

Citizenship and Identity in Post-Secession Northern Sudan

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On 9 July 2011, the region of south Sudan officially split from the Republic of the Sudan to form the independent state of the Republic of South Sudan. The secession was one of the most anticipated events, following the results of the January 2011 referendum in which the overwhelming majority of Southern Sudanese people voted for independence. The long history of bitterness, the way in which the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) of 2005 was crafted, and the subsequent haggling between the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) and the government of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) left no doubt that the people of South Sudan would choose separation over unity. While the independence of South Sudan was met with great jubilation and euphoria in the South, the mood in northern Sudan was decidedly somber and gloomy. To the overwhelming majority of Southern Sudanese, the event represented the pinnacle of their long and arduous struggle for peace and equality. Despite the formidable challenges facing them, most Southern Sudanese viewed July 9th as the beginning of a new era of hope and optimism.

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To many Northerners, on the other hand, the split of the South was a national disaster, a cataclysmic event that spawned an acute sense of collective failure, despair, and uncertainty. Indeed, as in the case of the new state in the South, northern Sudan itself is going to face numerous challenges, including the loss of vital oil resources, a potential conflict with the South over the unresolved issues, internal struggle within the ruling clique, the ongoing conflict in Darfur, and the possibility of a proliferation of civil wars in the rest of the country. However, one of the most critical issues that will shape the future of northern Sudan and whether it remains a single entity or disintegrates is the struggle over the old issues of the country's national identity and the definition of citizenship. This topic forms the central theme of this article. The inquiry is concerned with the way in which the Sudanese government is approaching these vital issues and the implications of its strategies and actions.

The separation of the South represented a huge blow to the Sudanese regime. In addition to the loss of much needed oil revenue, the regime of Omer al-Bashir and his Islamist supporters will bear the enormous historic responsibility of breaking up the country and of paving the way for its total disintegration. However, some Islamist hardliners, both within and outside the government, welcomed the separation of the South and saw it as an opportunity for implementing their Islamization project. From their perspective, southern secession has removed a major obstacle to their project and would leave a monolithic Arabic and Islamic entity in northern Sudan. It is not surprising that on 19 December 2010, less than a month before the

referendum on self-determination, President Bashir told his supporters in a rally in the town of Gedarif that if the South seceded, he would swiftly move to change the constitution to make shari`a the law of the land. He went on to declare that henceforth there would be no place for any debate about cultural diversity in the Sudan. Such a debate, according to Bashir, is nothing but rubbish.¹ Similar statements were made by his vice president, Ali Osman Taha, on 30 July 2011 at a public rally at the village of Hilaliya where he vowed that Islamic law would be adopted and would specifically target those who oppose it or who oppose the regime: “We will cleave with a sword,” Taha warned, “those who have overstepped their limit, and acted insolently against the Sudanese people, their president, and shari`a.”² The pronouncements of the regime’s leading figures should be viewed as a declaration of the NCP’s “manifesto” for the post-separation period. At the core of this manifesto is the establishment of a theocratic state, the imposition of the Arabic-Islamic form of identity, and the suppression of any form of dissent. This article argues that this approach will have grave consequences for the country. The separation of the South will neither lead to the emergence of a monolithic entity in the remaining part of the Sudan, nor will it solve the problems that are the root causes of the country’s endemic instability. The perception that northern Sudan is homogenous is not only a pure fantasy, but also a negation of historical and social realities. It is also a dangerous and potentially destructive notion for the imposition of the NCP’s vision will add fuel to the fires that are already raging in Darfur and south Kordofan and will spread them to the marginalized regions of the Upper Blue Nile and Eastern Sudan.

Framing the Problem

It is not my intention to add to the voluminous and

often contentious debate about Sudanese identity.³ Rather my goal is to examine the premises upon which the notion of northern homogeneity is based by shedding light on some important, yet neglected elements of the region’s makeup.

For a long time, the dominant discourse on Sudanese conflicts tended to frame them within the context of an Arab-Muslim North versus an African-Christian South. However, this oversimplified dichotomy lost currency for a number of reasons. In the first place, it is an inaccurate description of the ethnic, social, and cultural composition of the two regions and the remarkable diversity of the North itself.

Northern Sudan is a vast territory, encompassing Darfur, Kordofan, the Red Sea, the far North, Khartoum, the Gezira, and the White Nile. The social and cultural makeup of this region was shaped by a long history of migration, miscegenation, and enslavement. Its inhabitants consist of a multitude of ethnic and linguistic groups such as the Nubians, the Beja, and the Fur, Zaghawa, and the Nuba as well as Arabic speakers such as Ja’alyin, Shaiqiyya, Kababish, and Shukriyya, just to name a few. Even the northern groups that claim an Arab identity are in fact a hybrid of African and Arab blood. However, the claim of an Arab descent was a byproduct of major historical transformations in the region, including increased links with the Middle East particularly after the rise of Islam, population migration and intermarriage, the pattern of state formation in the

³ The question of Sudanese identity has been the subject of numerous works such as Francis M. Deng, *Wars of Visions: Conflict of Identities in the Sudan*, (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1995) and his *Dynamics of Identification, A Basis for National Integration in the Sudan*, (Khartoum: Khartoum University Press 1974), Amir Idris, *Conflict and Politics of Identity in Sudan* (New York: Palgrave, 2005), and Ann Mosely Lesch, *Sudan: Contested National Identities* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998).

¹ *The Guardian.co.uk*, 19 December 2010.

² *Sudan Tribune*, 31 July 2011.

Sudan, commerce, and social transformation. These processes became more prevalent in the central and the northern parts of the Sudan, where some immigrants from North Africa and the Middle East settled and intermarried with the indigenous population.⁴ The northern and central parts of the Sudan were part of ancient Nubia, which witnessed the emergence of powerful states, the last of which were the three Christian kingdoms that survived until the early sixteenth century. However, following the Muslim conquest of Egypt in the seventh century A.D. and the increasing pressure on Nubia, the Christian kingdoms finally collapsed and a new Muslim kingdom known as the Funj emerged, with its capital in Sinnar on the Blue Nile in the early sixteenth century. The rise of the Funj created conducive conditions for the spread of Islam and the Arabic language. Two other Muslim kingdoms –Tegali and Darfur – emerged in the western parts of the country. However, as in other parts of Africa, the spread of Islam in the Sudan was associated with Sufism (Muslim mysticism), which incorporated many local beliefs and developed a less orthodox approach to religion. The fact that Islam and the Arabic language were intertwined in the northern and central parts of the Sudan has contributed to the adoption of Arab ancestry among the inhabitants of these regions. However, in other parts of the country, such as the east, the west, and the far north, the population adopted Islam but retained their indigenous languages and cultures.

The adoption of an Arab decent became a mark of distinction and a base for social stratification. Those who adopted this form of identity came to view themselves as ethnically and culturally superior to the non-Arab and non-Muslim groups in the country's southern and western hinterland. This situation persisted under the successive states that ruled the Sudan, particularly the postcolonial

⁴ See R. O'Fahey and J. Spaulding, *Kingdoms of the Sudan* (London: Methuen, 1974) and J. Spaulding, *The Heroic Age in Sinnar* (East Lansing: Michigan State University, 1985).

regimes that were dominated by the Arabic-speaking northern Sudanese elites.

For geographical and historical reasons, Islam did not make inroads into the present-day southern Sudan where traditional African religions prevailed. The region remained outside the domain of the Muslim states of the north until the nineteenth century when it was integrated into the commercial network of the Turco-Egyptian regime, which ruled the Sudan from 1821 until it was finally overthrown by the Mahdist revolution in 1885.

Under the Turco-Egyptian rule, the non-Arab and non-Muslim communities in Southern Sudan, the Nuba Mountains, and the Upper Blue Nile became prime targets of the growing Nilotic slave trade, which persisted until the end of the nineteenth century. Thousands of people from these regions were captured, initially by government-organized raids and later by private merchants from Europe, North Africa, the Middle East, and northern Sudan. Slaves were sent to Middle Eastern, Mediterranean, and northern Sudanese markets. Slavery and the slave trade left an indelible mark on Sudanese history, ravaging many parts of southern and western Sudan and leaving bitter memories. At the same time, slavery has had a huge demographic and cultural impact in northern Sudan, which will be elaborated below.

“Unpacking” the North

The discourse on cultural diversity and regional inequalities in the Sudan has revolved around a number of issues. First, it stressed the fact that the northern Sudan itself is a multiethnic and multicultural entity that includes Arab and non-Arab groups such as the Fur, the Nuba, the Beja, and so forth. Second, even those who claim an Arab ancestry are in fact mixed. Third, political and economic power in the Sudan was held by a small class of Arabic-speaking elites, from the central and the northern parts of the country. While these regions were favored in terms of economic and social development by colonial and postcolonial

governments, the remote regions of South, Darfur, Kordofan, the East, and the Upper Blue Nile were neglected. This disparity led to the notion of the hegemony of the “center” and the marginalization of the peripheries. Indeed, this paradigm provided a better and more nuanced understanding of Sudan’s problems than the oversimplified North-South dichotomy. What is missing from this discourse, however, is the fact that the makeup of the center itself is far more complex and needs further interrogation. Unpacking the center will provide a better understanding of Sudanese conflicts and will also play a vital role in shaping the debate about identity and citizenship.

Northern Sudan is a site of deeply entrenched social hierarchies, ethnic cleavages, and subcultures. As mentioned previously, the region’s makeup was shaped by a long history of slavery, miscegenation, and migration. Its inhabitants include a large number of former slaves and their descendants, people of West African origins such as Hausa, Fulani, and Borno, and millions of migrant workers and displaced people from southern and western Sudan. Nonetheless, these groups, who formed a significant segment of the population of the North, have been left out of the discourse on inequality, citizenship, and identity in the country.

The institution of slavery thrived for at least three decades after the establishment of Anglo-Egyptian rule in the Sudan at the end of the nineteenth century. Slaves and their descendants formed a significant segment of the northern Sudanese population. For instance, during the early years of the twentieth century, the British colonial administration conducted a registration of slaves in several provinces as part of its efforts to combat slavery and the slave trade. Although the registration was not adequate, it did provide some clues about the size of the slave population in northern Sudan. In 1904-05, there were about 20,517 slaves in Dongola Province, over 15 percent of the population. In the neighboring Berber Province, about 10,000 slaves were registered, comprising between 10 and 14 percent of the

province’s population. In 1900, Kordofan Province had an estimated 40,000, the Blue Nile Province had about 30,000 in 1912, while the capital cities of Khartoum, Khartoum North, and Omdurman had 25,000 slaves in 1900.⁵ Indeed, these figures represent a significant decline from the nineteenth century, which represented the peak of the slave trade, but they do underscore the role of slavery and the slave trade in shaping the ethnic makeup of northern Sudanese society.

Former slaves and their descendants formed an important southern and western “Diaspora” in northern Sudan. They brought with them cultural traditions from their original homes, which had a profound impact on northern Sudanese society. These influences can be seen in religious rituals such as *zar* (“spirit possession”), music, dance, and other artistic activities. Yet even after the official abolition of slavery, former slaves and their descendants have continued to suffer from the badge of slavery and have been relegated to the lower rungs of the social hierarchies in the Sudan. As a social category they were rendered invisible and were left out of the discourse and the agenda of the various political forces in the Sudan, including those who claim to speak on behalf of marginalized groups. However, the absence of overt political action does not mean acquiescence or acceptance of subordination. Former slaves and their descendants expressed their grievances and resisted their subordination through popular culture and other activities. These included religious rituals such as *zar* as well as music, dance, dress, and other expressions, through which they created a counter discourse against the hegemonic paradigms of the Arabic-speaking northern elites.⁶

⁵ M. W. Daly, *Empire on the Nile: The Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, 1898-1934* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 236-37.

⁶ See G. P. Makris, *Changing Masters: Spirit Possession and Identity Construction among the Descendants of Slaves in the Sudan* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2000).

Another important category that has been totally neglected in the discourse on identity and citizenship is those Sudanese of west African origins such as Hausa, Fulani, Borno, known collectively as Fellata, whose presence in the Sudan dates back several centuries. They originally arrived as pilgrims on their way to Mecca, but many of them settled in the Sudan. The Fellata played a leading role in the spread of Islam in the Sudan through the establishment of *khalawi*, or Quranic schools, in various part of the country. In the twentieth century, however, the Fellata came as migrant agricultural laborers in the Gezira Scheme. The term Fellata then gained a derogatory connotation and was gradually associated with menial labor and low social status. The exact number of the Fellata in Sudan is unknown, but estimates range from 5 to 10 percent of the population of the country. However, despite the long history of their presence, the Fellata are still considered outsiders and have had great difficulty in gaining Sudanese citizenship.

Northern Sudan has also experienced profound demographic changes during the past few decades. In addition to old patterns of labor migration, violent conflicts and famines in the South, the Nuba Mountains, the Upper Blue Nile, and Darfur have resulted in the displacement of millions of people, most of whom have settled in northern Sudanese towns, particularly the capital city of Khartoum. The majority of these people have lived in refugee camps and shantytowns around the capital.⁷ The presence of predominantly non-Arab groups in the capital raised the anxiety of the ruling Sudanese elite who dubbed these shantytowns the “Black Belt,” seen as a major political and cultural threat.

Immigrants and displaced people established neighborhoods and vibrant communities. These neighborhoods became unique social and cultural

enclaves and remained beyond the reach of government authorities. The inhabitants chose place names that convey a strong sense of defiance, difference, and identity. For example, the neighborhoods of Mandela, Angola, “No Government,” and several others offer a clear affirmation of the African identity of these communities and their rejection of government authority. Despite their destitution, these quarters have become the scene of vibrant leisure activities that involve festivals, sport activities, and clubs where Congolese, East African, Caribbean, and African American music and dance are performed. This is not new, but a continuation of an old pattern that dates back to the nineteenth century, when thousands of people from southern Sudan and the adjacent regions came to Khartoum as slaves, soldiers, workers, and migrants, and shaped the ethnic composition and the cultural tradition of northern Sudanese society. They made Khartoum one of most diverse and cosmopolitan cities in Africa and the Middle East, a trait that it has maintained during the twentieth century, and one that will undoubtedly continue to exhibit in the future.

Contest Over Identity and Citizenship

As in other parts of Africa, the emergence of the Sudan as a political entity was associated with the establishment of British colonial rule in late nineteenth century. Although both the Turco-Egyptian regime and the Mahdist state established a strong presence in the South, they were not able to control the region. The South was officially incorporated into the Sudan during the Anglo-Egyptian rule (1898-1956), but was administered by the British as a separate entity and was isolated from the North. While economic and social development was concentrated in the North, the South was totally neglected. However, colonial economic development was concentrated in the central part of the Sudan, particularly Khartoum and the Gezira region, and little attention was given to the peripheral regions of Darfur, Kordofan, the East, and the far North. This pattern persisted during the

⁷ *Sudan: Internally Displaced Persons in Khartoum* (LANDINFO, 3 November 2008): online at www.landinfo.no/asset/748/1/748_1.pdf accessed 20 October 2011.

postcolonial period and became the catalyst for the regional conflicts that plague the Sudan. It was this reality that inspired the late Dr. John Garang de Mabior, leader of the SPLM/A, to move away from the North-South dichotomy and adopt the concept of “New Sudan” in which there would be no discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, regional origin, religion, culture, and gender. Garang’s vision appealed to the non-Arab groups, particularly in the regions of Darfur, the Nuba Mountains, the Upper Blue Nile, the East, and even the far North, who felt that they were systematically marginalized by the ruling Arabic-speaking elites from the center.

Although the concept of New Sudan became the slogan of the SPLM/A, the bulk of its rank and file were skeptical about it and continued to see the South as a distinctive entity, with its unique problems and aspirations. However, the concept of the New Sudan was met with profound hostility by the Arabic-speaking northern Sudanese elites who saw it as a serious threat to their hegemony. The successive postcolonial regimes that ruled the Sudan embraced the Arab-Islamic form of identity and tried to impose it on the rest of the country, and it is the Islamist movement that became the most zealous champion of this paradigm and the most vicious enemy of the SPLM and its slogans. The concept of New Sudan became the antithesis of Arabization and Islamization. Throughout the period of the late 1980s, the National Islamic Front (NIF, later the National Congress Party) used its enormous resources to launch a brutal attack on the SPLA and its northern supporters who were dubbed as traitors. It framed the conflict as a Western and Zionist conspiracy and a threat to Northern “honor” and cultural tradition. Finally, on the eve of the ratification of a peace deal that was signed between a northern political party and the SPLA, the NIF moved swiftly to stage the military coup that was led by Omer Bashir in June 1989.

Once in power, the new regime embarked on a vigorous military campaign to crush the SPLA. In addition to conscripting thousands of young men, it created a wide array of paramilitary forces and

tribal militias. Most important, the regime framed the war as a form of a jihad, or a Muslim holy war against “infidels.” The military campaign led to the death and displacement of millions of people in the South as well as the perishing of thousands of young men from the North. In the end, the government failed to crush the rebellion, and the war took a heavy toll on both the North and the South. The failure of both sides to score a decisive military victory and the growing pressure on Bashir’s regime as a result of George W. Bush’s war on terror forced the government to engage in peace negotiations. The peace process was sponsored by the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the US, and other European and African countries, culminating in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, CPA, in 2005. In addition to making arrangements for power sharing, and for distribution of oil resources, the agreement asserted the principle of self-determination for Southern Sudan after a transitional period of six years. Although the agreement laid the foundation for a democratic transformation, its major shortcoming is the fact that it adopted the North-South dichotomy as a framework and failed to address the root causes of the Sudanese problems. The ramifications of this omission were immediately felt in the outbreak of conflicts in Darfur and the East, but also in the haggling between the SPLM and the National Congress over the implementation of the CPA itself.

Having failed to impose their Arabization and Islamization project on the South, some hardliners both within and outside the NCP openly advocated the separation of the region. One of the ardent champions of this view was Al-Tayyib Mustafa, a leading Islamicist who founded an organization called *kayan al-Shamal* (Northern Entity) and established a daily newspaper in which he openly advocated the separation of the South and expressed the most contemptuous views about southern Sudanese. However, Mustafa is not alone and his views are shared by other leading Islamicists such as Abd Al-Rahim Hamdi, the former minister of finance. In a workshop on economic development in

September 2005, which was sponsored by the NCP, Hamdi unabashedly advocated that development efforts should focus on the central and northern parts of the Sudan, or what he called the Dongola-Kordofan-Sinnar Axis. The former minister argued that this region would likely determine the outcome of the upcoming elections because, in his view, it has a more enlightened population who are better acquainted with the election process. Indeed, the overwhelming majority of the population in this region are Arabic-speaking Muslims. It is not surprising that Hamdi's views incensed many people from the marginalized regions who accused him of blatant racism.⁸

Although the CPA stipulated that both the NCP and the SPLM should strive to make unity attractive during the transitional period between 2005 and the referendum of 2011, in reality the NCP did exactly the opposite. In addition to its continuous maneuvering to derail the implementation of the provisions of the CPA, the NCP made every possible effort to make unity less attractive. Even after the results of the referendum, the NCP continued to adopt a hard line on the major unresolved issues, such as border demarcation, oil sharing, the contested region of Abyei, and the status of Southern Sudanese in the North.

The question of Southern Sudanese in northern Sudan is particularly relevant to the theme of this article. As mentioned earlier, the war has resulted in the displacement of millions of southerners in the North, and many of them were born in the region. The SPLA advocated the establishment of a system of dual citizenship and maintained that Southerners living in the North and Northerners living in the South should be allowed to choose citizenship in either state. The NCP flatly rejected the idea of dual citizenship. Even before the referendum, the government made it clear that in case of secession it would not grant citizenship to Southern Sudanese living in the North. The Sudanese law and public

discourse tend to focus more on the concept of nationality and link it to ancestry or belonging to a community rather than citizenship, which involves the rights of individual members of nation states as defined by international and national laws. According to the Sudanese Nationality Law of 1957, which was amended in the 1974, nationality is based on descent, with a provision for naturalization. To obtain Sudanese citizenship, a person had to have been born in the Sudan to at least one parent who was either of Sudanese ancestry or had been naturalized. Under this law it was extremely difficult for immigrants to gain citizenship.⁹

Following the vote for separation, the government amended the nationality law, which was ratified by the parliament in July 2011, a decision that put in limbo the fate of over one million southern Sudanese.¹⁰ The government action raised the anxiety even of people of Southern decent whose ancestors had migrated voluntarily or had been brought as slaves in the nineteenth century.¹¹ Although the denial of citizenship can be viewed as a reprisal against Southern Sudanese for supporting secession, it is also part of the NCP's effort to cleanse the North of any non-Arab elements.

It seems that the NCP hardliners are prepared to go to any length to impose their vision, including altering the social, ethnic, and demographic composition of the country. There has been a great deal of chattering about a large-scale immigration and settlement of Egyptian farmers in the northern and central parts of the Sudan under the guise of agricultural development. Indeed, during the past few years the government has leased huge tracts of land to investors from various Arab countries. On 19 December 2010, an agreement was signed

⁹ Munzoul A. M. Assal, *Nationality and Citizenship Questions in Sudan after the Southern Sudan Referendum Vote*, (Bergen: Chr. Michelsen Institute, 2011; SR 2011;1).

¹⁰ *Sudan Tribune*, 25 July 2011.

¹¹ *Rakuba*, online newspaper 8 August 2011.

⁸ See Siddiq Umbada's response in *Sahafa Newspaper*, 19 September 2005.

between the Sudanese and Egyptian ministries of agriculture to develop one million acres in the famous Gezira Scheme, half of the area of the scheme, which was the backbone of the Sudanese economy. The movement was vehemently opposed by the Sudanese Farmers Union and Gezira tenants.¹² However, from the perspective of the NCP, the settlement of millions of Egyptians will not only provide cheap labor, but will also serve their cultural project, by augmenting the Arab population of the country.

The NCP is determined to stamp out any opposition to its project. The existence of several insurgencies among the marginalized people in the western and the eastern parts of the Sudan represented a major threat to the regime. It is not surprising that immediately after Southern independence, Khartoum demanded that the northern branch of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement in the Nuba Mountains and the Blue Nile disarm, a demand that was totally rejected. Dubbing the rebel fighters outlaws, the government launched a lethal military campaign in the Nuba Mountains, which was described by many human rights groups and international organizations as nothing less than ethnic cleansing and an attempt to totally annihilate the Nuba people.

The NCP's efforts to reshape the country and the government pronouncements and actions in the aftermath of Southern independence have increased the level of discontent among the marginalized people of Darfur, the Nuba Mountains, the East, and the far North, who view it as a continuation of the old pattern of domination and exclusion. It is not surprising that the rebel movements in these regions have begun to think about coming together to form a broad alliance to confront Khartoum. On 8 August 2011, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) in South Kordofan and two factions from the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) in Darfur signed an accord to form an alliance, with the publicized goal of overthrowing the government of

Bashir and establishing a secular state in the Sudan. However, Darfur's Justice and Equality Movement distanced itself from the accord over the issue of establishing a secular state and insisted that the focus should be on the creation of citizenship rights.¹³ It is not clear whether this alliance will hold or succeed in achieving its stated objectives. However, if it is able to transcend its regional and ethnic base and create a vision and a program that rally the support of the various strands of opposition, it will present the most serious threat to the NCP rule. It is no secret that the regime itself is cracking and is suffering from internal divisions and power struggles. Sudanese crises have prompted many observers to wonder if the country will experience an "Arab Spring." Indeed, of all the countries in the region, Sudan has one of the oldest and richest traditions of civil disobedience. This troubled country once had one of the best organized and most dynamic labor movements in Africa and the Middle East. On two occasions, Sudanese trade unions and professional associations led uprisings that toppled two military regimes, that of Ibrahim Abboud in 1964 and that of Ja'far Numeiri in 1985. However, these constituencies have been crippled by the systematic repression by the successive authoritarian regimes, particularly the current one.

Conclusion

The future of what is left of the Sudan after the separation of the South is fraught with uncertainty and danger. The country is currently run by a fractured, ruthless, and corrupt regime that is facing a weak, divided, and disoriented opposition. This situation has created a feeling of invincibility and unbounded power among the regime's hardliners, who seem to be prepared to engage in recklessness and adventures. They have become so intoxicated with power and wealth that they are unwilling to heed any lessons from the history and the experiences of authoritarian regimes in their own neighborhood and worldwide. The experiences of the former Soviet Union, Germany, South Africa,

¹² *Sudan Tribune*, 19 December 2010.

¹³ *Sudan Tribune*, 9 August, 2011

the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Somalia, and many other places have demonstrated the dangers of xenophobia, of the notions of racial purity and racial superiority, and the use of ethnicity and ancestry as a basis for citizenship. If Sudanese rulers insist on following this path, what remains of the Sudan will undoubtedly fall apart and the so-called “North” may shrink to the confluence of the Nile and the Gezira region, an entity that can hardly be considered “homogenous.” If the Sudan is to be salvaged, the NCP’s project must be challenged on all levels, with a new democratic vision of identity and citizenship that recognizes and celebrates the country’s multiple diversities.