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The other Sudanese civil war

Posted By Colum Lynch | Wednesday, March 14, 2012 - 4:32 AM | [Share](#)



Mukesh Kapila, a former U.N. envoy to Sudan who was among the first to raise the alarm over atrocities in Darfur, recently returned to Sudan, sneaking into the Nuba Mountains to assess humanitarian conditions in a province that has seen violence and been cut off from international assistance.

The Nuba Mountains have been the center of fighting between Sudanese forces and rebels allied with newly independent South Sudan. Sudan's government in Khartoum, which launched a major offensive aimed at crushing the rebellion, has refused to allow U.N. humanitarian aid workers into the region to witness what is happening and assist hundreds of thousands facing looming famine.

Kapila and other Sudan peace activists, including film star **George Clooney**, have traveled to the Nuba mountains in recent weeks to raise awareness about the plight of the Nubans, and pressed government officials to take dramatic steps to avert hunger.

"People are living on rats, wild flowers, and fruits," Kapila said in a telephone interview with *Turtle Bay*. Kapila, who was representing the advocacy group Aegis Trust, made the case that the situation has grown so dire that foreign donors need to bypass the United Nations delivery system and provide direct assistance to local groups, some of which have links to the rebels, to stave off a massive humanitarian calamity. If some aid is diverted to armed fighters challenging the government so be it.

"In my view, cross-border operations are necessary," Kapila said. "Those who don't want to do it don't have the moral high ground to stand in the way."

The United States has warned that the country this month will **reach** a phase four-level food emergency, one stage short of full-out famine, without a major relief effort. And American officials have been quietly building up food stocks in the area and are considering the prospects of supporting cross-border aid distribution operations that are opposed by the Sudanese government, according to senior U.N. officials and private aid groups. The move follows an increasing push by a group of seven human rights advocacy groups, including the Enough Project and United to End Genocide, which appealed to **Susan**

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Rice, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, last month to support cross-border aid. "Counter-intuitively, sending aid into Sudan by any means necessary -- backed by heavy press for humanitarian corridors -- might be the best way to compel the regime to lift its aid embargo," Enough Project founder **John Prendergast** and Clooney **wrote** in December.

Officials say that Rice is sympathetic to the argument for cross-border operations, which were used to stave off hunger in the Nuba Mountains during the 1990s. The relief assistance then was channeled through several Norwegian and American relief organizations with operations in the area.

Princeton Lyman, the U.S.'s special envoy for Sudan, told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee today that while the United States would prefer the U.N. secure Khartoum's consent for aid deliveries it is considering doing it without it. "Should Khartoum agree to allow access to international humanitarian organizations across the lines of fighting, there must be swift progress on implementation. If necessary, we will examine ways to provide indirect support to Sudanese humanitarian actors to reach the most vulnerable. We have monitoring and accountability tools to make sure that civilians would be the beneficiaries of these activities. Nevertheless, an international program, as proposed by the U.N. and its partners, is the best means to reach the most people and we continue to urge the government to approve it."

But the proposal has faced stiff resistance from the U.N.'s chief humanitarian relief agencies, including the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, and several humanitarian relief groups with operations in Sudan. They fear that the effort would provoke the government into moving against relief agencies, and would undermine the chief principle of humanitarian neutrality.

"I've made it clear on many occasions that I do not support cross-border operations unless they are agreed by both governments, the governments of Sudan and South Sudan," said **Valerie Amos**, the U.N. humanitarian relief coordinator. "And indeed the government of Sudan have said that they would see any kind of cross-border operation as a hostile act."

Amos said that she has proposed that the Sudanese government allow international relief workers to have "cross line" access to displaced civilians in rebel-controlled areas of South Kordofan by crossing through government-controlled territory, not through the border. The anti-government rebels, known as the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (North), have agreed to the plan, but Khartoum has not provided a response.

The Sudanese government kicked the United Nations out of the Nuba Mountains last summer, arguing that their services were no longer needed following the end of the countries' decades-long civil war.

A landmark 2005 peace deal ending Sudan's bloody civil war between north and south paved the way for the latter's independence, but it never resolved the fate of their Nuban allies, who remain subject to northern rule.

The local forces were supposed to disarm following a "popular consultation" that was intended to determine the regions relationship with Khartoum. But the rival forces were never integrated, and the popular consultation never took place.

In May, Khartoum ordered the Nuban forces to either turn over their weapons and submit to northern rule or move to the south. A month later, as the world's attention was focused on South Sudan's independence, Khartoum opened its new military front in the Sudanese territory of South Kordofan, in the country's Nuba Mountains region.

The situation in South Kordofan bears some similarities with Darfur, where Sudanese forces, backed by Arab militias, mounted a brutal counterinsurgency campaign --including large-scale killings and massive displacement of civilians -- against the region's restive tribes. In one ominous twist, South Kordofan's new governor, Ahmed Haroun, a member of Sudan's ruling National Congress Party, is wanted by the International Criminal Court on charges of committing war crimes against Darfurians.

However, the local forces in South Kordofan are far more heavily armed than their Darfurian counterparts and have exercised control over a large swath of the territory. Sudanese officials charge the Nubans with precipitating the latest round of violence by reinforcing their military presence in recent months and refusing to meet their obligation under previous agreements to disarm and attacking local security outposts.

The fate of Sudan's Nubans has become a growing source of concern among human rights observers. Kapila, who traveled to the Nuban Mountains with a rebel escort, said he witnessed a veritable wasteland.

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"What did I see?" he asked. "Basically, as you drive in, you see totally deserted countryside, burnt village after burnt village after burnt village."

The few remaining locals, he said, are terrorized by daily bombings from government Antonov airplanes. In the town of Taroji, he saw two churches hit by overhead bombs, while a local mosque was left untouched. He saw boxes of Mark 4 anti-personnel mines (bearing Farsi writing, and thus apparently of Iranian origin), that had been seized by anti-government forces when they captured the town last month. Spent munitions of Chinese, Russian, Ukrainian, and even U.S. origin were found in towns that faced attacks by government forces.

In the town of Dar, in the Nuba Mountains, he encountered a group of woman collecting water at a pump when an Antonov began its approach, forcing the women to flee to a nearby hill where they sought refuge in hidden nooks, crannies, and caves.

"I was totally paralyzed because I'm not used to Antonovs flying over my head," he said. "These Antonov bombers go around terrorizing the population almost every day."

Kapila said that anti-government forces of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (North), also known as the ninth division, have gradually expanded their control of territory, providing an opening for the delivery of aid from South Sudan.

"These people are being cleared away," Kapila said. If we don't act fast, he added, "we will end up with a situation where Khartoum will delay assistance until it has cleansed the area. The same thing happened in Darfur."

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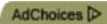
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The war was quick. We easily

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Drug rehab center

Sudan relied on a variety of countries for its arms supplies. Following independence, the army was trained and supplied by the British. However, after the 1967 Six-Day War, relations were cut off, as were relations with the United States and West Germany.

From 1968 to 1972, the Soviet Union and COMECON nations sold large numbers of weapons and provided technical assistance and training to Sudan. At this time the army grew(?) from a strength of 18,000 to roughly 50,000 men. Large numbers of tanks, aircraft, and artillery were acquired, and they dominated the army until the late 1980s. drug rehab center

Relations cooled between the two sides after the coup in 1972, and the Khartoum government sought to diversify its suppliers. The Soviet Union continued to supply weapons until 1977, when their support of Marxist elements in Ethiopia angered the Sudanese sufficiently to cancel their deals. The People's Republic of China was the main supplier in the late 1970s.

Egypt was the most important military partner in the 1970s, providing missiles, personnel carriers, and other military hardware. At the same time military cooperation between the two countries was important.

U.S.-aligned countries resumed supplying Sudan in the mid-1970s. The United States began selling Sudan a great deal of equipment around 1976, hoping to counteract Soviet support of Marxist Ethiopians and Libyans. Military sales peaked in 1982 at US\$101 million. After the start of the second civil war, American assistance dropped, and was eventually cancelled in 1987.[15]

In November 1993, Iran was reported to have financed Sudan's purchase of some 20 Chinese ground-attack aircraft. Iran pledged 17 million in financial aid to the Sudanese government, and arranged for \$300 million in Chinese arms to be delivered to the Sudanese army. [16]

Meanwhile the rebel SPLA was supplied weapons through or by Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Uganda. The Israeli embassy in Kenya also supplied anti-tank missiles to the rebels.[17]
Child soldiers

Armies from all sides enlisted children in ranks. The 2005 agreement required that child soldiers be demobilized and sent home. The SPLA claimed to have let go 16,000 of its child soldiers between 2001 and 2004. However, international observers (UN and Global Report 2004) have found demobilized children have often been re-recruited by the SPLA. As of 2004, there were between 2,500 and 5,000 children serving in the SPLA. Rebels have promised to demobilize all children by the end of 2010.[18]

The Nuer White Army, a minor participant in the war in the Greater Upper Nile region, consisted largely of armed Nuer youths, but it was principally self-organised and often operated autonomously of both elders' authority and the dictates of the major factions.[19]
See also drug rehab center

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