

## **Sudan/South Sudan Symposium – Post-Symposium Report**



**The Centre for Refugee Studies (CRS) at York University in Canada, the Global Collaboration  
Centre (GLOCOL) at Osaka University in Japan, and the Max Planck Institute for Comparative  
Public Law and International Law in Heidelberg, Germany**

**July 3-5, 2013**

**York University, Toronto, Ontario, Canada**

The Sudan/South Sudan Symposium was a successful event that brought together practitioners from different academic, governmental, and non-governmental disciplines in an effort to address and to construct solutions to the humanitarian challenges in the two Sudans. Held in the Kaneff Tower at York University, Toronto, Ontario, this three-day conference bore witness to the contributions of over 70 participants.

With a particular focus on understanding the environmental, social, cultural, and political factors affecting the humanitarian crisis in the two Sudans, and with an emphasis placed on the investigation into constructive paths forward, the symposium's planning committee attempted to combine a unique blend of open public and closed expert sessions to provide a safe space for all participants to share their research and ideas and to foster new approaches and directions for future research.

Without the invaluable help provided by the symposium's planning committee and volunteers, the Symposium would not have been possible. The following short report seeks to summarize the main highlights of the Symposium and some of its key outcomes. Simultaneous detailed reports on the conference's proceedings and keynote and plenary speeches are available for public access on the Sudan/South Sudan Symposium website that is found at <http://www.yorku.ca/soss/>.



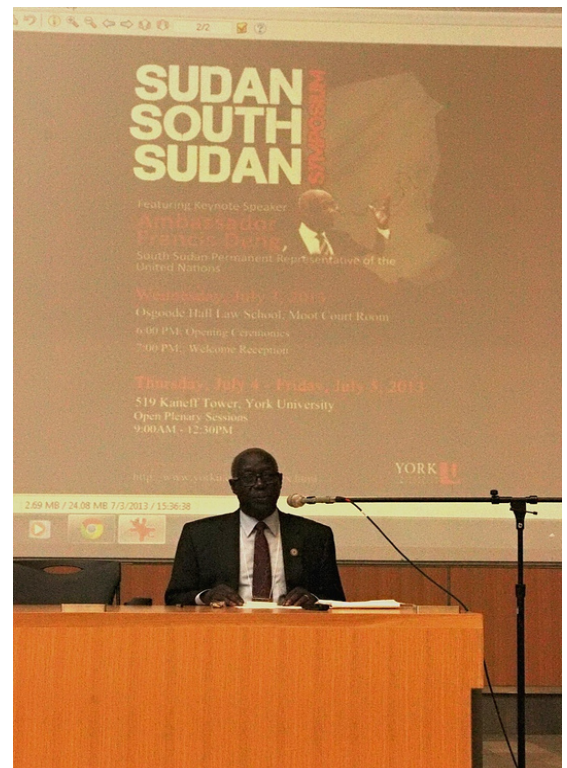
### Wednesday, July 3

The Sudan/South Sudan Symposium was launched on the evening of Wednesday, July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2013 in the Moot Court Room, Osgoode Hall Law School, York University. The symposium was officially opened with a welcoming speech by Dr. Patricia Burke Wood, Associate Dean Academic Affairs for the Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies (LA&PS) at York University, and by Dr. Ali B. Ali-Dinar, the Symposium Chairperson and the Associate Director of the African Studies Center, University of Pennsylvania.

Following the welcoming remarks, the keynote address was delivered by Dr. Francis M. Deng, Ambassador and South Sudan Permanent Representative to the United Nations. Commending Canada for its open acceptance of diversity, Ambassador Deng's speech stressed the importance of unity amongst different ethnic groups. Above all, Ambassador Deng's opening speech recounted the harsh conditions in the two Sudans, particularly, drawing attention to the historical legacies of colonialism that has been the central catalyst for the divide between the Muslim Arab groups in the North and the African Christians in the South. In

closing, Ambassador Deng paved the way for the rest of the symposium by reminding us that while conflict was and is still fought on racial grounds, it is important to understand that unity and the acceptance of diversity are a vital means for solving the current humanitarian problems.

Following Ambassador Deng's keynote address, everyone in attendance was invited to a welcome reception that was held in the Osgoode Hall Law School's Founders Court, that is located just outside the Moot Court Rooms where Ambassador Deng delivered his opening keynote address for our



Sudan/South Sudan Symposium. The welcome reception provided Symposium speakers and participants with the opportunity to meet each other in an informal and relaxed setting immediately before the Symposium. It also provided an opportunity for those in attendance to meet Ambassador Deng and to continue the debates and discussions that commenced in the question and answer session following his keynote address.

### **Thursday, July 4**

The second full day of the symposium took place in room 519, the Conference Centre, Kaneff Tower, at York University. The day began with the Symposium introduction and the first plenary session focusing on the topic of “Understanding the Extent and Nature of the Humanitarian Crisis in Sudan and South Sudan”. As the facilitator for this first session, Ambassador Deng, delivered yet another stirring speech about the unforgiving realities in the two Sudans, and in particular, capturing the extent of the marginalization of internally displaced persons (IDPs). Plagued with their mutual homelessness, Ambassador Deng explained that the IDPs are also labeled enemies by their governments and are denied help from the international community as well. In these harsh conditions, Ambassador Deng called on the two national governments not only to learn how to negotiate between State sovereignty and the reality on the ground, but, to accept international help to restore peace and order in these war-torn States.

Following Ambassador Deng’s presentation, these points were further expanded upon by Justice Isaac Lenaola, High Court of Justice, Kenya. Justice Lenaola delivered a vivid and descriptive account of the challenges faced by the people in the two Sudans. As shortages of all basic necessities continue to plague the lives of many in these remote regions, Justice Lenaola also recounted the relentless threats of human trafficking, drug abuse, occupational insecurity, and the general lack of urban development suffered by the people of Sudan, in general, and the IDPs, in particular, Justice Lenaola strongly urged reforms on all basic levels, especially, when it comes to accepting the help of humanitarian aid workers.



Following this train of thought, the discussion was expanded even further by the next presenter,



Dr. Kevin McKague, Adjunct Professor for the Schulich School of Business, York University. Having recently returned from South Sudan, where he held meetings with various senior officials, he was able to provide a current account of the situation there. Taking a different approach to the topic entirely, Dr. McKague offered a refreshing alternative outlook of the situation in the two Sudans. Viewing urban development as the key to success, Dr. McKague talked

about the possibility of restoring peace through joint initiatives between the international community and the IDPs themselves. He discussed the possibility of funding open mentorship, training, and education for young and driven Sudanese entrepreneurs in order to help the IDPs and provide a possible route for peace-making and peace-building. Dr. McKague believed that while fundamental change can happen through international efforts, it can simultaneously occur from within too.

Having noted the importance of grassroots movements, the last plenary session for the morning was concluded with an eye-opening presentation by Datejie Checko Green, a Torontonain filmmaker and scholar. Presenting from a feminist and gendered perspective, Green's session began with a stunning documentary on several Southern Sudanese women who have been involved with the ratification of the CPA (Comprehensive Peace Agreement). Though the women in these interviews had talked about their struggles



and sacrifices during the conflict, much of their experiences have largely remained invisible. In order to mend the ongoing conflicts between the two Sudans, Green concluded the first plenary session by arguing the importance of having more people-to-people dialogues and local peace meetings, especially, as it pertains to women's involvement in peace-making.

Following a short health break, the second plenary session was launched. This session focused on "Understanding the Economic, Social, Political and Cultural Factors Underlying the Chronic Humanitarian Crisis in Sudan/South Sudan: The Legacies of Unending Armed Conflict and War". Leading the first session was Kennedy Jawoko, a freelance journalist and an instructor in the Politics and Public Administration Department at Ryerson University. As an activist journalist for human rights, Mr. Jawoko delivered a moving speech on the importance of using the power of the media to foster dialogue in peace and nation building. According to Mr. Jawoko, the disconnect between the media and reality is often the result of the falsification of information by corrupt government officials and the lack of local community and journalist involvement. With the chronic problems of state corruption, human trafficking, and food insecurity on the rise, Mr. Jawoko stated that it is important that journalists do not turn a blind eye to these problems, but instead use strategic means to release accurate accounts about the gross human rights violations and volatile situation between the two States to the public.

Subsequent discussions on gross human rights violations were expanded by Amani El-Jack, an Assistant Professor at the University of Massachusetts Boston. Seeing oil extraction and development, forced migration, militarized conflict, and post development as pertinent exemplars to the ongoing gendered displacement and refugee situations in the two Sudans, Dr. El-Jack believed that these relations should not be studied apart from each other. To approach these interdisciplinary fields with a particular focus on gender would mean an overall reduction of gendered and militarized patterns of displacements. Dr. El-Jack concluded by arguing that if there were more female representation in

politics, education, and the media, this would significantly increase the chances of reconciliation and utopian transformation too.

Following these plenary sessions, the symposium was opened to a roundtable question and answer session. Full reports on the two plenary sessions as well as the question and answer sessions were prepared by student rapporteurs. These reports will be made available on the Sudan/South Sudan Symposium website. In addition, there are blog entries posted on the *Sudan/South Sudan Symposium Daily Blog*, found at <http://soss.apps01.yorku.ca/daily-blog/>.



Closed expert technical working groups on the morning plenary sessions took place in the Kaneff Tower after the lunch break. All invited participants were split into three groups. The first group analyzed the “Roots and Consequences of the Crisis”, which was facilitated by Dr. El-Jack, and Mr. Jawoko as the lead participant. The second technical working group discussed the “Humanitarian Assistance Situation”, and this was led by Zeinab Bashir El Bakri, Member of the Inspection Panel, World Bank, as the facilitator, and Caroline Keenan, Education in Emergencies Technical Advisor, Save the Children Canada, and Fabien Schneider, Program Unit Manager for Canada, Doctors Without Borders, as the lead participants. The third technical working group, led by Justice Lenaola, focused on the “Human Rights Situation and Justice”, and this group consisted of Dr. Joseph Rikhof, Senior Counsel and Manager of the Law, Crimes Against Humanity and War Crimes Unit, Justice Canada, and Yukari Ando, Special Assistant Professor, Global Collaboration Centre (GLOCOL), at Osaka University, Japan.

These technical working groups took place from 1:30 pm until 3:00 pm. Serving the purpose of connecting scholars, advocates and practitioners from different fields of interest as well as offering an



opportunity to share individual research and to create and to offer effective initiatives, interventions and programmes to the humanitarian crisis in the two Sudans, these technical working groups operated in confidential spaces to allow participants the opportunity to address candidly these

themes. Following these small group discussions, all the participants came back together for an open plenary session that lasted for ninety minutes. The first full day concluded with this open debriefing session where all members regrouped to synthesize and follow-up on the content discussed at the plenary sessions and expert technical working group meetings. The session concluded with a rousing summation and reflection of the day's presentations and deliberations by the Symposium Chairperson, Professor Ali B. Ali-Dinar. He provided a number of highly insightful observations and key points on possible areas of convergence on a number of issues and concerns raised throughout the course of the day and, specifically, how to realize an effective and sustaining peace not only within the two Sudans but throughout this region of Africa.

### **Friday, July 5**

The morning of third and final day of the Sudan/South Sudan Symposium began with a welcome and greeting from the new Director of the Centre for Refugee Studies (CRS), Jennifer Hyndman, who acknowledged the importance of an event of this kind for helping to find workable solutions to the plight of the displaced persons in the two Sudans. The first plenary





session of the day began with an examination of the “Constructive Paths Forward: Searching for Solutions to the Humanitarian Crisis through Peace-Making and Peace-Building”. The morning featured two plenary sessions and three expert technical working group meetings in the afternoon. The morning plenary was opened with the welcome remarks by Dr. Robert Matthews, Professor Emeritus in the Department of Political Science at the University of Toronto. Challenging the key routes that have



already been taken to peace restoration, Professor Matthews pointed out that developments in the security sector and the economy are vital components to justice and reconciliation. Peace-making and nation building should not be a top-down process; rather they must be

bottom-up initiatives. These same thoughts were shared by Professor Ian Spears from the Department of Political Science, Guelph University, as well. Constructing his presentation around a series of central issues in peace-making and peace-building, he posed several key questions to the audience to problematize the idea of “constructive paths to peace-making and peace-building”. He discussed the relevance of finding a “solution” to a problem that seemed indeterminable, and sought to question whether there were any absolute consensuses to moving forward. Further, Professor Spears also pondered the idea of succession as a route to managing political complexity and the imposition of Western agendas onto the humanitarian efforts. According to Professor Spears, before we can initiate any formal peace agreements, such questions must be thoroughly investigated. Critically assessing broadly held assumptions and unsupported or unexamined assertions is absolutely necessary if one is to

advance true knowledge and understanding, especially, in the field of peace studies and the prevention of armed conflict and the use of other forms of extreme and intense violence.

Simultaneous discussions on peace agreements were also elaborated by Vladimir Zhagora, former Senior Political Affairs Officer at the United Nations Headquarters in New York City. While also being skeptical of peace agreements, Mr. Zhagora delivered a vivid description of the precise problems with each State, and also provided key routes for salvation for them too. For the North, Mr. Zhagora mentioned the need for a new political regime that removed themselves from old racist ideologies and also to embrace the differences of the people on the periphery. As for the South, Mr. Zhagora stressed the importance of redoubling efforts to help the IDPs while providing support to the newly formed South Sudanese government and paving the path for development. Concluding the morning plenary session, Mr. Zhagora pointed out that constructive solutions to peace-making must start by seeing the two Sudans as separate States, hence, any solutions to the humanitarian crises must be planned separately according to their needs.

After a quick roundtable question and answer session followed by a health break, the second plenary session of the day began. Drawing attention to this session's theme, "Investing in Sustainable Developments and Livelihoods", this session was facilitated by Dr. Odwa Atari, Assistant Professor of Geography at Nipissing University, North Bay, Ontario. The presentations for this session were launched by Professor Fahimul Quadir, Associate Dean for the Faculty of Graduate Studies and with the Division of Social Science and Graduate Program in International Development Studies at York University. Approaching the topic of sustainable living with an overview of its key components and core principles, Professor Quadir stressed the imperative function of investing in people for sustainable development as a means for peace-building. Not only does it bring together different aspects of people's lives and livelihoods into development planning, implementation, and evaluation, it further encourages people to develop a common framework by uniting all relevant sectors. The success of this framework is what

drives many States to adopt these methods in state-building today. Dr. Quadir asserted that this approach can also benefit by the development for practical solutions to address the crippling problems confronting the two Sudans.

Mirroring Professor Quadir's proposition, this same train of thought was also discussed by



Panther Kuol, a pension analyst for Morneau Shepell, Toronto, Canada, but, more importantly, who was one of the 'lost boys of Sudan'. Panther Kuol provided a vivid description of the pitfalls of post-colonial Africa. According to Mr. Kuol, who strongly believes that governments must lay the proper foundations for future prosperity, beginning with the youth of today, investment at all grassroots levels, including education, gender equity, and civic education are needed to make a

difference, as well as the facilitation of proper physical infrastructure. Mr. Kuol concluded by arguing that investment in the youth of today will ultimately result in national prosperity in the future.

By way of another roundtable question and answer session, the fourth plenary session had come to a successful end. Following the lunch break, all invited attendees had regrouped back in the Kaneff Tower for their final closed expert technical working group meetings based on the themes of the morning sessions. With a focus on "Durable solutions for the displaced", the fourth technical working group consisted of Vladimir Zhagora and Hy Shelow, who came from the UNHCR headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, to participate in our Symposium, and Professor Susan McGrath, resident CRS Scholar, as the facilitator. The fifth technical working group analyzed the topic of "Developing the Institutional Capacities of the Public Sector", and this group consisted of Hon. Buri M. Hamza, former



Minister of the Environment and Member of Parliament of the Federal Republic of Somalia, Samer Abdelnour, PhD Candidate in Management at the London School of Economics and Politics, who participated *via* a SKYPE conference call, and Dr. Zeinab

Bashir El Bakri, who served as the session facilitator. And, the last technical working group consisted of Professor Galya Ruffer, Director of the Centre for Forced Migration Studies, Northwestern University, and Dr. Peter Penz, Professor Emeritus, Faculty of Environmental Studies, York University, who focused on “Sustainable livelihoods and community development”. While the discussions in these closed expert technical working groups are confidential, subsequent reports on these technical working group meetings can be found on the Sudan/South Sudan Symposium Daily Blog website, <http://soss.apps01.yorku.ca/daily-blog/>, and, in due course, on the Sudan/South Sudan Symposium main website, <http://www.yorku.ca/soss/index.html>.

Concluding the three day conference, the closing speech was given by the Symposium Chairperson, Dr. Ali B. Ali-Dinar, who did a remarkable job of highlighting the key outcomes of the Symposium and the most notable suggestions and recommendations put forward to try to address the most pressing security and humanitarian crises confronting the two Sudans. The Symposium Chairperson presented a most compelling and passionate call for the international community to not turn its back on the plight of the people of the two Sudans and called upon everyone to work to positive change for the benefit of all those who have suffered for far too long in the two Sudans.

The Symposium concluded with a final round of thanks for all those who worked so hard behind the scenes to make our Symposium such a great success: Jessica K. Anderson, Symposium Coordinator, and our many student volunteers, and especially, Stella Ha, a recent York University graduate, Michele

Millard, Coordinator, Centre for Refugee Studies, Yukari Ando, Special Assistant Professor, GLOCOL, Osaka University, Amani El-Jack, Assistant Professor, University of Massachusetts Boston, and Susan McGrath, Resident CRS Scholar and Professor at the School of Social Work, York University, and James C. Simeon, Director, School of Public Policy and Administration, York University. Special thanks were extended to all our financial sponsors including:

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Innovation and many others at York University. A complete list of our sponsors is found on our Sudan/South Sudan Symposium website at <http://www.yorku.ca/soss/sponsors.html>.

For those who would like to make a contribution to the forthcoming Special Issue of *Refuge*, on the Humanitarian Crises and Forced Displacement in Sudan and South Sudan, please do so before the October 1<sup>st</sup> deadline. The call for papers for this Special Issue of *Refuge* is found at the following link, <http://pi.library.yorku.ca/ojs/index.php/refuge/announcement/view/125>.



The Sudan/South Sudan Symposium concluded on a high note with concrete plans for not only disseminating the outcomes of the deliberations at the Symposium, but, with further plans to continue to develop the new Sudan/South Sudan Symposium website and to build a network of all those persons



who are interested in and/or are working on the issues confronting these two countries and within the broader Eastern Region of Africa. We welcome you to join us in building this new online network of researchers, policy makers, activists, humanitarian aid workers, students, public officials, and others who are dedicated to addressing the plight of the people who are living in the two Sudans.