

## Canada as an international actor in Sudan

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It may seem counterintuitive that Sudan should be the major foreign policy priority for Canada that it is. Historical linkages are not strong; the Sudanese ethnic community in Canada is small in number and trade volume over the years has been small. Yet, Canada plays an internationally recognised role in support of building peace in Darfur. Canada is one of the top three international donors in support of the African Union's Mission in Sudan (AMIS) to resolve the conflict in Darfur, with support totalling over \$218 million<sup>1</sup> since September 2004. It also provides critical support for various peace-building and humanitarian projects, aimed at consolidating grassroots support for peace in a country plagued by conflict for generations.

This focus on Sudan had its genesis in the run-up to Canada's last term on the United Nations (UN) Security Council (1999–2000), when an analysis by the Department of Foreign Affairs suggested that

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three major conflicts on the African continent – in Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Sudan – threatened the entire continent’s stability owing to the ‘contagion effect’ of the conflicts and the numerous countries they border. In addition, these conflicts diverted investment dollars available for development – making the humanitarian fallout of these conflicts an even more onerous task.

Canada has a ‘whole of Sudan’ policy, meaning that Canada recognises that all of Sudan’s regions – and therefore the various conflicts in those regions – are interrelated. As the Sudanese national government’s role in security and stability issues is key, it is important to recognise that actions and activities on one issue will inevitably have an impact on others.

The Canadian strategy with regard to Sudan is a three-track process, dealing with humanitarian, political and security issues. In Canada, we call this the ‘3D’ approach – an integrated strategy involving diplomacy, development and defence, as articulated in Canada’s International Policy Statement (IPS) released in 2005.

On the political side, Canada makes a strong effort to address root causes rather than symptoms. At the heart of most of Sudan’s conflicts is what can be thought of as a ‘centre-periphery marginalisation’, since much of Sudan’s national wealth has a tendency to flow to Khartoum without being redistributed to the country’s underdeveloped rural regions. The negotiations sponsored by the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) – which culminated in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) that ended the southern civil war in January 2005 – were a critical effort towards resolving these feelings of marginalisation. As a result, the CPA makes an explicit effort to address power and wealth sharing in a united Sudan.

When Canada became actively involved in the Sudan peace process in the late 1990s, the IGAD process was faltering. Though talks were progressing, there was little forward movement on key issues. In an effort to work with the international community to speed up the process, Canada named a special envoy for the Sudan Peace Process in 1999 to act as a focal point for Canada’s support for the IGAD peace talks and also provided critical funding to keep the talks secretariat functioning. This support complemented other humanitarian, peace-building and mine action contributions – together totalling \$50 million between October 2003 and March 2005.

During the IGAD-sponsored talks, Canada remained cognisant that the post-peace rehabilitation of southern Sudan would require a massive and coordinated international effort. Critical on-the-spot full-time support was being provided by the United Kingdom (UK), the United States (US) and Norway, but it was unrealistic to expect these countries to shoulder the bulk of the post-conflict recovery load. As such, Canada focused on engaging a broad range of other middle-power countries and on widening the core of international support to include multilateral actors (notably the development banks) and international and national NGOs. The latter were especially critical for

consolidating national grass-roots support for the accord considering the somewhat exclusionary nature of the negotiations that were strictly between the Khartoum government and the Sudan Peoples Liberation Movement.

At the same time, on the humanitarian front, Canada participated actively through the UN to address urgent issues surrounding supplies of food (keeping in mind that the latter stages of the civil war coincided with drought in the region), basic health care, and other assistance to internally displaced persons and refugees.

In addition to these activities in the south, Canada became actively involved in the Darfur conflict when it erupted in 2003. Coming as it did when the end was in sight for the southern talks, it was critical that Darfur be considered by the international community in a direct and comprehensive manner, given the potential it had for derailing the IGAD talks on the south.

Canada's involvement in Darfur continued its historical three-track approach in an effort to solve the desperate humanitarian catastrophe in Darfur while at the same time providing support for the re-establishment of peace and stability in the region.

In May 2005, the government of Canada launched a major new initiative to support international efforts toward peace and stability in Darfur. As a result, Canada is one of the top three international donors to the African Union Mission in Darfur. Canada does, however, recognise the need for an all-of-Sudan approach and maintains support to the implementation of the CPA, as well as humanitarian support and peace-building activities throughout Sudan. These efforts combine input from the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, the Department of National Defence, the Canadian International Development Agency and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

Canada established a diplomatic mission in Sudan for the first time in 2000, as a sub-office of its embassy in Ethiopia, which retained accreditation for Sudan. This office was upgraded to a full embassy, effective early 2005. Additional support is provided through various other missions such as Abuja for the peace process; Addis Ababa for relations with the AU; and Nairobi for various aspects regarding liaison with southern Sudan. In addition, in May 2005 a special advisory team was created to coordinate and promote Canada's initiatives in Sudan.

Canada continues to provide support to the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS), which is supervising the implementation of the CPA, principally in South Sudan, and has deployed Force Headquarters staff officers and military observers to UNMIS.

At the UN, Canada has worked actively with other countries to ensure that the UN Security Council fulfils its responsibilities in addressing the conflict in Darfur. Canada plays an important

advocacy role with council members, including the development of a targeted sanctions regime, aimed at ending the violence in Darfur and making sure that all relevant parties in Sudan are held accountable.

The International Criminal Court (ICC) announced on 6 June 2005 that it will launch an official investigation to determine whether crimes within the jurisdiction of the Rome Statute have been committed in Darfur. Canada announced a voluntary contribution of \$500,000 to support the ICC's activities in Darfur, and was the first country to make such a pledge. Humanitarian relief throughout Sudan is also a key priority for Canada, and at the Oslo Donors' Conference in 2005 Canada announced a contribution of \$90 million, committed to humanitarian efforts, peace-building and support for the implementation of the CPA. Canadian humanitarian assistance to Sudan has been strategically focused to address gaps in the provision of basic needs and the protection for internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees. This includes food aid, shelter, water and sanitation facilities, as well as maternal and child health care. Canada has also allocated resources to protect civilians and to familiarise citizens with human rights standards and their use.

In a complementary process, Canada provides peace-building support for Sudan in five thematic areas: security; governance and participation; justice and reconciliation; economic and social wellbeing; and support to the peace process. Canada provides support for the Darfur peace talks through funds allocated for peace-building activities. The AU chairs the peace talks (held in Abuja, Nigeria) between the government of Sudan (GoS) and the two main rebel groups: the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM).

In Darfur Canada is providing military and technical assistance to AMIS to strengthen its capacity to monitor the ceasefire, to increase stability and to help ensure the protection of civilians. Canadian support is provided in response to specific needs identified by the AU. Canada has been actively involved in encouraging other countries to support this mission and in coordinating international assistance for it.

Canada's contributions include essential equipment to AMIS, including armoured personnel carriers (APCs), helicopters and tactical airlift, and will begin to provide a significant portion of necessary aviation fuel. Canada is cooperating with other international partners in various aspects of training, both specifically for Canadian provided equipment, and more generally for building the capacity of the AU forces. Expert deployments in support of the AU also play a key role in Canada's contributions. Canadian Forces personnel have been deployed to support AMIS and assist the AU to build capacity in strategic planning, logistics support and contract management.

A civilian police expert is deployed in Addis Ababa as a senior police advisor in the Darfur Integrated Task Force (DITF). Canada also provides support to the in-field civilian police component of

the AU mission and participates as a partner advisor in the Joint Logistics Operations Centre in El Fasher.

In concluding this overview of Canada as an international actor in Sudan, there are a couple of points that could be useful to highlight. Though Canada's actions in the country are motivated by a desire to assist, rapidly and effectively, in dealing with humanitarian and political imperatives, Canada's support has always specifically identified an integral and critical capacity-building element. It is not Canada's goal to come with a preconceived idea and an implementation strategy, but rather to respond to the needs and priorities identified by the key actors on the ground, such as the AU. In this respect, the AU deserves recognition of the politically courageous role it played in addressing Sudan and Darfur, despite the considerable challenges this implied.

Canada's '3D' approach is aimed at providing maximum value for its resources. Canada is looking forward to ongoing cooperation with Africa and their institutions in pursuit of peace and stability, and the development that brings, throughout the continent.

## Note

1 All monetary values are expressed in Canadian dollars.