

birth of the Sudanese peoples Liberation Movement/Army, SPLM/A. It was, in the same characterization, a failure of leadership which opened the door for the coup launched by Omar Bashir in June 1989 and years of National Islamic Front/National Congress rule which have followed.

de Waal outlined how regional loyalties and differences have complicated life in Sudan, with regional parties all failing to gain real influence at the centre, partly because they lacked a sufficient economic base from which to buy such influence. "Southern control of oil reserves may prove to be the exception to this", he wrote. And he did so before the marked efforts of Omar Bashir and others to re-write boundaries and deploy other strategies to make Southern control of such reserves more a chimera than a reality, and if we can understand this, we have a better chance of understanding how the war of 2000 is not the war of 1990.

de Waal pointed out how regional groups marginalized by the centre have had recourse to violence, mentioning specifically Upper Nile, where neglect and exploitation had been so blatant. And he did not see that regional governance in the South had done much to overcome either the neglect or the reality of divisions in the South, which still seem marked today, much as they were in 1990. He also cited the division between the Nilotic peoples, Dinka and Nuer of Bahr el Ghazal and Upper Nile, and the people of Equatoria in the deeper South, but this was not to suggest that Dinka/Nuer relations were all harmony, or that they themselves were not being hard pressed by their "Northern" neighbours as well as having differences with their "Southern" ones.

These Northern neighbours are the Baggara Arabs, who have, since Chevron's arrival in Sudan in 1976, pushed even harder against the Dinka and Nuer in that part of Sudan.

de Waal devoted considerable space to a description of the Dinka, the largest ethnic group in the South, and the second largest in Sudan, after the "Arabs", but of course, there are many different Dinka tribes. The Nuer he listed as one of the other agro-pastoral peoples in the South. Just as he said that the Dinka form the core of the SPLA, of the Nuer and others such as the Shilluk, Acholi and Luo, he said that "factions among these groups have been armed as militias by both sides in the war", and the Assessment Mission, in order to carry out its mandate, had to understand the interplay of these armed factions as a defining characteristic of the civil war in Sudan.

It can be said that civil war provides a backdrop in Sudan against which the clearest picture that emerges is that people's human rights are too little respected no matter under whose control those people find themselves. Only an end to the war will make it really possible for the people to enjoy their inalienable human rights.