

STAND | digest

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PEACE AND NEGOTIATION PROCESS ■ In an attempt to build bilateral relations between Eritrea and Sudan, Eritrean president, Isias Afwerki, embarked upon a three-day official visit to Sudan on October 21st. Meanwhile, Omer Al-Bashir has revealed that the arms used by Libyan rebels to oust Muammar Gaddafi were supplied by Sudan. Instability in the Unity State continues, as the SSLM (South Sudan Liberation Movement) has accused Governor Taban Deng Gai of human rights abuses against his people in Mayom Town and Nhial Diew, and has committed to violent rebellion against the Governor. Consequently, the SSLM has allowed UN agencies and aid groups one week to evacuate, so they can avoid the pending violence. Meanwhile, the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Hervé Ladsous, has suggested that the UN, the African Union, UNAMID, and key Sudanese stakeholders collaborate to develop a new plan for a comprehensive peace in Darfur. Finally, Sudan has agreed to establish a tripartite technical committee with Egypt and Ethiopia, to review concerns over Ethiopia's Millennium dam project on the Blue Nile.

HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS AND SECURITY ■ The first feature length documentary on conflict minerals in the Congo was released in Britain on October 21st. *Blood in the Mobile* documents how the war in the DRC is partially fuelled by the mining of coltan, a mineral used in all major electronic products.

DRC ■ An up-to-date analysis of pre-election violence in the DRC.



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POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS //

- 1 In recent weeks, there has been a dramatic spike in violence in the South Sudan border regions of Abyei and South Kordofan. The UN estimates approximately 60,000 have fled Abyei and over 70,000 have left their homes in the Nuba mountains. Both the South and North have mobilized troops but the North has largely been responsible for most of the deaths, using aerial bombardments and ground forces to launch attacks and deny access to humanitarian organizations.
 1. Canada should speak out at the UN against the escalating conflict and talk to its international partners to apply pressure on both parties to stop attacks and begin a troop withdrawal.
 2. Canada's Foreign Minister should create a bilateral dialogue with his international counterparts to direct their attention to the grave nature of the situation.
 3. Canadian personnel participating in the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS), in Southern Sudan should influence UN mission commanders to take a more assertive role in protecting civilians.

- 2 The people of South Sudan have voted overwhelmingly for independence. With the Comprehensive Peace Agreement coming to an end and South Sudan getting ready to announce independence in July, there is still much work to be done. In order to avoid future conflicts, the Canadian government needs to focus on facilitating a dialogue between both parties in order to resolve the following outstanding issues (among others):
 1. Border demarcation
 2. Nationality and citizenship
 3. Oil revenue sharing
 4. The future of oil rich Abyei
 5. Sudan's external debts

- 3 In order to effectively prevent, monitor and address grave human rights abuses and mass atrocities, the Government of Canada should:
 - Create a Sub-Committee for the Prevention of Genocide and Other Crimes Against Humanity which should be attached to the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development. This would allow parliament to conduct:
 - MONITORING: keep MPs informed about the onset of genocide and crimes against humanity, including the identifiable stages of these crimes
 - PREVENTION: become proactive in its response to such crises, allowing MPs to act early and utilize a wider set of policy mechanisms
 - COORDINATION: centralize Canada's institutional approach to the issue of mass atrocities by giving one central committee the mandate to comprehensively monitor, study and recommend courses of actions.

DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH SUDAN // JESSICA DUFFY

South Sudanese President Salva Kiir travelled to Khartoum for the first time since the South's succession, to hold talks with Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir. There are many unresolved disputes between the countries, over issues including oil, borders, and debt. A number of joint committees also held closed meetings regarding security, economy, borders and the disputed territory of Abyei before the two presidents met for two days of discussion. While it was not clear whether any new agreements were reached, both sides pledged their intention to resolve their disagreements peacefully, rather than relapse into armed conflict. The heads of state also indicated that more negotiations would follow, insisting there was political will to resolve outstanding issues.

However, for all the sentiments, neither side has demonstrated a real intention of making serious compromises on any of the key issues. Further, neither country has honoured its agreement to withdraw forces from Abyei. The UN has expressed concern, claiming that the standoff threatens a "serious deterioration" of relations in the region between migrating herders and displaced farmers.

Accusations of state support for rebels continue to be levelled at one another, with South Sudan recently alleging that Sudan is training Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebels in remote villages of the Darfur region, in attempts to "destabilise" its southern neighbour. The LRA is a Ugandan rebel group under the command of Joseph Kony, which operates in parts of Uganda, Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan. While it claims to be a religious group, it is accused of being responsible for thousands of murders, rapes and kidnaps throughout the region.

In order to try to prevent LRA forces from entering South Sudan, the 27 entry points along the border with Sudan will be reinforced with police, according to Interior Minister Alison Magaya. In addition to the LRA, South Sudan also expressed concern about

broader terrorist risks. Magaya explained that this was in part because of the nation's weak infrastructure, and also referred to South Sudan's ranking as one of the top five terrorism-prone countries, according to analyses by global risk agency Maplecroft. Hilde Johnson, the top UN official in South Sudan, provided context for this categorisation by explaining that the ranking was based on Maplecroft's designation of the LRA as a "terrorist organisation." This is not universally acknowledged; the UN in particular has not adopted it.

Magaya also announced the government's plans to form a special anti-terrorism unit within its police force, increasing existing efforts to fight crime, instability and cross-border attacks by the LRA.

South Sudanese officials have welcomed the recent decision by the US to provide military assistance in the fight against the LRA. The priority will be to aid in the capture of Kony, who has been indicted by the International Criminal Court on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Their assistance will come in the form of 100 military advisors, who will provide logistical help through capacity training, and will support all four countries currently affected by the LRA. According to South Sudanese army spokesman Philip Aguer, the most important contribution will be the "provision of air surveillance and information."

Two positive steps have recently been taken towards achieving internal peace. In Jonglei state, two ethnic communities, the Lou Nuer and Murle, participated in UN-backed peace talks aimed at ending the violent cycle of cattle raids and retaliation. The most deadly raid occurred in August, resulting in around 600 deaths. The two-day peace building and reconciliation effort aimed to establish a dialogue between the communities, while boosting security in the region.

Meanwhile, last month a civilian-led disarmament process began across three states – Lakes, Unity and Warrap. The UN is expecting thousands of weapons to be collected from local communities.

**PEACE AND NEGOTIATIONS PROCESS //
CHELSEA SAUVÉ**

In an attempt to build bilateral relations between Eritrea and Sudan, Eritrean president, Isias Afwerki embarked upon a three-day official visit to Sudan on October 21st. Until very recently, Eritrea and Sudan, who share a common border, had poor relations on account of Eritrea's support for Southern Sudanese rebel movements. Therefore, it has been suggested that the meeting between Afwerki and Sudanese president Al-Bashir was a re-assessment of the countries' bilateral relations and security concerns in the aftermath of Southern Sudanese independence. The meeting was fruitful, as an agreement of mutual cooperation was established in order to increase regional security and stability.

It seems as though Eritrea was not the only country supporting Southern Sudanese rebel groups: on October 26th, the SPLA (the South Sudan army) seized relatively new Chinese weapons from rebel groups in South Sudan. Meanwhile, Omer Al-Bashir has revealed that all of the arms used by Libyan rebels to oust Muammar Gaddafi were supplied by Sudan. He noted that a Gaddafi-ruled Libya contributed to destabilizing domestic Sudanese politics. Gaddafi provided support for rebel groups in the Western region of Darfur, as well as for the former southern rebels such as the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), who now rule the newly independent state of South Sudan. In the spirit of retaliation, Al-Bashir sought to contribute to Libyan turmoil. Sudan's military support of the Lybian rebels had been conducted in secrecy.

The South Sudan rebel group, SSLM (South Sudan Liberation Movement) has accused Unity state's Governor, Taban Deng Gai, of human rights abuses against his people in Mayom Town and Nhial Diew. The SSLM has suggested that the governor had also stolen cattle and imprisoned citizens unlawfully. On account of this abuse, the SSLM has encouraged uprisings and violent resistance against the Governor. The SSLM has given UN agencies and aid

groups a week to leave in order to avoid the pending violence.

After fierce clashes with the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), the SSLM has announced its victory in capturing Mayom town. With the intention of ruling all of South Sudan, the SSLM has announced its plans to move into other counties until it has gained full control. The US State Department has offered to mediate between the Juba government and the various South Sudan rebel groups, in an attempt to negotiate a settlement; however, as of yet, all parties have rejected this offer.

Meanwhile, the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Hervé Ladous, has suggested that the UN, the African Union, UNAMID (UN Mission in Darfur) and key Sudanese stakeholders collaborate to develop a plan for a comprehensive peace in Darfur. The plan will include the implementation of the DDPD (the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur), including sustained dialogue amongst the various stakeholders, as well as a commitment to engage the people of Darfur in the peace process. Following further consultations, it was suggested that the plan would be complete by the end of December 2011. Unfortunately, the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) and two factions of the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) were absent from these discussions.

Finally, Sudan has agreed to establish a tripartite technical committee with Egypt and Ethiopia, in order to review concerns about Ethiopia's Millennium dam project on the Blue Nile. Such concerns include the potentially negative effects the project could have upon Sudan's share of the water. The tripartite committee will consult international and local experts in order to assess the potential impact of the massive dam. The committee will also be responsible for the establishment and placement of mechanisms committed to fostering cooperation amongst the three countries over the water resources, and the exchange of technical expertise. While Ethiopia has agreed to this committee, in order to increase regional cooperation, it has asserted

its right over development projects on the Blue Nile. The state has also argued that the construction of the dam will benefit downstream countries such as Egypt and Sudan, in terms of its potential capacity to regulate water flow.

HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS AND SECURITY FEATURE: FILM REVIEW OF BLOOD IN THE MOBILE // SHAUNA C. KEDDY

The first feature length documentary on conflict minerals in the Congo was released in Britain on October 21st. *Blood in the Mobile* documents how the war in the DRC is partially fuelled by the mining of coltan, which is used in all major electronic products.

US Congress has passed landmark legislation that requires increased transparency within the extractive industry, but Canada and other states including the UK have yet to enact similar regulations. However, the EU is beginning to look into the matter, which leaves Canada behind on the world stage. This legislation is incredibly important to filmmaker Frank Piasecki Poulsen, who learned through daily phone calls to Nokia, that it is simply not a priority for phone companies to make the change themselves. It needs to happen from the top down, starting with the government enforcing stringent regulations on the suppliers of electronics companies. For governments to make this move, they need consumer demand. They need to hear from us that the lives of the Congolese people are more important than the cheap consumption of phones, iPads, or laptops.

The war in the Congo has killed more than five million people since it began in 1997. It is common knowledge that diamonds are potentially tainted by the exploitation of the people who mine them; but the concept of “blood electronics” is much less widely known. The film takes the viewer into a mine in Bisie, located in the jungles of Walikale. Thousands of people work in this mine every day, many of them children. The conditions were unacceptable — Piasecki even notes that the squalor is “medieval.”

Children as young as twelve work in the mine, located 100 metres underground, where there is no source of clean water. Guards are stationed to collect “taxes” from the workers as they enter the mine. The filmmaker was not permitted to take his camera deep into the mine, so he gave a smaller camera to a young boy who offered to help. The footage shot by the boy exposes the kind of working conditions that would have existed during the rule of King Leopold II of Belgium, who ran the Congo as a slave colony from 1885-1908.

This is exploitation at its height — the people working in these mines are already some of the world’s poorest people, and they are not even earning money. The work may as well be slave labour. Not only has the west turned a blind eye to these horrific conditions, we are actually benefiting from these peoples’ suffering. The film encourages audiences to take action by petitioning MPs – an action we can take here in Canada as well. Although the filmmaker focused on Nokia, as this is the brand of phone he owns, he emphasizes that all cell phones include essential parts made of coltan.

Only about one-fifth of the world’s coltan comes from the Congo; the rest comes from Australia, Brazil, and even Canada. It is therefore possible to switch to a more domestic supply of the mineral, or at the very least to accept minerals from Brazil and Australia only. According to the Enough Project, each cell phone would only cost about a penny more for supply chains to evaluate the mineral smelters and confirm whether the minerals are clean.

The Enough Project’s “Raise Hope for the Congo” campaign spearheaded the legislation against conflict minerals. A group of companies led by Intel and Motorola is now creating a process to evaluate the source of tantalum in supply chains.

DRC: CONTEXTUALIZING THE CONFLICT // NISHA GUPTA

Violence has marred the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in anticipation of the country's second, democratic presidential elections. Local and international rights organisations, including Human Rights Watch, ActionAid, and the Eastern Congo Initiative, are accusing both presidential and legislative candidates of creating a "climate of fear" in the DRC before the scheduled vote on November 28.

These groups have documented numerous incidents (spanning the country) of ethnic slurs and hate speeches, and candidates threatening to sabotage the political opposition through violence. Certain political candidates and their supporters are provoking young people, gangs, the unemployed, and even rebel groups to use force and intimidation techniques against their opponents. In doing so, the candidates are ignoring commitments to democra-

cy, diminishing proper governance throughout the country, and increasing ethnic tensions, all leading to a seriously violent election process.

Even prior to the official start of the campaign, Congolese police began using uncontrolled force to disperse and manage violent clashes between supporters of rival political parties. Last weekend, Reuters Africa reported that a child was shot and killed by police during one of the many brutal political demonstrations between supporters of the presidential opponent Etienne Tshisekedi and those loyal to current president Joseph Kabila.

In spite of losing significant support due to his failure to ensure peace in the region and decrease corruption, Joseph Kabila still stands as the people's favourite to be re-elected. Mr. Tshisekedi, a veteran political opponent with growing support in the provinces of Kasi and in Kinshasa, is projected to be a close second.

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