialogue, such as World Vision International through supporting the Community Council for Peace and Tolerance in Kosovo, the Life and Peace Institute through strengthening the peace-building capacity of churches in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the International Centre for Religion and Diplomacy and the Kroc Institute through organizing faith-based reconciliation seminars in Kashmir.

Ability to connect faith-based communities and others worldwide, and convene large meetings among them:

Being part of a global network of like-minded faith-based actors is advantageous for both local and international actors. For instance, local Muslim peace-building actors who are part of an international Muslim network can connect to this network for support. Being part of such a network also gives them the capacity to mobilize the community, as well as national and international support for the peace process. Through their networking potential, they can also help to spread peace work to wider communities and, as in the case with Inter-faith Action for Africa, the Islamic community of Bosnia Herzegovina, and the Inter-religious Council of Sierra Leone, for example, they can organize large meetings and conferences, and initiate inter-faith dialogue and reconciliation on a larger scale. For international faith-based actors, being part of an international network may provide them quick access to conflicts on the ground. For instance, as the World Conference of Religions for Peace had some Iraqi religious leaders on its board, it managed to quickly enter Iraq after the war was over to prepare for an inter-faith meeting among key religious leaders from inside and outside Iraq.

Annex IV: Map of Sudan



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