

the different colors of civil society in Sudan. It was ratified unanimously [by the National Congress Committees]. Its concepts are embedded in the new Constitution, and we considered this as a radical and fundamental solution for the crisis of government in Sudan.

The next stage for us includes the presentation of this political charter to all the opposition members abroad. We are confident that it includes all the goals which every patriot looks forward to achieve. We are also absolutely confident that [the opposition] will come forward to add, delete, and amend it. But all this reveals that this is a real turning point in government and the beginning of the peaceful exchange of power.

The transitional period will coincide with peace in the south to repair the damage which has been brought to the basic infrastructure of Sudan, to coordinate foreign relations and take the path of a comprehensive development policy, then to prepare the country for general elections, in which political parties are founded, parties with objective contents and established according to the rule of law, devoid of any religious politicizing, tribal politicizing, and tribal dependencies and prejudices.

EIR: What can you tell us about forces from abroad which have been trying to destabilize the country, often working through opposition groups? I'm thinking of the British in particular, and Baroness Caroline Cox.

Al-Hindi: The British people know the Sudanese nation pretty well, and they know that we are a very peaceful nation, we love freedom and are very friendly. The British lived here for 60 years, during which they did not find any problems. I think what Baroness Cox is doing, is not clear even to the British people.

She is working in a very narrow pocket, which is that of the rebels in the south. She cannot speak about the intentions and goals of the Sudanese people at all, simply because she does not know the Sudanese people. She does not even know the people of the south; she knows only those in the south who are against the government. I hope that Baroness Cox will be able to visit the Sudan.

EIR: Legally, you mean?

Al-Hindi: (Laughing) Yes, legally.

EIR: Do you think Mohammad Othman al-Mirghani, the secretary general of the DUP, will follow you?

Al-Hindi: I am very positive that al-Mirghani, Sadiq al-Mahdi, and all the other political opposition leaders will come to the Sudan, very soon.

Please convey our best wishes and greetings to all people of Europe, and especially, to the American people. The prophets of freedom in America are known to us; we know John Adams, we know George Washington. So, best wishes to the American people.

Interview: Dr. Riek Machar

Why southern leaders want to end the war

Dr. Machar is chairman of the Southern Coordinating Council and vice chairman of the National Congress. He was interviewed in Khartoum on Feb. 22.

EIR: Dr. Machar, can you just give us some background on the peace agreement, and how you came to make the historic decision to join in the peace treaty?

Machar: Peace, to us, in our organization, is a strategic aim. In the south we have been fighting for a long time, since 1955, and we have seen wars, we have seen insurrections, we have seen conflict through that period. The last war is the current one, which I have participated in, mentally, physically; but then, having fought from 1983 to April 10, 1996, one felt that the option of war, the military option, is not going to solve the conflict in Sudan.

There are historical reasons for the war, there are political reasons, cultural reasons, there are military reasons, there are religious reasons, and they date back to the foreign interference of 1821 when Mohamed Ali from Egypt moved southwards to Sudan, and after that, the British conquest of Sudan. When the British left, the problem had already started. Now, these differences were not corrected by the previous governments that ruled Sudan since 1953 or since 1956, after Sudan was ruled by the Sudanese themselves. So, the war continued.

But then, what are the demands by the South? They varied. The South represented solutions, in political slogans, like demanding that if the British left the country, the country should be run on a federal basis, it shouldn't be run as unitary state, because the Sudan is so diverse, culturally, ethnically. So, the South requested the implementation of a federal system of government; that was not acceded to, at that time; federalism was considered a taboo, was considered separation. Then, the thinking of the rulers in Sudan was to create a homogeneous Sudan, in which two twin policies were advocated: one, Arabization, and second, Islamization. Those did not succeed.

At a second stage, the South requested self-rule, which was implemented from 1972 to 1983, at a time when there was relative peace in the country, but then that was destroyed by the very ruler who brought it about.

The other demand made by the South in 1947 was the exercise of the right of self-determination of people of the South, which should determine peacefully and freely whether they are part of Sudan, or would opt for a different course of action. In this, we tried our best in negotiating with the previ-

ous government, before this government. Unfortunately, by then, our articulation of the problem was not coming forth.

It was the SPLA, under John Garang. In 1983-84, what was presented by the SPLA was that they wanted a socialist transformation of the whole country, in order to correct the grievances which the South and the rest of the country had been complaining about. So that socialist trend went on for a time; it actually made us have governments, regimes, military dictatorships, one after another, and we found that we were going in a vicious circle, because during the time of Nimieri — you could say it was a military dictatorship, a military government. Then, when it fell, obviously because of the war, we tried to negotiate with the next government, but it didn't go through. Sadiq [Al Mahdi] came in, composed five governments, and we tried to negotiate, but it did not go through. Bashir came in, we had a series of negotiations which started from Addis 1989, through to Nairobi 1989-90, then Abuja 1, Abuja 2, Nairobi 1, Nairobi 2, then the IGAD [Intergovernmental Authority on Development] process, which we know.

In 1990, after this government came in, and began to project its policies on the South, on how to resolve the problem, we began to ask ourselves, in the SPLA organization, whether we were really articulating the problem. Are we being understood, or are we just going in a vicious circle? And we found out we were going in a vicious circle. So, we split from the SPLA on Aug. 20, 1991, and gave a solid presentation that the issue of the South needs to be resolved peacefully and through the exercise of the right of self-determination for the people of the South. With this presentation, we engaged the government in peace talks, starting in Frankfurt, Germany, on Jan. 25, 1992, and we arrived to a certain understanding in that meeting. We took that understanding to the Abuja peace talks.

Now there were two movements, one led by John Garang, one led by me. We had two delegations in Abuja, and gave a presentation of our view of peace. We failed to get any agreement, but then the SPLA under Garang was still maintaining the same attitude of being slippery, in what really their demands were, the reasons for war. So in 1992, we failed in Abuja. Then came 1993: That also failed. In June, the SPLA under Garang continued in Abuja, we had a parallel meeting in Nairobi, where there was progress in our peace talks with the government in Nairobi, but it was not conclusive; there were still points of disagreement. Then came the Washington conference, at the U.S. Institute for Peace. Garang and I went to Washington and in the Congress, under the chairmanship of Harry Johnston (D-Fla.), who was then the chairman of the subcommittee for African affairs. In our discussion, for the first time, the SPLA came to our projection, in adopting the right of self-determination. That was on Oct. 22, 1993.

From there, the IGAD process was restarted. The first meeting we had with the IGAD heads of the government was in Kampala on Nov. 6, 1993; using the same paper, the Washington declaration, the IGAD process was launched. On Jan. 6, 1994, we drafted a common agenda for the IGAD

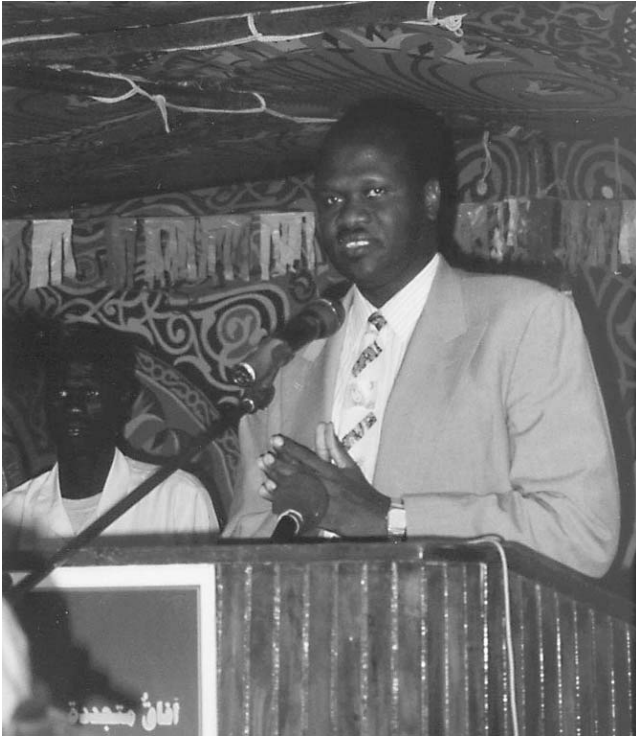
meetings. And from there, March-July, then September 1994, until the IGAD process flopped.

Now we saw that the SPLA under Garang had decided to forget about the whole process, and, through the help of Eritrea, they decided to have a different forum; we also followed that forum, which was the Asmara forum. Our conclusion was, that the Asmara forum was a war forum, not a peace forum. After that, we had discussions with the President Isaias [Afwerki] in Asmara — this was in October 1995 — and with high-ranking officials in Addis Abeba, and with the northern opposition in London. In early 1996, we decided that the Asmara forum, since it was a war forum, did not serve our purpose, so we said we should go for direct talks with the government.

For the first time, I met the late First Vice-President, face to face, and from there, our organization decided that I myself, as a leader of this organization, should also lead these talks. So by March 11, I met the First Vice President, Al-Zubair, outside Nasir, in a village called Katbet. So, the political charter came up. Our decision to take a peaceful course of action was influenced by the fact that we found the regional powers, and some members in the international community, were not genuinely seeking ways of resolving the conflict in the Sudan; it was being used as a stick to perpetuate the conflict, whether with this government or another government which would come along. And that is not the reason for which we took up arms; therefore, we decided to take the peaceful course of action.

EIR: You referenced members of the international community. Of course, the first person and group who comes to mind is Baroness Cox of Britain, because after all, she was in Asmara. She was instrumental in organizing the NDA and mediating contacts between the SPLA of John Garang and the northern political opposition. She organized the conference in London after that, at the House of Lords, and another one which was more discreet, but in which the House of Lords endorsed the Asmara declaration, which was a declaration to overthrow the government by violent means of continued war. I am wondering if you can say something about this role of the British, particularly this group around Baroness Cox, because without that kind of political, logistical, and military support, maybe the war would have taken a different turn, or maybe the situation militarily would be different, so that others still in the John Garang camp would be encouraged to seek peace through negotiations.

Maچار: I attended the conference at the House of Lords, Nov. 3, 1995. What struck me was that the forum was not even seeking peace; it was more a forum to perpetrate war. And it's actually after this forum that I met the northern opposition, who were strongly represented. We had extensive discussions for two days with them. After that, I left for Addis Abeba. That forum contributed to reshaping my thinking about what others could or could not help in resolving the conflict in the country.



Dr. Riek Machar: "Our decision to take a peaceful course of action was influenced by the fact that we found the regional powers, and some members in the international community, were not genuinely seeking ways of resolving the conflict in the Sudan."

As for Baroness Cox: She is using two issues for her campaign. One, is slavery; two, is religious persecution. On the slavery front, I think that is a fiasco, because they made a setup in one of the areas controlled by the SPLA, which is even incriminating to the SPLA itself, because if slavery was being practiced in the areas controlled by the SPLA, then there is the SPLA sanctioning slavery. Unless there were evidence from the areas controlled by the government, and she proved that this was being done in broad daylight and the government was seeing it and not taking action, then she would have a strong reason to think that she had evidence of slavery. But let us ask: Why should slavery be practiced in one spot, one dot? What she was talking about were the areas on northern Bahr al Ghazal. The North and the South have very long borders. There are no incidents of this kind. Why should such incidents be localized in a small area, if slavery is being practiced? So, I think Baroness Cox was deceived; something was set up for her. Even in the video itself, one of the people who was supposed to have slaves, and wanted money in return for their freedom, could not mention his name, because, he said, he was going to be persecuted by the government. Why would the government persecute such persons, if the government sanctions slavery? She is using slavery, which is very sensitive in the West and in the whole world, because this is an outdated trade which people see as inhumane, but the truth of the matter—I know Baroness Cox; I wish she could visit the

Sudan, legally, come to Khartoum and go to the areas she had visited and visit the areas controlled by the government, at least cross-check her information, because there is a question of credibility. She is a member of the House of Lords; if she moves around with incredible information, and this is exposed, what would be her own credibility as a politician?

The other issue she is using is religious persecution. It would still be good for her to come, particularly after this agreement of April 1997. She cannot lock herself into a situation of 1995. I believe her information is outdated. Now, whether her actions are sanctioned by the British, that I do not know; but I know that the British and the Americans are today the ones imposing sanctions on the Sudan. The British support that. But I yet see British clergymen coming to the country; I met the Bishop of Liverpool, I met the Bishop of Bradford, they had come to see their fellow Christians. I have met some of the British MPs in the House of Lords.

But the British are not living up to their historical responsibility. The problem started when they were the masters of the country. They are not living up to that, but they should live up to it. Instead of perpetrating the conflict, they should work to see that the conflict is resolved peacefully, this is what one should expect from their side. Baroness Cox's information is outdated, and I really wished that she would come and visit the country. She would move freely.

People change. Let me take [Ugandan President Yoweri] Museveni: He was a communist, now he is a darling of the Americans (and the British). Take a man like Nelson Mandela, who was jailed because the apartheid [regime] thought he was a communist, the same with [Zimbabwe's Robert] Mugabe, the same with Afwerki, the same with the one in Ethiopia, [Meles] Zenawi. The communists who were the "bad boys" have become the "good boys" now. And, a system can change. The good things the system in the Sudan is doing, should be seen.

EIR: You referred to the problem when the British were ruling the country, or even before. Could you point to what the problem historically was?

Machar: You know, when the British took over in 1898, and they destroyed the Mahdist system, in the early 1920s, they decided that they should run the Sudan using two systems, the North to be run on the Middle Eastern model, of Arabs, and the South, of Africans. So, there were two systems operating. By 1943, they established an advisory council for the North, which the South was not involved in. In 1946, they wanted to establish an advisory council for the South, but then they changed their minds in the Khartoum administrative conference, and they failed to unite the two countries. These are two different places. So by 1947 they convened a conference in Juba, the Juba conference, where the South presented two demands: one, federalism; two, right of self-determination, their advisory council. But that did not go through. They decided to unite the country, and instead, in 1948, they made a legislative body for the whole Sudan, in which the South

was represented by 13 members. That created resentment politically in the South, and the South was more underdeveloped. So they [the British] had different ideas; they thought that if the North became independent, they would move southward; they kept it as a reserve. So, with their sudden change of mind, without preparing the South, things went bad. In 1953, there was the Cairo conference on self-rule, the whole Sudan. They did not even make sure that the South participated in that conference! So, independence was given without the South participating. All that began to be resented by the South. By 1955, the South rebelled, under the British, you see, and started a war. In 1956, they [the British] left, and left the people fighting.

EIR: Would you say that problems between the South and the North go even back earlier, into the nineteenth century, which the British failed to address?

Machar: They failed to address some, and they created some. Actually the majority of problems, they created. They divided, they made barriers. The people couldn't know themselves.

EIR: Coming to the current situation, could you explain what really is the significance of what went on here during the week, not only in terms of the elections to the Vice Presidency, but also the process as a whole?

Machar: This is an historic event. I think it is a landmark, in the sense that the Sudanese are starting to chart out a new era, in the sense that the political organization, the National Congress, has the basis for forming an organization that transcends racial, cultural, religious, ethnic divides, as you realized, and I hope that with this start, there should be definite, serious formations at the level of the 26 states, all over the South. Now it seems with the historical background of the political organizations in this country, there have been three dominant political organizations before this government. Until 1989, it was the Umma party, then the Democratic Unionist Party, then the National Islamic Front. Let us take the first two, the Umma and the Democratic Unionist Party: These are sectarian, and their leadership, the inner core of these organizations, is based on families who had religious leadership: the Mahdi family, or the Mirghani family. The hard core is composed of the religious sects, the Umma, supported by the Ansar; the Democratic Unionist Party by Khadaimiyya. These are the inner core and the outer core. After that, the bigger outer ring are the northern Sudanese, being members, or coopted into it. So the priority goes to the families, then the sects, then the northern Sudanese. This is for these two parties; they were not representative of the Sudanese [as a whole]. As for the National Islamic Front, by its name, it only accepted Muslims.

Now, with what happened last week, I think we are making an effort to create a political organization that will transcend all this, that will unite the people, that each will be comfortable and stand on his platform and say, "Yes, I do see

myself there." That is one point. And it is good that it is happening while people are discussing pluralism, freedom of speech, freedom of political organization. And we have no choice: Sudan is not an island. So, since our expected Constitution is going to come about, is going to guarantee freedom of speech, freedom of political organization, pluralism, then people should get organized, to face the challenges coming up. It was an important thing.

The other thing that attracted my attention, is that, even in all the committees of the conference, they came out with recommendations on peace. And therefore, they gave peace priority. It means that peace in actual fact is the prime problem in the country, the main problem. Once peace comes, pluralism shall be acceptable, freedom of speech will be a norm. And therefore it means the Sudanese people really give priority to peace. In seven of the committees — even in committees which I didn't think would talk about peace — they came up with peace.

The other point which attracted my attention was the election of the vice chairman. We know him; he was the secretary general of the Democratic Unionist Party. It means that there are new alliances taking place. Because a man like Sharif Zein Al-Hindi would not accept to be vice chairman of the National Congress, unless he had decided, that this is it.

So there are new alliances taking place in the country. The final result would be that the attempt for reconciliation with the northern political parties will be accelerated, whatever their stand will be. Pluralism, freedom of speech, freedom of political organization are coming. The moves toward peace have been consolidated. Definitely, they will have to come to terms with the government. In it, the loser will be John Garang, because the talk of the overthrow of the government, will not be there with the northern political parties, if they get the guarantees; politically, they will operate. They will have no reason to continue holding arms and fighting the government. Garang will be faced with the choice, to come to peace. After all, he has no reason to continue the war, because if he is fighting for the federal system, this is under implementation; if he is fighting for self-rule in the South, there is a special status for the South during the interim period. If he is fighting for the right to self-determination, it shall be exercised through a referendum. He has no political agenda. His only political agenda would have been democracy, a multi-party system, pluralism, in the country, which that conference addressed.

EIR: Coming back to this problem of religious persecution. Are you satisfied with the arrangements of the new Constitution, and the way the Coordinating Council for the Southern States functions with respect to the significance of *Sharia* [Islamic law] in the legal system of the country?

Machar: In the agreement, the first thing we agreed upon was to accept the multiplicity in the Sudan: that Sudan is multi-racial, multi-religious, multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, and that the majority of the Sudanese are Muslims, but there is a considerable number of Christians and others who profess

different religions. Citizenship is the basis on which rights and duties will be based. We also agreed that *Sharia* and custom shall be the sources of legislation. Now in the Constitution, it is the same thing that is mentioned. And therefore, the South will be using custom—not only the South; there are people in western Sudan still using custom now, because this is the only way they can operate, even if they are Muslims. So, with that I am satisfied.

But the implementation process is not over. The Coordinating Council is not yet established. The papers will be in front of the President, we hope, before the end of this month; the process shall be over, and therefore, the process of implementing what we have agreed upon will start. But I know there is so much improvement, on the question of religion. There are still problems here and there, which priests or pastors are complaining about. But where were we before the agreement? We were at a different stage altogether. So, I didn't expect all problems to be resolved in one day.

EIR: What do you think the United States and European countries should do, to help this process? What would you like to see come out of the U.S. administration and Congress?

Machar: First, I was disappointed in what the United States did while we were in the peace talks in Nairobi, when they imposed trade sanctions on the Sudan. That was not an incentive for peace talks. It was just telling the SPLA, "don't deal with that government." Therefore the sanctions were imposed while we were talking. Whatever explanation was given, was not satisfactory, because by actions, people will blame the United States. But yet, the United States says it is supportive of peace. It is one of the member countries of IGAD. Now if the United States would take peace as a priority—Sudan is a big country. If there is no peace in Sudan, there will be instability in the region, in Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, and the rest. We border nine countries. We are the heart of Africa; if we are unstable, the rest will be unstable.

I think the best that the United States can do, is to support the peace process. People change. There is nothing unique or strange in this country: There is a Presidency, there is a National Assembly—elected; the press—you know, when I compare the press from 1986 and today, there is so much freedom. There has been a big change. The country is moving towards constitutionality. The country is moving towards pluralism. What does America want? So, America should support the peace process. Let America support the move towards constitutionality, towards democracy, democratization, pluralism. This is not a communist country. There is a free market economy, which I think would be in the interests of America.

EIR: What do you see as priorities for economic development in the southern states? How do look at projects such as the Jonglei Canal?

Machar: After the ten state governments of the South and the Coordinating Council are constituted, hopefully, before

the end of this month, we are looking forward first to repatriation, resettlement, and rehabilitation, then opening up roads so that those who can produce can get to the markets and the markets can sell to the population. On the economic development in the South, there is extensive oil exploration now. Chevron is the one that started it, but what has been discovered in the last year in the South, is greater than what Chevron had discovered before. So we expect, with these new riches of oil, that we will emphasize agricultural development. What people themselves can do is more important, as our society has an agricultural base. We also want to improve animal husbandry, and the trade interaction with the North and the neighboring countries, place more emphasis on commerce.

Now on the Jonglei Canal, three-quarters of the canal has been dug. Only one-quarter remains to be dug. We need to reclaim land, to develop that area. The Jonglei Canal would bring about development there, so it's one of the projects that we want to revive. The swamp is expanding in the Nile basin, every year, and even taking more land, displacing it. We need water northwards; and also the agreement was with Egypt, they also need it. And on our side, we need development in that area, we do not want a human zoo. We need a highway. There was supposed to be a highway built along the canal, that highway would open the South to economic development and commerce. We have ambitious projects.

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Interview: Dr. Ghazi Salahuddin Attabani

An optimistic look at Sudan's future

Dr. Ghazi is the outgoing secretary general of Sudan's National Congress. He was interviewed in Khartoum.

EIR: Dr. Ghazi, could you give us your view of the significance of the second National Congress?

Ghazi: This second meeting has, first of all, come after many significant developments in the political arena, especially the signing of the peace agreement in April last year, so we had to be more inclusive in the conference, in the sense that six factions have joined the peace process and are therefore represented in the Congress. So in terms of membership, it's much