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**Darfur Crisis of 2003: Analysis of the Darfur Conflict from the Times of First Clashes to the Present Day**

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## **Darfur Crisis of 2003: Analysis of the Darfur Conflict from the Times of First Clashes to the Present Day**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The present article discusses the conflict in the Darfur region that took place in 2003. Main aim consists in analyzing of major Darfur conflict emphasizing historical events preceded it. The crucial question raised here is what were significant causalities that affected the emergence of terror? The paper deals with the origin and evolution of tension and violence in Darfur. It observes growth of violation throughout history from the pre-colonial period to the present day. Emphasis is placed on the root causes of the Darfur crisis of 2003, its participants and characteristic aspects of this war.

**KEY WORDS:** Darfur, Arabs, Africans, rebels, Janjaweed, race, ethnicity, natural resources, marginalization, state crisis, genocide, tormented triangle

*“Until the depredations of the fearsome rabble known as janjawid began to filter into the international consciousness in 2003, Darfur was one of the last-known places in the world. Poor, remote, landlocked, and sparsely populated, it was obscure even to the rest of the Sudan. Darfur’s western borders are as far from the Red Sea as they are from the Atlantic, and the overland journey from Khartoum, the Sudanese capital on the Nile, still takes days across the desert. Darfur has no valuable minerals (although oil drillers live in*

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*hope), no famous sons or daughters, no natural wonders or monuments to attract any but the hardest foreign visitors. When world of the killings began to seep out in 2003, it seemed to a perplexed world to be news from a void. But Darfur has history“ (DALY 2010:1).*

Darfur - this boundaryregion of western Sudan is known in the whole world from the year 2003, when the conflict simply characterized by dichotomy „Arabs“ vs. „Africans“ started. This violence was closely watched by world media and the public received the information from daily news. Later because of celebrities who get involved in humanitarian aid dedicated to thousands of refugees, who found themselves without a home.<sup>1</sup>The attention was devoted more than roots of violence to victims, refugee camps and various foundations, which were founded to help to the refugees. The causes of the tensions were not so interesting for the media.

**Darfur Before 2003**

Darfur is part of Sudan, which was until recently the largest African state.<sup>2</sup>This fact is reflected in the composition and diversity of Darfur’s people. The western part of the country is home of various ethnic groups, like Furs, Zaghawas, Baggaras, Fallatas, Tunjurs, Masalits and others.<sup>3</sup> Darfur is named after Furs, it is the connection of Arabic word „*dar*“ (home) and „*Fur*“ – name of the main ethnic group, which inhabited this region from pre-modern times (LEVY-LATIF 2008; JOK 2007; DALY 2010). Therefore, Darfur means the home of Furs, although its population is not homogenous.

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<sup>1</sup> For this media coverage Záhorkík talks about the conflict in Darfur as „an synonym of destruction and misery and also a media symbol of African conflicts and wars, as usual western media present them“ (ZÁHORKÍK 2012:111).

<sup>2</sup> Sudan lost this primacy on 9th of July 2011. The independent state Southern Sudan, officially South-Sudan Republic was founded on this date. The more information you can find on the web page of Ministry of foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic. The direct link to the topic:  
<[http://www.foreign.gov.sk/servlet/content?MT=/App/WCM/main.nsf/vw\\_ByID/ID\\_DD6F67735A1B6F80C12576350033486B\\_SK&OpenDocument=Y&LANG=SK&MENU=staty\\_sveta&TG=BlankMaster&URL=/App/WCM/karta\\_statov.nsf/\(vw\\_ByID\)/ID\\_07BBD851E5075BDEC12578CE003BA84C#bookZaklInfo](http://www.foreign.gov.sk/servlet/content?MT=/App/WCM/main.nsf/vw_ByID/ID_DD6F67735A1B6F80C12576350033486B_SK&OpenDocument=Y&LANG=SK&MENU=staty_sveta&TG=BlankMaster&URL=/App/WCM/karta_statov.nsf/(vw_ByID)/ID_07BBD851E5075BDEC12578CE003BA84C#bookZaklInfo)> [cit. 20.2.2014].

<sup>3</sup> Arabic inhabitants also live there, but they started to settle this area later. Hence, we could say that they are not native. The most noticed cultural difference between Arabs and native Africans is nomadism. Africans are known as the settled farmers and Arabs as the nomadic shepherds of goats and camels. It can be seen for example in (JOK 2007).

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Furs belong to the Nilo-Saharan language family and they are Muslims. The majority of them are farmers. The members of the Masalit ethnic group are farmers too. These groups were influenced by the conflict the most. Many of their villages were destroyed, what caused that a lot of them decided to join the rebels.<sup>4</sup> The destiny of Tunjurs was similar. Their style of life is alike to the type of life of Furs and Masalits. They are settled farmers. Many of them were killed or their houses were destroyed during the war in Darfur. Baggaras are nomads, who settled down in Darfur because of the good natural conditions for this type of life. They originally formed part of the Arab population who migrated from the North, but they got married with local native Africans and they assimilated. Zaghawavas are partly nomads (called also seminomads), they are known because of their long travels through the desert towards the border with Libya. They sell herds of camels and trade with salt there. They live on the border with Chad, where many of the people were seeking refuge after ground attacks and air strikes. We suppose that Fallatas descend from the Fulani group from Nigeria. They are nomads and they practice Islam (LEVY-LATIF 2008; HASTRUP 2013; JOK 2007).

All of these (and other native) groups of Darfur we can call simplistically Africans. M. Daly says: *“To the outsider, all the people of Darfur are black, and it is ethnicity rather than „race“ that sets them apart“* (DALY 2010:1).<sup>5</sup> He also says that the Muslim and Arabic culture had gradually permeated to the indigenous traditions. Precisely this Arabic element later acted in the various news as a counterpart to the native inhabitants. These two blocks are simplistically described as two sides of Darfur conflict. However, based on historically documented facts we can see these two entities – Africans and Arabs living together for a long time in peace. How is it possible that they could live side by side without problems before, and then the conflict which caused thousands of deaths and millions of people had to leave their houses started? The situation and relations among the inhabitants were changing gradually. Individual time periods important for understanding of subsequent problems and substantial changes which separated them are described in the following pages.

Like many other states of Africa there are three important periods in the history of Sudan. The period before colonialism, the era of colonialism and the period of independence. During the epoch before colonialism state formation called Darfur

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<sup>4</sup> It could be caused also by the fact that there were conflicts among Furs, Masalits and Arabs, called Fur-Arab and Arab-Masalit wars before 2003. We will mention them later.

<sup>5</sup> Therefore, Daly calls Darfur the „abode of the blacks“, which is part of the „land of the blacks“–part of Sudan (DALY 2010:1).

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Sultanate<sup>6</sup> existed in the territory of Darfur. John Xavier (2008) says: “*The prominence of the Fur Sultanate is the root of much of the ethnic divisions between Africans and Arabs in Darfur today*” (XAVIER 2008:28). The Sultanate was founded in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and it was Islamized because of the exclusivity which the conversion offered. Fur Sultans started to form part of the Arab world and they also gained more power and the ability to trade with other Sultans. Moreover, the education came up with Islam too. The various inhabitants lived there even during this period, but ethnic differences were not so important like belonging to the Sultanate. The Sultans themselves were native Africans, but culturally they were considered to be Arabs, adds Xavier (2008).

We can thus find a rich ethnic, cultural and religious diversity in the territory of Darfur during those times. People lived in peace there and the native cultural elements were mixed with Islamic elements. The same situation lasted during the next centuries, when Darfur formed part of various political formations.

The first significant changes started in the 19th century. The sultanate was independent until the 1874, when the Fur Army was defeated by the Turco-Egyptian invasion to Sudan which started in 1821. Later the period of rapid transformations started. In 1881 Mahdist revolution began and it was supported also by Darfur. Mahdists<sup>8</sup> celebrated several military successes. They defeated the Turks and Mahdist State (1885-1898) was founded. Darfur formed part of it. Simultaneously British successfully occupied Egypt (1882) and they became another important player in the battlefield. They gradually annexed various parts of Sudan and the definite breakdown of Mahdist State came in 1898. The Turco-Egyptian invasion was replaced by Anglo-Egyptian conquest and, “*Anglo-Egyptian Condominium*” was created (COLLINS 2008:33). It was a contract, according to which Sudan fell under the British control managed primarily from Egypt. However, Darfur regained its sovereign status.

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<sup>6</sup> Xavier attributed this title to the Islamization. The kingdom was called the Sultanate after the conversion to Islam (XAVIER 2008).

<sup>7</sup> It is generally reported, that foundation of Darfur Sultanate dates back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century, but Sulayman/Suleiman Solong, the founder of the dynasty of Keira which was ruling in the Sultanate, united the tribes already in 1596. The whole era of the Sultanate is then defined as span of years 1596-1916. We can find this datum for example in Hassan-Ray(2009).

<sup>8</sup> The Army of Mahdists was led by al-Mahdi (real name Muhammad Ahmad ibn Abdallah). Al-Mahdi is considered the only one successor of the Prophet. Its mission is to bring Umma to its original purity, like it was during the time of the Prophet and his companions. This objective should be fulfilled even by the use of the sword, if it is necessary (SANDERSON 1985).

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Fur Sultan Ali Dinar Zakariya Muhammad al-Fadl regained the throne after the collapse of Madhistic state. Darfur was recognized as the independent by a condominium, but it maintained this statute only until 1916,<sup>9</sup> when it was finally attached to Sudan (JOHNSON 2011; COLLINS 2008; HASSAN-RAY 2009). The end of the era of the independent Darfur Sultanate did not provoke decrease of interest in this region. Mansour Khalid (2009) writes: *“Since the nineteenth century, successive Sudanese rulers have never ceased to cast covetous eyes on Darfur; indeed, some of them gave their all to bring it under their jurisdiction”*. He refers specifically to the Turks, the British and Mahdists (Khalid, 2009: 35). Although the British managed to incorporate Darfur to their colonial empire, it was still developing differently from other parts of Sudan. The first uprisings of local ethnic groups started even in the first years after the colonization of Darfur.

Richard Andrew Lobban (2010) draws attention to the fact that between 1916 and 1956 i.e., during the whole era of colonization, sporadic revolts and interethnic conflicts emerged in Darfur. Untowardness of its population was reflected in the Masalit revolt of 1922.<sup>10</sup> The response to this rebellion was demarcation of the border that separated Darfur from Wadai, a region which forms part of Chad today (LOBBAN 2010).<sup>11</sup> This era is important mainly for two reasons. Firstly there were no so much tense interethnic relations to provoke regular violent clashes before. Secondly cliché about the colonial demarcation of the borders „by the ruler“ appeared here.

Why has the situation changed so much? The most important moment that influenced the shift from relatively peaceful coexistence of the ethnic groups to interethnic clashes was the indirect rule established by the British that reached its peak in the 1920s. It was implemented firstly in the southern and western parts of Sudan, which were the most remotest and underdeveloped areas. The administration insisted on the dividing of Darfurians into tribes. This system came from traditional structures, but it was understood

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<sup>9</sup> The British decided to attack Darfur after Ali Dinar provided support to the Turks in the battle against the Allies during the First World War (HASSAN-RAY 2009). Ali Dinar and his two sons were assassinated. It contributed to the success of military forces led by Hubert Huddleston (LOBBAN 2010).

<sup>10</sup> It was rebellion against British colonial administration. The consolidation of indirect rule took place then. On its basis also Dar Masalit (house of Masalits) should be definitely incorporated to the colonial empire. Dar Masalit was occupied by colonial troops and defeated. In 1922 Reginald Davies, ideologue of the regime, was reinstated there as a resident (DALY 2010).

<sup>11</sup> This border is very important, because it separated not only two state territories as it is today, but also British and French colonial empire in Africa. Darfur and Wadai could, therefore, develop differently considering to the differences between the ideas of French and British colonialism.

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wrong and it caused a creation of new hierarchy based on tribal division.<sup>12</sup> Tribal identities and borders between them were underlined in order to reinforce the separation of the groups, as well as to show where the competence of each *shaykh* starts and ends (BASSIL 2013). As a result there was a division of society into solid bounded units. During the times of colonialism the inhabitants of Darfur did not fall under one ruler, but under the hierarchical system of administrators. However, tribal identity was not so important during the period of Darfur Sultanate. Belonging to Sultan was more important back then.

The system of indirect administration was maintained until the independence of Sudan (1956). The resulting situation is described by Noah Bassil (2013): *“British colonialism did nothing to foster a sense of a national Sudanese identity – in effect, the opposite occurred...The policies of the colonial government undermined any possibility of constructing Sudanese national unity after independence. The Sudan that emerged as an independent state in 1956 was a loose confederation of tribal, racial and regional identities”* (BASSIL 2013:88).<sup>13</sup> This was not only the case of Darfur, but of the whole Sudan.

Sudan was thus one of the African countries which had to create a national consciousness artificially. Based on the Bassil's statement we can conclude that it was not easy to reconnect all the groups “under one ruler“. Moreover, Darfur was affected by another adversity. It was less economically developed than the eastern part of Sudan as there were no rich deposits of valuable raw materials. The region was economically neglected without proper investments neither during colonial rule nor during the independent existence of Sudan (e.g. BASSIL 2013; JOHNSON, 2011; ZÁHOŘÍK 2012 et al.). This marginalization and lack of international interest played also in further escalation of the ethnic conflict.

The conflicts appeared mainly among the Arab and the native population. As it was mentioned above, these blocks are usually defined as nomads and farmers. The conflicts between them are connected with different lifestyles and pressure on natural resources – soil and water (ZÁHOŘÍK 2012). Therefore, these clashes take a form of fight for these

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<sup>12</sup> Bassil underlines that there was no tribalism in Darfur like we know it today during the times of the Keira (Darfur) Sultanate. He sees the division of power among the local political structures used during the forty years of colonialism to be the base of tribal entities as they exist today. This administration divided the regions on the basis of tribal entities. Further it gave more power to shaykhs, tribal or clan chiefs, who were positioned as the traditional rulers without the mention about the existence of such establishment in the past. They chaired tribal court held separately for each of the tribes (DALY 2010; BASSIL 2013).

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sources (nomads started to encroach to the territory of farmers etc.) The most known are wars between Furs and Arabs and wars of Zaghawas and Masalits against Arabs.

These circumstances are often referred as a vanguard of the later conflict in 2003. Anders Hastrup (2013) distinguishes these violent events on the basis of geographical breakdown and divides them to wars in *Darfur*, in *Dar Masalit* and in the region *Dar Zaghawa*. He describes the conflict with Masalits of the nineties as a consequence of power, which came into the hands of Islamic elite: “... *Arabs attacked Masalit farmers, burned down entire villages, killing and looting cattle*” (HASTRUP 2013:36). The author compares it with very similar behaviour of *Janjaweed* militia in the subsequent conflict. Because of this reality Hastrup (2013) considers Arab-Masalit wars as the predecessor of 2003 crisis. It looks that the Arabs started the fights. Many people died and many inhabitants were forced to move. Approximately a hundred thousand refugees were moving to the territory of Sudan and other twenty – forty thousand found their refuge in Chad (JOHNSON 2011).

Also Furs had to face the identical situation. Douglas Hamilton Johnson (2011) dates the birth of tension between main Darfur native ethnic group and Arabs back to the times of a devastating drought that hit the region in the seventies and eighties. Lack of rainfall caused a shift of pastoral societies, not only from the Northern parts of Darfur, but also from Chad to the areas populated by farmers. This move caused a mentioned pressure on natural resources and incited the conflict between the new "immigrants" and settled population. Various movements representing the interests of nomads featured against the regional government represented mainly by Furs. Even the war in Chad and the war between Chad and Libya had started, that influenced militarization of Darfur. Johnson (2011) relates the Chad war to the creation of the blocks Arabs and Africans. “*As the war in Chad spilled over into Darfur, it sharpened the divide between „Arabs“ and „Blacks“ (Zuruq), with the Sudanese Islamist parties now equating Islam with Arabism*” (JOHNSON 2011:140). Five thousand of Furs died during this war and other forty thousand lost their homes until the 1989 (JOHNSON 2011).

Another example of wars that influenced the conflict in 2003 is Arab-Zaghawa war. The causes of this clash that started in the sixties are similar to the Fur-Arab war. The most significant cause of the conflict was the fight for access to water. The area where the Zaghawa people live (North Darfur) is generally considered as less fertile and it was affected by drought even more. Although the roots of war are similar to the other conflicts in Darfur region, this clash is specific for one reason. As was mentioned above, colonial border divided Sudanese Darfur from Chad. The border area between Northern Darfur and Eastern Chad (also known as historical Dar Zaghawa) has the same composition of the population, i.e. Arabs and Zaghawas. Hence, after many refugees of the Arab-Zaghawa war

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found their shelter in Chad, conflict continued in refugee camps and extended to the outside of the Sudanese territory (HASTRUP 2013). Therefore, is this clash characteristic for the most clearly internationalization.

Besides the above mentioned conflicts, there were also several other wars not only between Arabs and Africans, but also among the native ethnics. It is important to stress that all of these “little“ clashes caused thousands of deaths and produced a lot of refugees. However, the international attention was paid for it when it was too late, and so in 2003 commenced conflict whose victims are counted in the hundreds of thousands.

**Conflict in Darfur or “the third Darfur rebellion“**

The roots of main conflict in Darfur dates back to the beginning of the twentieth century. Firstly it followed the local wars which were mentioned above, secondly it was part of the civil war between southern and northern part of Sudan (1985-2005). Basically the conflict in Darfur can be seen as a continuation of long lasting violence. Whereas, the year 2003 is generally considered to be its beginning, it is more complicated to say in which year this crisis finished. According to Hastrup (2013), the fundamental atrocities and destruction of Darfur took place in 2003-2005, when the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (also known as Naivasha Agreement) was signed between participants of the civil war, i.e. Sudan People’s Liberation Movement and Sudanese Government. According to Natsios (2012), conflict in Darfur still persists. These differences are caused by different peace agreements which were signed during the war.<sup>14</sup> Although the hardest violence fell silent, there are still some smaller conflicts lasting even in the second decade of the twenty-first century.

In this paper I will follow the official end of the war in 2009, when the peace agreement between the Sudan government and Justice and Equality Movement (see below) was signed in Doha, Qatar (BARLTROP 2011).<sup>15</sup> It should be kept in mind the fact that also this agreement did not bring universal peace and that the conflict to a certain extent still persists.

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<sup>14</sup> Well known is the failure of the Abuja peace agreement, which would have been signed in Nigeria in May 2006. This agreement was signed only by one part of the SLA and Sudan government. Other parts of the SLA and the movement JEM did not sign it (SULEIMAN 2010a).

<sup>15</sup> The final form of the agreement was listed in 2011, when the document for the peace in Darfur was created (The Doha Document for Peace in Darfur DDPD). For more information see the web page of UNAMID <<http://unamid.unmissions.org/Default.aspx?tabid=11060&language=en-US>> [cit.2.3.2014]. There is also a possibility to download full version of the agreement.



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Andrew Natsios (2012) calls this conflict “*the third Darfur rebellion*“. He distinguishes local uprisings as the first Darfur rebellion which took place between 1986 and 1989, the second lasting from 1995 to 1999, and the third rebellion from 2003 to present (NATSIOS 2012:1). Today’s war started in February 2003, when the Darfur rebels (see below) attacked state military bases in Sudan. The reaction was that the government supported the militia *Janjaweed*, which should suppress this uprising. But combating against rebels early turned into slaughter of civilians. The change of situation describes Mahmoud Abbaker Suleiman (2010a) as follows: “*The government of Sudan (GoS) and its allied Janjaweed militias systematically targeted the civilian population when they failed to put an end to the rebellion*“ (SULEIMAN 2010a:9). The number of victims estimated about four hundred thousand (although the Sudanese government talks about the number ten thousand). Another 2.5 million people fled their homes during the war (SULEIMAN 2010a).<sup>16</sup>

### Participants of Darfur Conflict

As it was already mentioned, the war in Darfur is presented as the fight of two blocks. On the one side there are Darfur rebels, particularly the - movements *JEM - Justice and Equality Movement* and *SLM/A – Sudan Liberation Movement/Army* (representatives of the Africans). On the other side there is Sudanese government availing services of the *SAF – Sudan armed forces* and militia *Janjaweed/Janjawid* (representatives of the Arabs).

As first let us mention the Darfur rebels. Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) is described by Mohamed Fadlalla (2005:63) as „*the smaller of the two rebel groups*“, which shares „*similar objectives to those of the SLM/A, but it has not articulated a clear political platform*“. Fadlalla says that it does not claim to be fighting for independence but only to obtain participation in government. He estimates the number of JEM members up to 7000 (FADLALLA 2005). Despite of some conformity with the requirements of JEM and SLA, there are also a lot of differences. Johan Brosché and Daniel Rothbart (2013) who deal with these issues mention religious difference, which comes from the fact that JEM is the movement with a strong Islamic ideology, connected to the prominent Islamist Hassan al-Turabi. The second one are ethnic differences of these movements and their fight for the power (BROSCHÉ-ROTHBART 2013). JEM is more multi-ethnic, open to all who advocated an African Islam (MAMDANI 2004), whereas SLA is composed mainly by

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<sup>16</sup> Because of the high number of war affected civilians, the conflict in Darfur is known as „the worst humanitarian crisis of the early twenty-first century“(Levy, 2009: 6).

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Furs, Zaghawa and Masalits (FADLALLA 2005). Mamdani (2004) says that while there are connections between JEM and Islamist regime of al-Turabi, SLA is linked to SPLA (Sudan People's Liberation Army), which operates in the southern part of the country (now independent South Sudan).

While Fadlalla (2005) considers JEM as a smaller movement than SLA in his book of 2005, Brosché and Rothbart describe the dominance of JEM in their book printed 8 years later when saying that JEM had changed „*from minor militia group to a major military force inhabitants*“ (BROSCHÉ - ROTHBART 2013:71). It resulted in winning successes of the movement in the western part of Darfur. JEM was, therefore, presented as the “*only genuine representatives of Darfurians*“ (ICG 2005b:7 In. BROSCHÉ - ROTHBART 2013:71).<sup>17</sup>

The Sudan Liberation Army<sup>18</sup> is the movement whose participants came from original Fur militias formed in the eighties. It consisted mainly of Furs, Masalits and Zaghawas (FADLALLA 2005)<sup>19</sup>, groups which are fighting with Arabs for a longer time. The aim of SLA is to reach and put in the practice ideas and requirements of Sudan Liberation Movement. The SLA is regarded as armed part of the SLM, which was formed in response to the unfair political, economic and social practises of the Sudanese government towards black Africans of Darfur (TOTTEN 2011). SLM/A is trying to fulfil a political declaration, described by Samuel Totten (2011): “*The brutal oppression, ethnic cleansing and genocide sponsored by the Khartoum government left the people of Darfur with no other option but to resort to popular political and military resistance for purposes of survival*” (The SLA and SLM 2003:1-2 In. TOTTEN 2011:14). This declaration shortly describes the goals of SLM/A and methods of achieving them. It also contains a sort of justification of the chosen procedure.

SLA entered into the struggle for the equal rights of Darfur and its inhabitants against the government favouring the Arab component of the Sudanese nation. JEM and other movements joined it later. They formed the opposition to pro-government militias *Janjaweed* and Sudan Army. The word *Janjaweed* tells us a lot about the activities of militia and how the people perceive it. *Janjaweed* is usually translated as aspirit or devil

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<sup>17</sup> It was JEM who published the Black Book; Imbalance of Power and Wealth in the Sudan – critical book about the conditions which rule in the country (SULEIMAN 2010b; TOTTEN 2011).

<sup>18</sup> Movement is known also like Darfur Liberation Front/DLF (SULEIMAN 2010a).

<sup>19</sup> Fadlalla (2005) estimates the number of SLA's fighters for sixteen thousand.

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riding a horse (HASSAN-RAY 2009; LEVY 2009).<sup>20</sup> Those horse ridersland attacks were supported by aerial bombing of Darfur provided by Sudanese Army (THEERASATIANKUL 2008). Such mutual support has proved extremely successful, because the number of victims and refugees<sup>21</sup> from Darfur was tremendous.

Except the “traditional“ military tactics and the use of weapons, members of *Janjaweed* became known for raping women as one of the practices of the fight. According to Suleiman (2010a): *“They used rape and other forms of sexual violence as a weapon of terror and humiliation. The standard procedure is for Janjaweed to kill all of the males in the village, regardless of age, and rape the women and the girls,”* says Suleiman (2010a:9). He adds that militias used also strategic landscape burning in order to destroy everything that could be useful for inhabitants of Darfur. As a result, people who survived the massacre did not have a place where to return and they became Internally Displaced Persons (SULEIMAN 2010a).

The role of mission *UNAMID – The United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur* (BESADA 2010) is to create and maintain the peace in Darfur. It does not participate in Darfur crisis directly but it is necessary to mention it at least marginally. This mission was founded on 31th of December 2007, when it replaced *AMIS*.<sup>22</sup> It includes approximately twenty-six thousand members composed of soldiers, police and civilian members as the official website of the mission says.<sup>23</sup> Mission's mandate is always extended for a year and still continues.

### **The Basic Causes of the Conflict in Darfur**

The Darfur war is typical example of multi-causal conflict.<sup>24</sup> Let us focus first on ethnic and racial aspects that are generally often discussed. The artificial character of tribal

<sup>20</sup> The name consists of two words – „Jin“(spirit/devil) and „jawad“ (horse) (HASSAN-RAY 2009:499).

<sup>21</sup> Except the smaller number of refugees who looked for their refuge abroad, the majority of them stayed in Sudan. We call them „IDPs – Internally Displaced Persons/People“ (SULEIMAN 2010b: 208; 2010a 9).

<sup>22</sup> Mission AMIS – African Union Mission to Sudan was the predecessor of UNAMID (BESADA 2010).

<sup>23</sup> Full details of the mission can be found on the official website of the UNAMID available at the link: <<http://unamid.unmissions.org/>> [cit. 5.3.2014].

<sup>24</sup> Totten speaks about the five most important causes – „extreme drought and desertification, Arab supremacism, authoritarianism, the disenfranchisement of the black Africans at the hands of the Sudanese government and an ever-increasing bellicosity in the region“ (TOTTEN 2011:6).

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division of the inhabitants of Darfur was already mentioned in the historical excursion. Except the fact that ethnicity was previously not so important like during the period of colonialism, there is one more interesting fact. So far we have talked about Furs, Masalits and others as about the “black“ Africans. Arabs evoke an idea of people with lighter skin and finer facial features. Is it true that they are so different? And are the ethnicity or race substantial roots of violence in Darfur?

Most of the authors say that this division of the Darfur population is not sustainable. In terms of ethnicity, according to Suleiman: “*Centuries of intermarriage have further blurred ethnic distinctions*“ (SULEIMAN 2010a:8). Another expert on the Darfur Alex de Waal describes African-Arab dichotomy as *historically and anthropologically bogus*. He says that Darfurian Arabs are also *indigenous, black and African*,<sup>25</sup> that there are not clear racial or religious differences between these groups. They are living together through centuries, they are all Muslims. The conflict among them has started because of the disputes over theft of camels and grazing rights. The war in Darfur was not a slaughter of one group by the other, as he adds (de WAAL 2004 In. SULEIMAN 2010a:8).

The author does not like to mix the concept of race and physical characteristics with ethnicity, but it is important to draw the attention to the fact that many information (presented mainly by media or non-academic texts) about the Darfur conflict give the impression, that the ethnicity is manifested also by "external signs". That would mean that the ethnicity is quasi equal to race here. The conviction that the Arab population forms part of the Caucasian race (in this case by chance aptly „white race“), makes the sense that it is a conflict of “blacks“ and “whites“ in Darfur. As we could see the dichotomy Arab-African is more based on self-identification, a sense of belonging and way of life than on appearance. Moreover, they coincide religiously and often use also the same language.<sup>26</sup> Therefore, we better prefer the distinction between them based on their different way of life – nomads/farmers - and we understand and use terms Arabs and Africans with the emphasis on this environmental specification.

One of the most important causes of Darfur conflict are natural resources. Because of the periods of drought, which caused the famine,<sup>27</sup> the nomads started to move to the parts

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<sup>25</sup> This idea is presented also by Mamdani (2004).

<sup>26</sup> The Africans of Darfur are also Muslims and they speak or understand Arabic. Even the name Darfur is Arabic. See e.g. (JOK 2007; ZÁHOŘÍK 2012).

<sup>27</sup> For more information about this period of drought and consequent problems with sufficient food see Alex de Waal: *Famine that Kills: Darfur, Sudan* (2004).

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settled by farmers. This movement has started in the eighties,<sup>28</sup> when the northern and central parts of the region were desertified and the shepherds of camels moved to the south, to adopt the agricultural way of life (O'FAHEY 2006:26 In. ZÁHOŘÍK 2012). It caused increased pressure on water resources and the conflicts between the people who were living there and the new inhabitants started. These conflicts continued until the next century and as de Waal says, the competition of grazing rights was the cause of today's conflict too. So we can speak about two commodities of natural resources which caused the fights – water and soil. Inhabitants of Darfur after the first violence tried to solve the disputes in the traditional way, by negotiations of chiefs (mentioned *shaykhs*). However, this system was due to the effort of the Khartoum government to establish the state administration in Darfur attacked (JOK 2007; ZÁHOŘÍK 2012).

Here we can see another fact associated with the emergence of the war – economical marginalization of Darfur. In contrast with Southern Sudan, where rich oil deposits are available and it would be thus inappropriate for Sudan to lose this part of the country, Darfur was not so interesting for Sudan government. Nevertheless the Khartoum government wanted to control this territory and so negotiations held by *shaykhs* were prohibited. However, this step proved as unfortunate later. The Khartoum government among other affairs could not give sufficient attention to the remote region.

The ruling regimes of Sudan deprived the rights of Darfur's inhabitants from the times of the end of the colonial rule. Each president, prime minister and other important persons have always been from Arab population and they came from the northern part of Sudan, writes Suleiman (2010b). It is understandable that someone who was born hundreds of kilometers away and does not know the realities of Darfur can hardly replace the tribal chief, who is not only familiar with the problems, but also has personal experience with the local situation.<sup>29</sup> Such discrimination when high offices did not receive people from other parts of the country was the stimulus for creating the Black Book. "*There has never been a Sudanese head of State from any of the other regions of the country. This state of affairs in Sudan has been reflected clearly in The Black Book: Imbalance of Power and Wealth in Sudan*" (SULEIMAN 2010b:205). This book cannot be considered as a cause of the

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<sup>28</sup> We know about the conflicts for water and soil which took place those times between Masalits and Arab militias (FLINT-DE WAAL 2008:57 In. ZÁHOŘÍK 2012).

<sup>29</sup> Záhořík describes replacing of chiefs as a struggle against obscurantism which was led by new regimes after the gaining of independence. They saw this obscurantism in the chieftaincy, tribalism, religion and other traditions, therefore, the chiefs were replaced by modern political elites. He also points out that these elites were ruled from the capitals and usually without contact with rural areas (ZÁHOŘÍK 2012).

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conflict but it became to be a kind of doctrine for the Darfur rebel movements. Its ideology „allowed the unification of different Darfur elements in resistance to government“ (ZÁHOŘÍK 2012:113). The book was published anonymously, but Khalil Ibrahim Muhammad<sup>30</sup> is considered as one of the authors as well as Hassan al-Turabi<sup>31</sup> (DALY 2010; PIGOTT 2009).

We can mention *state crisis* and *criminalization of the state*<sup>32</sup> as a following causes of the marginalization of Darfur by government. The state crisis is represented by involving the state as a participant of the conflict, criminalization is represented by violence directed against one group of inhabitants. Both of these phenomena are also connected with Sudanese Army, but primarily with militia *Janjaweed*. The government could “justify“ the participation of the SAF in fights by excuse that they tried to suppress the rebels who were the first who attacked official military bases. However, the support of militias *Janjaweed* was criticized. This support was carried out at more levels. Nicole Theerasatiankul (2008) emphasizes that new facts of relations between the government and militias were found out over time. She says that the government was not only „supporting their activities“, but also „recruited *Janjaweed* members, supplied resources to the militia and provided air support to *Janjaweed* land attacks“ (THEERASATIANKUL 2008:74). This information was received by the public throughout the time. Sudan government tried to distance themselves from the activities of the *Janjaweed* and did not want to be responsible for the actions of the militia. But Mamdani (2004) says that the government organized militias in Darfur already in 1990. He adds that *Janjaweed* is not organization with a unified command and it could be easier for the government to support the militias than to try to dissolve them. Mamdani does not want to decrease the degree of responsibility of the government for the actions of the *Janjaweed*, but he says: “Those who start and feed fires should be held responsible for doing so; but let us not forget that it may be easier to start a fire than to put it out“ (MAMDANI 2004:259). It is possible that Sudan government is not responsible for all *Janjaweed* atrocities, but it is responsible for their formation and for the support given to militia during the war.

Another cause which enters into the conflict of Darfur is religion. Islam is characteristic for both sides of the conflict and so it might seem that religion should not be

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<sup>30</sup> The founder of the JEM.

<sup>31</sup> Hassan al-Turabi is one of the most well-known opponents of Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir. They separated after they broke up in the views in 1999. Al-Turabi became one important person of the ideology of Darfur opposition to the government (MAMDANI 2004).

<sup>32</sup> See ZÁHOŘÍK 2012.

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the source of tension and violence. The interesting point of view is mentioned by Samuel Huntington (2007). He analyzes Islam in terms of its conflicting nature and speaks about „*Islam's bloody borders*“ (HUNTINGTON 2007:254)<sup>33</sup>, which relate mainly to the conflicts between Islamic and non-Islamic “civilization“ in border regions. Huntington also brings the findings which can be applied in the case of Darfur. He found out that on the basis of statistical data Muslims participate in religious conflict more than other civilizations and not only on borders of other cultures but also within the Islamic world. “*Islam's borders are bloody, and so are its innards*“ he says (HUNTINGTON 2007:258). This fact is in question, it shows that religion does not have to enter into the conflict only where two or more religions meet each other. Huntington refers to other authors, whose statistics data confirm that wars where the Muslims participate are very bloody with results of thousands of victims what we can unfortunately confirm on the example of Darfur (HUNTINGTON 2007). The tendency of Muslims to participate in armed conflicts is cited in the book as a result of increased militarization of Muslim societies (PANE 1989 In. HUNTINGTON 2007). Verification of this statistical data and the appetite to fight of the participants of Darfur war caused by their religiosity would require further empirical exploration. However, on the basis of the conditions mentioned by Huntington the premise could be considered as a confirmed.

### **Darfur as Genocide and "tormented triangle"**

The war in Darfur is denoted as genocide. Previously the conflict was designated as war, crisis, rebellion, while the word genocide was used very carefully. Currently it is used often and without embarrassment. The reason is the „*resolution 467*“ that was voted by members of the U.S. House of Representatives on 22th of July 2004. It was confirmed that the conflict in Darfur is genocide by this step and UN Secretary Kofi Annan, together with U.S. Secretary Colin Powell appealed to the international community in order to put pressure on Sudan Government (TOTTEN – MARKUSEN 2006). Many authors criticise the fact that although the world committed that there will not be any other genocides after the Holocaust, they still exist. In this respect, Gregory H. Stanton (2008) says: “*When the Genocide Convention was passed by the United Nations in 1948,*<sup>34</sup> *the world said, „never*

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<sup>33</sup> See also (HOŘÍNEK 2007:28).

<sup>34</sup> Convention is known as the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (CPPCG). For more information see official page of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic. Direct link to this topic: <[http://www.mzv.sk/servlet/content?MT=/App/WCM/main.nsf/vw\\_ByID/ID\\_BDFA0F8449A80739C125763500337369\\_SK&CTYPE=%C4%BDudsk%C3%A9%20pr%C3%A1va&&OpenDocument=](http://www.mzv.sk/servlet/content?MT=/App/WCM/main.nsf/vw_ByID/ID_BDFA0F8449A80739C125763500337369_SK&CTYPE=%C4%BDudsk%C3%A9%20pr%C3%A1va&&OpenDocument=)

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again“. *But the history of the twentieth century instead proved that „never again“ became „again and again“* (STANTON 2008:281).<sup>35</sup>

We speak about genocide in Darfur as about genocide against Africans.<sup>36</sup> They had to faced to common ground and air attacks, rape and burning of villages. Totten (2011) points out that many Arabs firstly not interested in the war later joined the SAF and *Janjaweed*. Under the threat of their own death they participated in the killing, but as he emphasized, not all of them were direct members of militias (TOTTEN 2011). Greta Marie Stults (2008) interested in sexual violence issuesays that it is weaponused by GoS and *Janjaweed*in the fightagainst Darfur insurgent groups, it is „*an attempt by the Sudanese government to displace and sometimes destroy elements of the Darfuri people*“. She adds that the estimates put the number of victims of this violence in the thousands (STULTS 2008:2; Amnesty International 2007 In. STULTS 2008). Stults underlines that not all of the violence was aimed exclusively at women. Consequently, she prefers using the term sexual violencerather than gender-based violence (STULTS 2008).

Apart from rape there are also records of beating or lurking of offenders to women and girls close to refugee camps, where they were looking for wood etc. (IBID; HRW 2008; 2007).The total number of victims is very hard to fix on. Women are afraid of the family's reaction and of the possible exclusion from the community, and so many of them hide that they have become the object of violence. Such behaviour of militias thus could bring the "destruction of Darfuri elements" in several ways. Firstly women could to conceive, secondly many of them were rejected by their husbands and families. Moreover, after the reading of details about the horrific practices which were used during the carrying out of violence, we can assume that many of them would not be able to get pregnant anymore.<sup>37</sup>

Another aspect is the participation of foreign countries on the conflict in Darfur. Let us discuss the role of neighbouring states. Some authors call the relations among Chad, Central African Republic and Darfur as tormented triangle. Jennifer Giroux, David Lanz

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<sup>35</sup> Building upon the genocides of twenty century Janey Levy (2009) speaks about genocide in Darfur as an „another entry in this tragic catalog“(LEVY 2009:6).

<sup>36</sup> The majority of victims consisted of Furs, Masalits and Zaghawas (TOTTEN 2011).

<sup>37</sup> The statements made by the victims themselves can be seen in the publication of organisation Human Rights Watch entitled *Five Years On: No Justice for Sexual Violence in Darfur* (2008), and details of sexual violence can be seen in publication *Darfur 2007 Chaos by Design* (2007) issued also by HRW.



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and Damiano Sguaitamatti (2009) analyzed the complicated relationships among its members and they described it by this event: „*In February 2008, approximately four thousand rebels from eastern Chad travelled a thousand kilometres across the entire country to attack the capital, N'Djamena, with the aim of ousting President Idriss Deby. The weapons and pick-up trucks that the Chadian rebel used in the attack were provided by the Sudanese government in Khartoum. The rebels had prepared their attack in western Darfur and north-eastern Central African Republic (CAR)*“ (GIROUX-LANZ-SGUAITAMATTI 2009:1). But Sudan was not the only one of this trio, who supported the rebels with aim to unseat the government of the other state. Idriss Deby who has the Zaghawa origin fostered JEM – the movement formed mainly by Zaghawa people. On the contrary, he supported rebels fighting against al-Bashir.<sup>38</sup> Francois Bozize, president of CAR, has the close relationship with Deby and the northeastern part of the country is used by Chadian and Darfur rebels for training and as a shelter. In addition, Chad and CAR became to be the destination of thousands of refugees from Darfur (FADLALLA 2005; GIROUX-LANZ-SGUAITAMATTI 2009; ZÁHOŘÍK 2012).

As we can see, the situation is very complicated and events of violence in region influence each other. Another participant who enters this event is Libya. Totten (2011) connects its involvement with idea of Arab supremacism. The idea in Sudan draws on Muammar al-Gaddafi's concept of "Arab belt", which he wanted to establish throughout Africa (TOTTEN 2011:7). However, it did not remain only at the level of ideology. In the seventies and in the eighties Al-Gaddafi supported various Arab groups in Sudan because of his pan-Arabic ideas (DE WAAL – FLINT 2008: 22, 37 In. BROSCHÉ-ROTHBART 2013). However, later the situation has changed. Al-Gaddafi hoping to enhance influence in sub-Saharan Africa offered a military support to JEM and SLA from the start of the rebellion in 2003 (MARCHEL 2007:181 In. BROSCHÉ-ROTHBART 2013). As we can see, Darfur became the conflict of interests of all neighbouring countries. International policy, relations of Sudan with surrounding states and other interests and advantages of results of the war were also involved in the conflict. Violence taking place in neighbouring countries affected Darfur not only by ideology but also in a material way due to the flow of arms and military equipment.

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<sup>38</sup> The similar situation occurred also between Sudan and Eritrea. Eritrea situated more than thousand kilometers far away supported JEM and SLA in their fight against the Khartoum government. It was revenge for Sudanese support of rebel groups in Asmara in 2003 (ICG 2010b:16-17; UCDP 2011 In. BROSCHÉ-ROTHBART 2013).

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### Darfur After the Genocide

Today, Darfur is in the state of fragile ceasefire. The situation still could not be called post-conflict. Nevertheless, some changes happened after the agreement of Doha which was signed by JEM and Sudan government in 2009. However, it is disputable to what extent are changes positive. *The Special criminal court on events in Darfur* established by government in June 2005 had objective to deal with people responsible for the war crimes. Chandra Lekha Sriram, Olga-Martin Ortega a Johanna Herman (2014) point out that „no mid-or high-level government officials or militia leaders were suspended from duty, investigated, or prosecuted for serious crimes in Darfur“. Therefore, they speak about this court as „an attempt to prevent international trials“ (SRIRAM-ORTEGA-HERMAN 2014:151). The results of this court is simply considered as a disappointment, mainly because of the mentioned Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

The elections in 2010 brought another expected changes. Many people hoped that it terminate the marginalization and improve the situation in this region. According to the report of the organization The Carter Center (2010) which deals with these elections, for many inhabitants of Darfur was impossible to vote. The verdict of this report says: „*The elections in Darfur cannot be considered credible*“ (The Carter Center [TCC], 2010:5). This conclusion was reached by the organization on the basis of several facts. Its employees did not get into many parts of the region because of persistent danger. Many IDPs leaders were arrested and there were no electoral commissions in the several refugee camps. In addition, irregularities in the election results was also detected (TCC 2010).

Elections were not available for all voters and others could to give up opportunity to vote because of lasting violence in the region. At the end it does not matter how were the elections conducted. The result is that Omar al-Bashir (who was ultimately accused of involvement in the genocide by the international court) convincingly won and remained in the office. At the same time the political party *NCP – National Congress Party* of which leader is just al-Bashir won in the parliamentary elections (TCC 2010). In essence, the leadership of the country has not changed a lot, and unfortunately the same hold for the violence.

The latest news on the page of UNAMID that monitor the situation in Darfur from March 2014 speaks about the other thousands of people who left their homes and about persistent fights.<sup>39</sup> Instead of improving the situation in Darfur, the positive reports about

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<sup>39</sup> There are more than twenty thousand new IDPs according to this page. More about this report you can see on the link:

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the negotiations between leaders of rebel groups and signing the peace agreement are mixed with reports about unceasing violence and other displaced persons. These tidings are the indicator why the author herself considers the conflict in Darfur as unfinished. Despite of the peace agreement from Doha, some subgroups of the rebel continue in fights with the Sudanese government, which is inspite of the confirmation of support for the *Janjaweed* militia stilled by Omar al-Bashir, just as it was in 2003. Although the main war maybe has finished, small fights still remain.

Moreover, the militia *Rapid Response Force RRF* which is under the administration of the capital was founded in 2013. Eric Reeves calls this militia *The New Janjaweed* because its behaviour is similar to a spree of the *Janjaweed* (REEVES 2014). He adds that even if it looks that the situation in Darfur is slowly getting better, it got worse during the last two years. Rapes, bombings, hunger and diseases, killing of the people coming back to their homes or other fights of rebels with RRF. According to Reeves (2014) this is the today's reality of Darfur. Therefore, it is hard to say that Darfur is found in the post-conflict period.

### Conclusion

The Darfur crisis is an instance of multicausal conflicts with a long list of roots of violence starting with pressure on natural resources, continuing with marginalization and state crisis, and finishing with religion. Its result is more than four hundred thousand of victims, more than two millions displaced persons, and the present situation characteristic by the presence of many non-governmental organisations and humanitarian aid. Except UNAMID ensuring peace an important role have e.g. *Médecins Sans Frontières* and *Red Cross*, providing medical care and also information about numbers of victims. Help to refugees provide and their number monitor e.g. *Save the Children* and *Refugees International*. Also various church organisations joined, e.g. *Catholic Relief Services* or *American Jewish World Service*<sup>40</sup> ensuring water sources or sanitation facilities. Conditions in the region are changing continuously, in spite of the activity of many humanitarian

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<<http://unamid.unmissions.org/Default.aspx?tabid=11028&ctl=Details&mid=14215&ItemID=23318&language=en-US>> [cit.9.3.2014]. Other reports you can see in the section Newsroom on the already mentioned home page of the mission or in the publication *Voices of Darfur* published by UNAMID. The individual issues of the magazine could be seen in the section Publications, also on the home page of UNAMID. The issue from January of 2014 is dedicated exactly to the IDPs.

<sup>40</sup> For more information about organisations see *Darfur Crisis: Progress in Aid & Peace Monitoring Threatened by Ongoing Violence & Operational Challenges* (United States Government Accountability Office [GAO] 2006).

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organisations the reports show that war has not finished yet. We can simply say that if still remain the same people ruling in the country, the situation is unlikely to change. The government denies the relations with *Janjaweed* on one side, however, right after it allows the foundation of similar movement. The rebels have signed the peace agreement, but they continue with violence. It looks that Darfur is still far away from definitive peace. The activity of UNAMID looks positive, due to its peacekeeping and informative function preventing the spread of other incorrect data provided by Sudanese government. With the presence of the mission and its periodic reports, the world has the opportunity to be better informed about the current events. And according to these reports we can conclude, that total cost of Darfur war of 2003 is still not definitive.

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