

Enough Project Report on “Sudan: The Economics of Ethnic Cleansing” John Prendergast, Omer Ismail, and Akshaya Kumar

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WASHINGTON – Economic imperatives are now a major driving force for escalating violence in Darfur, says a

[new Enough Project report](#)

. Based on research from a recent trip to the region, the report confirms that the Sudanese government is sponsoring violent clashes to strategically pacify restless janjaweed militias and consolidate economic control over Darfur’s rich natural resources. (...)

Since the height of genocide in 2003-2005, the government of Sudan has relied on militia groups, acting as proxies, to carry out the regime’s security interests in Darfur where Sudan Armed Forces are weak. In recent years, the government budget has declined, leaving the Sudanese government unable to fulfill patronage obligations. To appease weakened alliances and loyalty among militia groups, the regime now secures its interests by allowing these militias to loot and pillage with complete impunity and keep the spoils as a form of compensation.

Omer Ismail, Darfuri Activist and Enough Project Senior Advisor states:

"As the regime struggles to stay afloat economically and pacify Janjaweed militias looking for greater compensation, Sudanese government officials are increasingly willing to fan the flames of violence, even against some of their traditional allies. The refugees we talked to in Chad explained that the ‘chameleon is switching its colors’. Now, for economic reasons, government-backed Arab militias are even attacking other Arab communities."

Competing Arab groups have clashed in the past. However, the patterns of recent violence reveal that the systematic nature of attacks aligns with Khartoum’s underlying strategy: consolidating control of Darfur’s economy and appeasing Janjaweed militias that the government needs for its fight against the rebel Sudan Revolutionary Front. The report states that a closer look at the common threads of economic motivations for militia groups and the Sudanese government’s patronage networks reveals that motives are visible, as follows:

- North Darfur's gold: Long-favored Abbala tribe cleared the Jebel Amer gold mining area of traditional Beni Hussein custodians but then grew dissatisfied and declared their own rebellion.
- South Darfur's gum arabic: Beni Halba cleared gum arabic producing areas of Gimr with support of second vice president.

- Central Darfur's arable land: Ali Kosheib's Taaysha pushed Salamaat off their land with support from Minister of Finance.

- Nyala clashes: In a rare fissure, Janjaweed and National Security and Intelligence Service forces clashed in South Darfur following a dispute over spoils from an extortion scheme.

By pitting regional groups against each other, Khartoum has been able to seize lucrative resources throughout the region while attributing violence to historical tribal conflicts. Now, clashes between tribes regularly occur around the gold mines in North Darfur, gum arabic groves in South Darfur and fertile lands of Central Darfur, often driving out civilian populations and destroying towns. John Prendergast, Enough Project Co-Founder states: "Crafting a durable solution to the unfolding human catastrophe in Darfur requires understanding the economic drivers of the violence. (...) Civilians are suffering the consequences." (...)

Akshaya Kumar, Sudan and South Sudan Policy Analyst states: "The Sudanese government's continued inaction in the face of systematic ethnic cleansing campaigns is a clear failure of its responsibility to protect its own. Now it won't even allow refugee aid workers into the country. When a state won't fulfill its duties to its people, the international community's responsibility to act is triggered."

The report concludes that peace efforts in Darfur since the mid-2000s have intensified conflict instead of reducing it. Real solutions, the authors write, will only come if the United States and its international partners can play a major role in helping construct a new comprehensive national peace process that replaces the region-specific initiatives, and addresses the core issues that drive violence in Darfur, and include the interests of the rebels and general population.

Read the full [report](#) . Read the full [press release](#).

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