

Security

From the security perspective, Canada's concern is with the civil war in Sudan. More accurately, it lies with several simultaneous wars in Sudan: the war among rebels for control in the south, the war among rebels for control in the north, and the war between rebels and the central government in Khartoum. The consequences of these wars include the devastation of the northern regions, displaced persons, mass killings of civilian populations, and the risk of spill-over into neighbouring countries, such as Uganda, Ethiopia, Eritrea who support the rebels against the Khartoum government. Another factor affecting the security situation is the recent American bombing of the pharmaceutical factory in Sudan. This instability endangers Canadians in the region, especially those who are located outside Khartoum.

Thus, regarding the search for peace in Sudan, Canada has focused on and promoted the Inter-governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) which established in an ad hoc manner in 1993 a Peace Committee on Sudan to pursue a settlement of the Sudan conflict. This IGAD Peace Committee on Sudan has been the primary avenue for pursuing peace. For two reasons, it is considered to be the best chance for peace in Sudan. First, it includes Sudan's neighbours (Uganda, Ethiopia, Eritrea) whose acceptance of a final settlement is important to a lasting peace given their involvement in the conflict. Second, it established in 1994 a Declaration of Principles (DOP), which lists issues for discussion in the peace process, including the search for a peaceful solution to the conflict, self-determination, unity, the notion of a multi-racial/ethnic society, democracy and freedom of belief/religion.

As an indication of its support of the peace process, Canada was one of the initial core group of states (others included Italy, Norway, the UK, the Netherlands) who organised themselves as donors in 1995 to support the process. This core group later became the IGAD Partners Forum (IPF). The IPF also established a Sudan Committee of which Canada is a member. However, the IPF lacked leadership and motivation in promoting the peace process in Sudan and, therefore, has had limited effect.

At the same time, the IGAD peace process is weak in some areas and was characterised by the roundtable participants as dysfunctional on several fronts. First, its focus is limited to the conflict in the south, neglecting the national scope of the conflict in Sudan. Second, it is undertaken in a public forum with irregular meetings. Third, key actors of the conflict, especially some of the rebel groups, are excluded from the process, thereby ensuring a continuation of the conflict should an IGAD-sponsored peace settlement be reached. Fourth, some members of the IGAD (Uganda, Ethiopia, and Eritrea) support the rebel factions against the Khartoum government. Finally, the parties in IGAD themselves are without accountability.

Despite these weaknesses, the roundtable participants did not think the IGAD process should be abandoned or marginalised as it has made limited progress. After a period of inactivity, the IGAD process was revitalised in 1996; Canada contributed to this revitalisation with CIDA funding. In 1997, agreement was reached on the DOP (although established in 1994, there had been no agreement on the declaration) and an agreement in principle was reached on self-determination. Furthermore, the IGAD process clearly identifies through the DOP the necessary elements of a lasting peace. At the same time, other avenues, specifically the OAU, through which a peace settlement in Sudan has been sought have been even less effective. Likewise, the view was