

# The Arab Congregation and the Ideology of Genocide in Darfur, Sudan

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## Introduction

This article presents six documents related to Al Tajamu Al Arabi, loosely translated here as the “Arab Congregation”. Other translations are: the “Arab Coalition”, “Arab Gathering”, “Arab Alliance” and “Arab Congress.”

The Arab Congregation was probably formed in the early 1980s, but gained momentum in the latter years of the same decade. Darfur has been a major site of operation for the Arab Congregation. This basic fact disguises the broader aim and geographic spread of the organization. Within Sudan, the Arab Congregation aims at displacing and controlling the indigenous populations of the entire country, though modestly starting with the six states of the western regions, or provinces, of Kordofan and Darfur.

At the broader regional level of Sub-Saharan Africa, the tentacles of the Arab Congregation spread as far as Chad, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Niger and, possibly, beyond. The geographical spread of the organization indicates that the Arab Congregation of western Sudan is but a small cog in a wider network of national and regional dimensions. At the national level, the Arab Congregation of western Sudan is sponsored by, and operates as a conduit for Kayan Al Shamal, hence “Kash”, or the “Northern Entity” in English (El-Tom, 2006). Kash was formed in 1976 when the government of the dictator, Nimeiri, was nearly toppled by a Kordofan army officer who in today’s language in the Sudan, would be classed as “Black” and non-Arab. Kash was then formed to ensure that irrespective of the ideology behind the government of Khartoum – democratic, fascist, military, socialist, religious fanatic or otherwise – the leadership remained in the hands of the northern region. But Kash is an exclusive club, open only for the three elite ethnic groups of the northern region. This is what various

circles, including the Arab Congregation have referred to as Al Thalooth, i.e. the Tripartite Coalition. The Tripartite Coalition, which has been ruling the Sudan since independence, encompasses three ethnic groups: the Shaigiya (former President Sir Alkhatim, current Vice-President Taha), the Jallayeen (President Albashir) and the Danagla (former President Nimeiri, former Prime Minister Almahdi and former Vice-President Alzibair). For the last forty years or so, Kash has spearheaded the project of Arab-Islamization of the Sudan and in the pursuit of their project, they have needed foot soldiers supplied by various bodies, including the Arab Congregation. The hegemony of the northern region over Sudan is very clear-cut and requires no rerun in this article (see JEM, 2004; El-Tom, 2003 and Ibrahim, 2004).

The might of the geo-political dimension of the Arab Congregation was chillingly demonstrated in Darfur in the early 1980s. Following the collapse of Nimeiri's regime, the Khartoum government connived with Gaddafi and his disastrous gamble in Chad to turn Darfur into one of their daring crusades, to push the so-called "Islamic belt" into Black Africa. Having been kicked out of Chad, Gaddafi proceeded to locate his Islamic Legion under the command of Acheikh Ibn Omar in the Massalit land, western Darfur. The Legion, whose recruits were sourced in Chad, Mali and Niger, but also as far away as Mauritania, devastated the area and its indigenous inhabitants. Later, settlers of the Islamic Legion in Darfur were to play a prominent role as Janjaweed, effectively executing Musa Hilal's call: "Change the demography of Darfur and empty it of African tribes" (Flint and de Waal, 2005; see also Flint and De Waal, 2006). Attempts to change the demography of Darfur are still going on to this day. As recently as July 2007, Bloomfield accused the government of Sudan of "cynically trying to change the demography of the whole region." Monitoring the Chadian-Sudanese borders, Bloomfield wrote:

An internal UN report, obtained by the Independent, show that up to 30,000 Arabs have crossed the border in the past three months. Most arrived with all their belongings and large flocks. They were greeted by Sudanese Arabs who took them to empty villages cleared by the government and Janjaweed forces. .... a further 45,000 Arabs from Niger have also crossed over (Bloomfield 2007).

At least three conclusions can be drawn so far, each of which connects with a general misconception about the current conflict in Darfur. Firstly, the Darfur conflict cannot be reduced to a strife that is internal to Darfur and the outcome of an environmentally-generated scarcity of resources. Rather, the conflict is part and parcel of the national and regional dynamics and aspirations.

Secondly, the Janjaweed are not a by-product of the present Darfur conflict. Their current involvement in the Darfur war is simply a culmination of decades of atrocities in this region as well as in other parts of the Sudan, like Abeye in southern Sudan.

Thirdly, the reading that the Khartoum government unleashed the Janjaweed following the rebellion in Darfur is factually incorrect. On the contrary, the Darfur rebellion took place for several reasons which include atrocities of the Janjaweed against indigenous Darfurians.

### **The Documents**

In the following pages, I will present several documents, all of which have been translated by myself. Notes made by the author on the text are placed between angle brackets, while official translations of Qur'anic verses have been used throughout. Some of these documents have been commented upon in English in other sources, but they have never been made available in their entirety to the English reader. Therefore, the value of this article lies in the inclusion of the documents and not in my own analysis as such.

#### ***Document No. 1***

“Arab Coalition

Foundation Statement/ *Bian Assasi*

October 1987

‘In the Name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful’ (Holy Qur’an).

Sayed ( Mr) Prime Minister Sadiq Al Mahdi,

The Arab race known today as Arab tribes in Darfur entered the Sudan together with the Arab waves that arrived in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Despite their division into numerous groups, these tribes belong to one origin.

These tribes settled in two areas in the Darfur region. One faction settled in an area constituting 88 per cent of the province of South Darfur. The other faction settled in the province of North Darfur; namely, the greatest part of its northern, middle, eastern and western territories. In the province of North Darfur, Arab settlement constitutes 55 per cent of the province. The Arab tribes now form more than 70 per cent of the population of the Darfur region.

Over the centuries that followed their entry into Sudan and their settlement in Darfur, these Arab tribes played a pivotal role in the formation of the identity of the region. In this part of the nation, the Darfur Arabs have been the makers of civilization that have formed the real and actual existence of this region. This they have done through their involvement in politics, religion and language, and in a manner that has led to the moulding of present Sudan.

Darfur Arabs have also been instrumental in the Mahdist Revolution, having fought, excelled and died in defence of Sudan. Throughout other periods, Darfur Arabs have contributed to the political, economic, social, civilizational and cultural advancement of Darfur in particular, and Sudan in general.

We reaffirm that we have defended and we will continue to defend the unity of Sudan, and with utmost faith and strength. We will remain united and avoid any fragmentation and guard the wholeness of Sudan at all times.

Sayed Prime Minister,

Scholars of political systems define regional governance in different ways. However, they all concur that regional governance calls for the handing over of power to the people of the concerned region to undertake political, administrative and economic reforms. Regional governance stipulates that the tribes of the region take over the running of the region and manage their affairs using their available capable cadres. In this regard we state with regret that we have been deprived of our right of leadership, representation and participation in decision-making in this region. We have become a majority, but with no weight; and subjects, but not citizens. This has been the case despite the following:

1. We represent 70% of the population of the region.
2. Our educated members constitute 40% of the total educated members of the region. We have hundreds of university graduates and tens of others who have obtained Masters and PhD degrees in numerous specializations.
3. Our contribution to the national budget amounts to no less than 15%.
4. Our contribution to the Darfur region exceeds 90%.
5. We contribute a lion's share to the army, and in sacrifice to the nation.
6. We have contributed 14 representatives to the Constitutional Assembly (*Jamiya Taseesya*) who have effectively represented us, the Arabs. We have equally contributed 18 members to the Constitutional Assembly (*Jamiya Tasseesia*).  
<Note irregularity in the last two sentences>

Mr Prime Minister,

All that we have said confirms the political, social and economic weight of the Darfur Arab tribes. We therefore demand to be represented at a minimum of 50% in regional constitutional posts and in the regional representation to the central government. We are worried that, should the neglect of representation of the Arab race prevail, things may get out of control and matters may pass from the hands of the wise to the ignorant. The consequences of that will be unpalatable. Injustice visited by kin is more painful than the stab of a sword.

Finally, we assure every Sudanese citizen that we are not callers for fragmentation and disunity. We are callers for justice and equality. Long live Sudan; united and under freedom and democracy.

Interim Committee, mandated by the Arab Congregation:

Signed: 1. Abdalla Masar; 2. Sharif Ali Jagar; 3. Ibrahim Yagoub; 4. Hesain Hasan Basha; 5. Nazir Hanid Beito; 6. Tajeldin Ahmed Alhilo; 7. Ayoub El Baloula; 8. Mohamed Khawif Alshitali; 9. Zakaria Ibrahim Abu Leahao; 10. Mohamed Zakaria Daldoum; 11. Nazir Alhadi Eisa Dabaka; 12. Altayib Abu Shama; 13. Sindika Dawood; 14. Haroun Ali Sanusi; 15. Dr Omer Abdel Jabbar; 16. Abdalla Yahia; 17. Sulaiman Jabir Abbaker; 18. Nazir Mohamed Yagoub Alumda; 19. Hamid Mohamed Kheiralla; 20. Mohamed Aldouma Omer; 21. Abdelrahman Ali Abdelnabi; 22. Ahmed Shahata Ahmed; 23. Abubaker Abbo Amin; 24. Jabir Ahmed Alreyyah.” <End of text>

***Document No. 2***

(Document undated; possibly 1987; Flint and de Waal 2005 refer it to 1998/99)

“Qoreish 2

Extremely Confidential.

‘In the Name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

Say: O God!

Lord of Power

To whom Thou pleasest

And Thou strippest off Power

From whom Thou pleasest

Thou enduest with honour

Whom Thou pleasest,

And Thou bringest low

Whom Thou pleasest:

In Thy hand is all Good.

Verily, over all things

Thou hast power’ (Qur’an – Ali 1983:129)

God, the Almighty, is Most Truthful.

In Qoreish 1, we covered the birth of the new Qoreish and some of its programmes. However, new political realities, with internal and external dimensions, necessitate taking a moment of reflection to recall objectives, review plans and consolidate achievements for the realization of your noble aims. As you know, the Jaalyeen, the Danagla and the

Shaygiya have prevented us from ruling Sudan for almost a century. Despite their adopted Arab cloak, these three ethnic groups are nothing but a hybrid, both racially and culturally, and are part and parcel of the Nubian Egyptian fabric. These groups intend to cling to power forever. As we have just learnt, they have vowed to retain power and rotate it among themselves.

Qoreish is currently passing through a difficult period. All of us, and especially the two partners in Kordofan and Darfur, are requested to rise above opinionated and sectarian divisions so that we can achieve our noble objectives and retain gains that have been realized to date. To achieve our objectives, it is necessary to hold fast to the following:

- a. Aiming at the year 2020 as the latest date
- b. The objectives are those stated in Qoreish 2020 (i.e. to control Sudan)
- c. Provisional objective: to control the six western states of Sudan
- d. Plans, programmes and methods:

*1. Internal-to-Sudan Recommendations:*

- Giving special attention to education, both vertically and horizontally; and preparation of highly qualified cadres in all specializations, including politics, economics, media, security and military professions
- The establishment of an economic institution/foundation
- Enlightened recruitment into the army and security apparatus
- The continuation of the plan of pretended cooperation with the current regime
- The retention of established working relations with some of the central figures who belong to the ruling Tripartite Coalition <Jaalyeen, Danagla and Shaygiya>
- Co-ordination with our cousins in central and eastern Sudan
- The affirmation of the tribes of the north-south intersection zone, their support, armament and training; making use of the Popular Defence Force <at the time, pro-government militias>, Mujahideen and Peace Forces.
- The encouragement of all those who are able to fight to join the Sudan Peace Force
- The retention of channels of communication with the Dinka
- Complete commitment to principles enshrined in the Shaheen Operation of south Kordofan.
- The containment of friction between Nuhood and Alfula townships (Kordofan) and urging of relatives across the nation to avoid internal strife, which depletes energy
- The avoidance of raising the oil issue before its actual extraction
- The containment of consequences of Nyala inter-Arab conflict as far as possible and working for release of detained – Arab – cavalries

- The securing of scarce pastures for nomads in Sudan, Chad and Central Africa
- Fighting traditions of land rights, like *hawakeer* (indigenous traditional titles to land) and *Dar* (tribal land), by all means
- The projection of our strife against non-Arab tribes in the west as a national defence against the extension of southern rebellion into the west
- Widening the gap and demolition of trust between the centre and the non-Arab tribes. This can be done by pushing leaders of the non-Arab groups to the extreme in expressing their grievances regarding the injustice of the central government in the west (Darfur and Kordofan) and by enlightened collaboration with them in their racist and regionalist tendencies
- Working for an increase of our constitutional posts in the centre and in the states.
- The securing of achievements of the Jamous (Bafalo) Programme in western Darfur with all its calculated consequences
- The continuation of Teraifi 1 and Reraifi 2 in their aim of entrenching members of Qoreish in Darfur
- Adequate preparation for elections in the six western states
- Remaining vigilant regarding discipline and avoiding callous behaviour like talking about the Nation of the Baggara
- The payment of attention to positive media by our leaders
- The necessity of upgrading the financial performance of Qoreish
- Prominent leaders of Qoreish shall remain within the National Congress, three from Qoreish <?> and make decisions as necessitated by daily events.

2. *External Recommendations:*

- The strengthening of co-ordination and consultation with members of Qoreish in neighbouring countries
- The promotion of strategic thinking as founded by Albaqalani Aseel and Sheikh Ibn Omer
- The promotion of the Camel Race programme and using it to strengthen relations with Arab brothers in the countries of the Arab Gulf, and with the help of God we will succeed.

‘And we wished to be  
 Gracious to those who were  
 Being depressed in the land  
 To make them leaders (in faith)  
 And make them heirs  
 To establish a firm place  
 For them in the land,

And to show Pharaoh, Haman,  
And their hosts, at their hands,  
The very things against which  
They were taking precautions' (Qur'an – Ali 1983:1002-1003)

God, the Almighty is Most Truthful." <End of text>

***Document No. 3***

“The Arab Congregation  
Administration of Military Operations

'In the Name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.  
And hold fast,  
All together, by the Rope  
Which God (stretches out  
For you), and be not divided  
Among yourselves' (Qur'an – Ali 1983:149).

All corporate members who have taken an oath under leadership of the Arab Congregation are instructed to convene intensive meetings in order to embark on the execution of all commitments/ resolutions that have been made and implemented by the leadership of the Executive Committee. The first meetings shall include all Arab tribes that reside near the areas designated for extermination/*ibada* and burning. Umdas and Sheikhs are to commit their subjects under oath of secrecy, so that the matter remains completely confidential. Following initial contacts, general meetings shall be convened to include Arab and non-Arab tribes and volunteers from other groups. Assistance of non-Arab tribes like the Zaghawa, shall be commissioned, thus making use of them in war procedures, military training, and geographical knowledge < original word: studies> of the area. In this way, the matter will not be evident for those targeted for extermination/*ibada*.

The following recommendations have been endorsed:

1. The dispossession of the Fur of all their cattle and other animals through the use of all available means
2. The assassination of Fur leaders, representatives and intellectuals, and the restriction of the remaining Fur in cities and jails, and murdering all those who can be killed



3. The destruction of all means of transport, including fast ambulance services, in order to prevent the reporting of incidences to the police and to disrupt communication – of the victims – with the government
4. The establishment of the camps of Arab fighters on top of mountains so that they remain beyond reach or entry of the attackers
5. Starting military operations in larger and more fortified areas, using disproportionately large number of fighters
6. The posting of those who have arrived from western nations or Chad, in particular members of Idris Jamous and Hesain Habri, in the following areas: (a) Wadi Salih, (b) Mukjar and (c) Wadi Kaja.
7. The posting of fighters of the Popular Defence Force who came from Kordofan, i.e. the Miseiriya, in the following locations: (a) Jabal Mara, (b) south and south-west Kas and (c) Wadi Bari.

All under-oath members are hereby instructed to firmly commit themselves to all agreed resolutions until we achieve victory. You are to know that our enemies are drawing on the support of the unbelievers and that is why we have assigned our forces to different locations and in a way that fits the military situation.

Committee of the Arab Congregation in the Region  
Administration of Military Operations, 1992.”

***Document No. 4***

(This document appeared in a circular letter format intended to be sent to several officials. No date was affixed to the document, possibly 1993?)

“The Arab Congregation  
Strictly Confidential

Mr. ....

The Executive Committee of the Arab Congregation has held a meeting for the purpose of evaluating the activities of all members and for reviewing the situation following the appointment of ministers of regional government from among the Zurga/Black population. The meeting agreed that we never obtain a position in Darfur without recourse to – armed – struggle and unity among ourselves. This is a difficult and critical time and can only be endured by determined men. To achieve the objectives of the Congregation, the Supreme Committee of the Arab Congregation has made the following decisions:

Committed members of the Congregation and those who are under oath, are to:

1. Incite troubles for the regional government and use all possible means to subvert the implementation of its policies and reform programmes
2. Work to paralyse the delivery of public services in the areas of the Black population and to agitate them and make them feel that the government is impotent and incapable of delivering even the minimum life requirements
3. Double the number of our volunteers in the areas of the Blacks. Our duty necessitates the creation of insecurity in these areas, the halting of production and the liquidation of Black leaders
4. Work to create tribal conflicts among the Blacks/Zurga so that they will never unite
5. Those members of the Congregation who occupy leading positions are instructed to:
  - a) Ensure the concentration of public services in the areas of influence of the Arab Congregation
  - b) Not to appoint children of the Zurga in important posts, and at the same time to work as opportune as possible to obstruct the work of the members of the Black community who occupy executive and administrative positions.
  - c) Work by all ways and means to disrupt the stability of schools in the areas of the Blacks/Zurga)."

***Document No. 5***

"The Arab Congregation  
Coordination Council of the Arab Congregation  
Political Committee

Date: 15/11/2003

Subject: Report on visits of the Political Committee to the localities of Buram, Tulus, Reheid Albirdi and Iddalfursan

The committee left for Buram, Monday 10/11/2003, and reached its destination at 10:30 pm. The committee started its work immediately by holding meetings with relevant community and local administration and tribal leaders, politicians, executive officials and notables

Members of the committee started the meeting, clarifying the mission and objectives of the visit. An exploration of the views of the hosts followed. Host speakers

related their satisfaction with the visit and affirmed their agreement with the mission, even though the initiative was somewhat late.

The discussion focused on ambiguous issues that needed some clarification by the committee members. The committee was able to make all necessary clarifications.

The following recommendations and points were agreed upon:

1. That the project of the Arab Congregation must proceed with resolute and effective power so that the end result will be wholly achieved
2. Making maximum use of learned people/scientists who command wisdom, prudence and knowledge of economics
3. Ensuring the just allocation of resources and access to power at both local and national levels, especially under the expected peace agreement <Later to be the CPA, Comprehensive Peace Agreement>
4. Working to overcome inter-tribal conflicts speedily among Arab groups.
5. Considering the issue at hand within the framework of religion, *sharia* and reconciliatory Islamic goodness
6. Propagating the plan across the Sudan
7. Changing the name of the state <meaning the Darfur region or the state of South Darfur> to a suitable one
8. Being attentive to the importance of the media, documentation and research.

After the issuing of the recommendations, Brother Omer Ali Alghali, Deputy Nazir of Buram Locality was chosen to coordinate between the people of his locality and the Coordination Council of the Arab Congregation.

That was followed by the appointment of the Secretary of the National Congress (the ruling party) to collect signatures of members of the Local *Shura* (Consultation) Council and to send them to Nyala at the earliest opportunity.

At the end of the meeting, all present attested under oath to work together for the success of the unification concept.

On the following day, the committee paid a visit to Nazir Salah Ali Alghali to explain the concept in detail and with which he was fully in agreement.

The committee also paid a visit to the house, also headquarters of the Commissioner of the Local Council, who gave the project his absolute support. The Commissioner was asked to assist the Secretary of the National Congress in the collection of signatures and in the provision of transport for members of the Consultative Commission, whenever requested.

On 11/11/2003, the committee visited Tullus Fallata Nazirite and held a meeting with tribal administration, politicians and government executive officials. The Commissioner addressed the meeting, thanking the Coordination Council represented by the visiting committee. He further elaborated on the dangerous state of affairs and

the necessity for unification before presenting the committee members to the meeting. After elaborate deliberations, the following recommendations were agreed upon:

1. All agreed on the idea of unification and the necessity of its implementation.
2. The setting up of an information committee
3. The necessity of working for extended presence in the Republic of Chad
4. Publicizing the idea among university students
5. The opening up of migratory corridors and resting areas/seasonal camping zones for nomads
6. The integration and organization of executive and political work
7. The establishment of strong and good relations with the Federal Government
8. The formulation of a system of exchange of security plans and intelligence – with the government
9. The institution of appropriate economic planning to secure unity
10. The activation and development of native administration
11. The preparation of a clear memorandum of association/congregation.
12. Abiding by strict secrecy.

Umda [Mayor] Yousif Omer Khatir was appointed Coordinator for Tullus Local Council. The Secretary of the National Congress was nominated to collect signatures of the members of Consultative Commission (*Shura*) and send them to Nyala as soon as possible. The Commissioner of Tullus was urged to provide transport for the Consultative Commission members whenever demanded. The Committee then met with Nazir Ahmed Alsammani Albasher who affirmed the unity project, but added further recommendations:

1. There is a need to bring together all Arab leaders, expose them to the idea of unity and commit them to its implementation.
2. Urge Nazir Madibbo of the Rezeigat to take this matter seriously with all other leaders in the area.

On 12/11/2003, the committee visited Reheid Albirdi Locality where they met with tribal leaders, politicians and notables. The hosts pledged their unanimous support to the unity project and affirmed their willingness to work for its full realization. The following recommendations were made in the meeting:

1. Advertise the unity to the public, since it is a noble project.
2. Commit to the secrecy of information, particularly with regard to internal local plans.
3. Give a clear name for the unity.

4. Give a clear goal/target and work for its implementation.
5. Switch from a defensive to an offensive stance and take initiative to refute gossip, lies and rumours – that harm the Congregation.
6. The careful study of events in order to secure the success of actions.
7. Cleanliness (self denial, steadfastness) in dealing with others.
8. Remove the Popular <Defence?> Police Force from the states of Darfur, as they are involved in numerous violations.
9. Work out a well-studied economic plan to support the project.
10. Complete taking over authority in South Darfur using a mechanical majority.
11. Change the name Darfur to a suitable one.
12. Review the issue of the National Service with Khartoum in all aspects.
13. Encourage the sons of the Arab tribes to get recruited into the armed forces, the police and the security bodies.

After taking oath, Brother Yousif Mohamed Yousif was elected to act as the coordinator for the locality, while the Secretary of the National Congress in the area was nominated to collect the signatures of the Consultative Commission and send them to Nyala. It is worth noting that the meeting was attended by all – Arab – families and clans, especially the Salamat who reside in Reheid Albirdi.

On Thursday 13/11/2003, the committee held a meeting with tribal leaders, notables and politicians in Iddalfursan. After explaining the purpose of the visit, the committee listened attentively to views of their hosts. The following recommendations were then made in the meeting:

1. The employment of – Arab – University graduates in government institutions.
2. the setting up of information and research committees
3. The guarding and development of the principles embodied in the project
4. The protection of politicians of all – concerned/Arab – tribes by all means
5. Changing the names of Darfur states into more logical ones
6. Strengthening the social fabric of the Arabs and the arrangement of exchange visits among them
7. Laying down clear economic foundations and principles
8. Publicizing Arab actions/achievements without reservation
9. Organizing the Janjaweed for benevolent actions and for protection – of the tribes.
10. Unreserved obedience to the Arab leaders, especially the Coordination Commission
11. Arbitration to solve interstate problems between all races to attain harmony and gain the respect of others
12. Paying attention to external and particularly border trade

13. Committing to secrecy of information
14. The utilization of university graduates and research results
15. The employment of graduates in government institutions [repeated, 1]
16. The improvement of the administrative and executive system in the capital of South Darfur and the strengthening of native administration at all levels
17. Reviewing the planned settlement <not clear of whom> to Goz Dongo and also reviewing the water project approved in the name of Iddalfursan
18. Reviewing immigration to Nyala.

This was followed by taking an oath and by the nomination of Dabaka Isa Dabaka to act as coordinator for the locality. The Secretary of the National Congress to the locality was asked to collect the signatures of members of the Consultative Council and send them to Nyala.”

**Document No. 6**

“The Light, the Fast and the Fearful Forces.

Top left is a stamp bearing name ‘The Light (*El-Khafifa*), the Fast (*El-Sariya*) and the Fearful (*El-Murjya*) Forces’, 28/8/2004; Top right is a stamp with an official government emblem [head of a bird?], inscription not legible and no date.

In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Subject: Intelligence Report No. 310

Sayed [Mr] Head of the Intelligence and Security Department  
Greetings of peace and Allah’s blessings

With reference to your message marked “top secret”, dated 6/8/2004 and concerning the removal of nine mass graves (*maqabir jammaiya*) in the Darfur states; the killing of any who poses a threat to the content of this instruction; and the possibility of giving evidence to the UN, EU and AU delegates coming to investigate mass graves, we hereby inform Your Excellency of the following:

- Eight mass graves have been unearthed, removed and completely burnt under the supervision of a committee of the National Security System, an Arab Congregation committee and the Secretary General of the state of North Darfur. The operation was conducted under protection of our forces and for whom nothing under the sun is impossible.
- We have not been able to reach the ninth designated mass grave in Wadi Salih, state of West Darfur. We appeal to Your Excellency to address the

Administration of Military Operations to approve an airplane so that we can remove Wadi Salih mass grave, possibly containing 1,200 – one thousand two hundred – remains ... .

- We salute Your Excellency, the National Salvation Revolution and the Arab Congregation.

(Repeat of military stamp as above left – no date inscribed; signed in left corner as follows)

Lieutenant: Hajaj Ahmed Rabih

Head of Field Division of the Light, the Fast and the Fearful Forces, and member of Implementation Mechanism of the Arab Congregation.

(On the bottom right hand margin, a commentary with different handwriting reads):

For information of Military and Security Intelligence Instructions:

Graves in Wadi Salih were unearthed within 24 hours using a plane, Nyala Airport to Wadi Salih. Relocation and burning shall proceed under utmost secrecy and shall not include ....

Intelligence Division, 29 August

### **Discussion**

The question of authenticity must arise in handling clandestine documents such as those presented in this article. Document 1 which appeared in the form of a letter addressed to Prime Minister Almahdi went public and was published in national newspapers. All other documents were meant to be secret and were marked so. More often than not, participants in the meetings were sworn on the Qur'an to ensure just that.

It is hard to doubt the authenticity of the presented documents. Excellent, though brief, comments on some of them appeared in Flint and de Waal (2005), and Harir and Sulaiman have also referred to some of them, although the latter writer relegated his comments to the footnotes of his publication (Harir, 1993; Sulaiman, 2000).

It is difficult to discern the consensus of the Arab Coalition on these documents, particularly the inflammatory and racist Documents 2, 3, 4 and 5. While it is obvious that these documents reflect the work of the supremacist sector of the Arab Coalition, it is not easy to comprehend the conspicuous absence of their public condemnation among Arab groups. Moreover, racist principles contained in most of these documents seemed to have enjoyed wide support in the current Darfur conflict and are well in tune with the perception of Black people in the Arab culture of northern Sudan (see Mukhtar, 2006 and Ibrahim, 2005). I will return to this issue after some comments on the documents.

The appointment of Dreige as a governor for Darfur during Nimeiri's rule in 1983 caused a stir among the Arabs of Darfur. As Dreige belongs to the Fur, the ethnic group that gave the region its name, the Arabs of Darfur saw his appointment as a setback to their dream of dominating the region. Clandestine, inflammatory cassettes circulated among members of Darfur Arabs; some of them were blatantly militant and racists. But the Arab groups were yet to organize into a coherent political force. That came during Almahdi's presidency later in the decade.

In October 1987, a coalition of 27 Arab groups sent an open letter to Prime Minister Almahdi, addressing him as one of their own and one who had in some way betrayed them. The letter, which was signed by 27 people, with three names later withdrawn, referred clearly to the background where the Arabs assisted the Khartoum government in its war against the South, only to be let down by passing over Darfur governorship to their opponents under leadership of Tigani Seise. The letter stated that the Arabs constituted a 70 per cent majority in Darfur and demanded control over the region, together with adequate representation in the central government. The Arab groups ended their letter with a clear warning that, should their demands be ignored, matters might pass from the wise to the ignorant and with dire consequences.

In some ways, Document 1 can be said to have marked the official inauguration of the Arab Congregation. An exaggeration of the size of the Arab population is very clear. If the Arabs constituted 70 per cent of the Darfur population, they would have simply controlled the region through the same election that had given power to Almahdi. Ibrahim, a formidable scholar who has monitored Darfur people over several decades, reverses the figures, giving the Arabs 30 per cent as opposed to the 70 per cent of African ethnic groups (Ibrahim, 2005:11). But what is more ominous is that the letter indicates a worrying sense of superiority, a divine right to monopolize power and a readiness to use all methods to achieve the stated objectives. Moreover, the letter implies that the support of riverine Sudan had been secured, but was not delivered (see also Qoreish 2 in Document 2).

Since its letter to Amahdi, the Arab Congregation has gone from strength to strength, but has passed its leadership to the "ignorant" if we are to use the Congregation's own expression. Subsequent communications of the Arab Congregation became steeped in a discourse of racial purity, a term that has long been relegated to the dustbin of history. Remarkably, and despite its intellectual inaccuracy, race has become central to understanding the Darfur conflict. In his thoughtful article on Darfur, Lumamba challenges analysts not to avoid the issue of race like the plague, but to face the ultimate truth that, although race is a social construct and has no biological basis, it has been the backbone of the ideology that has underpinned the conflict in Darfur and Sudan. Both, the Arab Congregation and their surrogate parents, the riverine Arabs, share this ideology (Lumamba, 2007).



At another level, Almahdi's second democracy (1986-1989) shattered the Congregation's dream in a different way. Their claim to constitute a clear majority in Darfur was falsified and did not translate into parliamentary seats. To add insult to injury, Almahdi proceeded to appoint a non-Arab Darfurian (Seise) to the governorship of Darfur. Although organized attacks by members of the Arab Congregation were reported as early as 1982, they became more incessant during the late 1980s (Flint and de Waal, 2006:52). At the same time, the Arab Congregation intensified the release of its edicts, which provided an ideological backing to their violence. This period also witnessed renewed emphasis on Arab racial purity coupled with lumping together all indigenous Darfurians under the rubric of "Zurga" (Black). So intense was the campaign of the Arab Congregation in this regard that non-Arab Darfuris began to see themselves as an undifferentiated mass of Zurga. The hybridity of race that was once alluded to by many indigenous people was finally laid to rest.

The ideological campaign of violence by the Arab Congregation became less clandestine in its operations, using the available technology of cassettes, photocopying and faxes. As the documents show, the edicts regularly called for the destruction of public services aimed at the Zurga, the killing of Zurga elites, the mobilization of Arab militias, the occupation of land and of inciting conflict.

At an organizational level, the Arab Congregation elected its offices in the guise of high councils, executive, political and military committees. Moreover, links began to be forged among all the Arabs of western Sudan (Kordofan and Darfur), within greater Sudan and at a geo-political level spanning neighbouring countries, North Africa and the Middle East. This is chillingly demonstrated in what has come to be called Qoreish 2, possibly released in the early 1990s, to follow Qoreish 1, which the author has not been able to track down.

Qoreish 2 subscribes to Arab purity which is now exclusively a preserve of components of the Arab Congregation. Riverine allies, and those who championed the project of Arab-Islamization of the Sudan are dismissed in the edict as no more than hybrid Nubians and Egyptians. Even worse, they are guilty of depriving the Qoreishi, and true descendents of the prophet Mohamed, of legitimately ruling the Sudan. In fact, the relationship between the Arab Congregation and particularly the Tripartite Coalition has constituted a marriage of convenience characterized by love and hate. The Tripartite Coalition sees its members as the civilized heirs of the colonial project regarding modernization, for which the Arab Congregation is badly suited. In its most recent form, government propaganda code-named this project "The Civilizational Orientation." In the eyes of the Tripartite Coalition, the Arab Congregation is no more than a bunch of nomads, steeped in savagery and only fit for use as foot soldiers. Nonetheless, they are indispensable in carrying out the full implementation of the Arab-Islamic project. If phase one of this project has been torpedoed by Western powers/the international community in the Christian south of the Sudan, phase two (Dafur) of it

must succeed. It will be accomplished, even if it takes considerable delaying manoeuvres, or to use Condoleezza Rice's term, "Khartoum's cat and mouse tactics" with the international community.

In a recent development, Hamdi, guru economist and Albashir's former Minister for Economy and Finance advised that future investment and development in the Sudan should by-pass Darfur and focus on the northern Dongola-Sennar-Kordofan axis. Hamdi concluded that this triangle represents the hard core of historic and future Arab-Islamic Sudan. Following the segregation of the South, taken as a given by Hamdi, this triangle guarantees power for the National Congress Party of Albashir in a future, democratic Sudan. The Arabs of Darfur have much to contemplate in their alliance with the riverine people of Sudan (Hamdi, 2005).

In examining these documents, one must avoid the temptation of treating them as the work of a lunatic fringe that has little impact on what has happened and is still happening in Darfur. For any nation to be able to massacre anything between 200,000 and 550,000 people, mostly non-combatants and in just over four to five years, requires a sustained ideology and discourse capable of turning a substantial sector of its population into conniving killers. It is within this context that we should read these documents. As long as the carnage in Darfur has called in the interference of the International Criminal Court, it is futile to waste time debating whether we have genocide on hand or not. What is pertinent is that these documents have been part and parcel of a culture that is favourable to the commission of genocide.

Comparing the Darfur situation with other countries that have witnessed genocides, crimes against humanities and other heinous atrocities, one finds similar edicts that were central to the formation of an ideology that sustained the killing. Rwanda, Bosnia, Holocaust Germany, and the Anfal of Iraq were all accompanied by similar campaigns. For the purpose of this article I will restrict myself to Rwanda, whose Hutu ideology mimics, though with some differences, the content of the Arab Congregation documents. The Hutu ideology that had led to the Rwandan genocide was enshrined in what was publicized as the "Ten Commandments of the Hutu." Below are the points of convergence between the Congregation documents and the Ten Commandments:

1. Hutu Ten Commandments:

Point 5 of the Commandments reads:

- All strategic positions, political, administrative, economic, and military and security should be entrusted to Hutu.

The Arab Congregation documents read:

- Enlightened recruitment into the army and security apparatus (Doc 1, point 1.3)
- The encouragement of those who are able to fight to join the Popular Defence Force, Mujahideen Force and Peace Force (Doc 1, point 1.8)

- Not to appoint children of the Zurga in important posts and at the same time ... (Doc 4, point 'b')
- Encourage the sons of the Arab tribes to get recruited into the armed forces, police and security bodies (Doc 5, 13).

## 2. Hutu Ten Commandments:

Point 6 reads:

- The education sector (school pupils, students, teachers) must be majority Hutu.

The Arab Congregation documents read:

- Giving special attention to education, both vertically and horizontally ... (Doc 1, 1.1).
- Work to paralyse delivery of public services in the areas of the Black population (Doc 4, point 3)
- Ensure the concentration of public services in the areas of influence of the Arab Congregation (Doc 4, point 'a')
- Work by all ways and means to disrupt the stability of schools in the areas of the Blacks (Zurga) (Doc 4, point 'c').

## 3. Hutu Ten Commandments:

Passages in point 9 read:

- The Hutu, wherever they are, must have unity and solidarity, and be concerned with the fate of their Hutu brothers
- The Hutu inside and outside Rwanda must constantly look for friends and allies for the Hutu cause, starting with their Bantu brothers.

The Arab Congregation documents read:

- Coordination with our cousins in central and eastern Sudan
- The strengthening of co-ordination and consultation with members of Qoreish in neighbouring countries (Doc 2, point 2.1)
- The promotion of the Camel Race programme and using it to strengthen relations with Arab brothers in the Gulf countries (Doc 2, point 2.3)
- Working to speedily overcome inter-tribal conflicts among the Arabs (Doc 5, 4)
- ... under oath to work together for the success of the unification project (Doc 5, point 11)
- All agreed on the idea of the unification project and the necessity of its implementation
- Advertise the unity to the – Arab – public since it is a noble project ... Give a clear name for the unity (Doc 5, points 1 and 4).

#### 4. Hutu Ten Commandments:

Point 10 reads:

- ... the Hutu ideology must be taught to every Hutu at every level. Every Hutu must spread this ideology widely.

Documents of the Arab Congregation read:

- Propagating the thought across Sudan (Doc 5, point 6)
- Spreading the idea among university students (Doc 5, point 4)
- There is a need to bring together all Arab leaders, expose them to the idea of unity and commit them to its implementation (Doc 5, point 1).

5. Finally, the Hutu Commandment restricts its call for having no mercy on the Tutsi. The Arab documents are much more explicit, referring to killings, assassinations and extermination.

#### **Darfur Crisis: From Culturecide to Genocide**

The Arab documents contained in this article did not appear from a vacuum. Rather, they are part of a discourse that has characterized the formation of Sudan's nationhood. The very constitution of Sudan as an Arab-Islamic entity presupposes that all other cultures, indigenous or otherwise, have to give way to Arab-Islamic cultures and in the way defined by the hegemonic power in the country. Genocides are not new to Sudan. Ignoring distant history, they featured in the Mahdia rule (Berber), in the south of Sudan, the Nuba Mountains, the conflictual zone of Abyie, and now in Darfur. While genocides in the Sudan have been intermittent, the destruction of African cultures (culturecide) has accompanied the formation of Sudan since the colonial era. British rule protected the south of the Sudan against Arab-Muslim encroachment from the north, but did not extend the same guardianship to other indigenous African cultures.

As far as other parts of the Sudan, including Darfur, were concerned, they were simply handed over to riverine Sudan to oversee the destruction of their cultures. If the European and the Islamic Arab World agree on one thing in Africa, it is their conviction that Black African cultures have nothing to offer, do not merit survival, and that the sooner they vanish; the better.

Leaving the European aside, Sudan's Arab-Islamic project has a regional dimension that transcends national borders. Black Africa, south of the Sahara is all too familiar with the incessant expansion of Arab-Islamic cultures, at the expense of its indigenous counterparts. What is more perplexing is that this process has gone unchallenged for so long. Even worse is that it has been taken as inevitable and desirable and has commanded the support of national and Arab leaders. Writing in this respect, Prunier states:

“... in the 1980s, Colonel Gaddafi and Prime Minister Sadiq al-Mahdi gave an answer: Darfur was poor and backward because it was insufficiently arabized. It had missed out in the great adhesion to the Muslim Umma because its Islam was primitive and insufficiently Arabic” (Prunier, 2005:162 quoted in Lumamba, 2007).”

Flawed as it is, this vision also finds support from far afield. Both Mazrui and Mamdani, otherwise respectable writers, glorify the de-Africanization of Africa in favour of Arab-Islamic culture. In a clearly racist view that admires the Arabization of Black Africans, Mazrui declares in Janjaweed style: “... under genealogical system of the Arab World [they] become subject to upward genealogical mobility. They were co-opted upward” (Lumamba, 2007). One would wonder whether Mazrui would also include reproduction through mass rape in Darfur within his process of upward mobility.

As Darfur is entirely Muslim, it is the Arabization of its populations that has occupied the minds of Khartoum rulers. Let us leave the alleged inferiority of Darfur Islam aside and focus on Arabization. The machinery of the state was used for that purpose: the school, the judicial system, the media, the mosque and, of course, the market. All these institutions played their roles in disseminating Arab-Islamic culture, while at the same time denigrating its rival, the indigenous cultures. Even the landscape itself did not escape this cultural onslaught. Towns had to be renamed to please riverine Arab-Islamic taste. Thus Id al-Ghanam became, Id al Fursan, the town Broosh became Uroosh, Kattal became Dar Alsalam, Khor Mareesa became Zamzam and so forth. The fact that these towns had acquired their names for historical and cultural reasons was immaterial. Part of the process was of course to rewrite history and obliterate local heritage. If the indigenous people needed any history, they could look beyond the Red Sea and retrieve it from the early Islamic period in the Middle East or the like. Not surprisingly, schools and classrooms came to be known as A-Zahra, Omer, Osman, Abubakar, Safa, Marwa, Alhumeira and so forth; names that make these establishments indistinguishable from any school nomenclature in Saudi Arabia. While there is nothing wrong in drawing on Islamic symbols, it is their exclusivity that makes a mockery of local history.

In looking at symbolic nomenclature, Arabism often transcends Islam. This is confirmed by the very fact that the plight of the Muslims in Darfur attracted little sympathy in the Arab-Islamic world. Running the risk of blaming the victim, the locals too have participated in pillaging their culture – a common feature of oppressed groups. Arab politics provided a rich source of names for boys in Darfur, but also for Sudan at large, sometimes commensurate with eras in which Arab rulers and dictators lived. Thus Faisal (Saudi), Najeeb, Jamal, Anwar (Egypt), Sabah (Kuwait) and Gaddafi are now common names in Darfur. As for girls in Darfur, they are not fortunate. Male

chauvinist, gender relations offer them scant opportunity. Arab soap operas, mostly Egyptian, stand ready to fill this void. Hence you have new popular names for girls like Rania, Hanan, Sameera, Shahr Zad and Nabeela, all lifted from Egyptian movie stars. These new names rarely feature among older generations in Darfur – more likely to be Khadija, Fatna, Ashsha, Mariam, Zeinab and Kaltuma and their derivatives. The former category is Arabic while the latter is distinctly Islamic. Those whose names depicted a Darfur accent also had to oblige. Thus Abbaker became Abu Bakr, Isakha turned into Ishag, and Adoama was retuned to read Adam.

### **The Genocide Connection**

The connection between the Arab documents and the Janjaweed genocide actions in Darfur is unmistakably evident. In sociological terms, genocide can be defined as “a form of violent social conflict, or war, between armed powers and organizations that aim to destroy, in part or in whole, social groups and those groups and other actors who resist this destruction” (adapted from Shaw, 2007:154).

In Lemkin’s format, genocide involved the destruction of social groups, a fact that challenges popular perception of mass killing as an essential component of genocide. As Shaw explains, destruction is aimed at uprooting the essential foundations of life for such social groups (Shaw, 2005:19; Lemkin, 1944). Without exhausting the social fields expounded by Lemkin, the assault includes political, economic, social, cultural and moral aspects of targeted social groups.

At the political level, the Arab documents were very clear in the intention of the group to destroy the political system of their enemies. To begin with, the target groups were stripped of their legitimacy to rule themselves. The right to rule the region(s) is seen as a divine outcome of the “biological” descent of the Arab groups; the descent that connects them directly with the Prophet. The right of the Arab groups to political domination is further asserted by their alleged majority status and by having migrated into the area when it was empty of indigenous populations. Both of these claims are factually incorrect. As practical steps towards effecting political control, members of the Arab Congregation are called in the documents to enrol *en masse* in all relevant, strategic institutions like the army, police, Popular Defence Force and Peace Force, Security, etc.

At a different level, the documents call for the assassination of leaders from the target groups, not appointing their members in high offices, and setting them against each other as well as against the government. All these measures are likely to destroy the political viability of the indigenous population.

In the economic field, the target groups are to be attacked at various levels. As the documents show, there is a clear mobilization for seizing the property of the Zurga, appropriating their land, disrupting public services and creating instability that makes economic advancement impossible.

In the social and cultural fields, the documents are again instructive regarding the destruction of the non-Arab populations. Many of the points raised above already point in that direction, i.e. the social and cultural disruption of the target population. The denial of political and economic autonomy poses a formidable threat to the social and cultural survival of these groups. Furthermore, the documents call for setting Zurga communities in conflict against each other, killing their leaders, wrecking their educational system and reducing their populations to a state of utter dependency, in the guise of landless refugees and IDPs. In short, the aim of the documents is to ensure that the Zurga no longer constitute functioning communities.

Those who see mass killings as an essential defining feature of genocide can turn to Documents 3 and 6. The term *ibada*, accurately translated as “annihilation”, “extermination” or “eradication” occurs twice in Document 3. It is noteworthy that the first time the term *ibada* (extermination) appeared in the Arab Congregation communication was in 1992, Document 3. Document 6 refers to a desperate attempt to hide evidence of mass killings prior to a visit of international investigators. Interestingly, international institutions and Western governments have often been accused of doing little to protect the people of Darfur. Document 6 shows that their actions, no matter how feeble, have thrown Darfur genocidaires into a panic. As such, it is possible to conclude that international intervention must have reduced genocide actions and saved human lives.

In reading through the documents, one is struck by the paramountcy given to secrecy. In fact, these documents were anything but secret. The co-ordination of the work with government security, army and political machinery made it difficult for these documents and their contents to remain confidential. Evil as it may be, the destruction of villages and the depopulation of entire areas were openly discussed by both government officials and members of the Arab Congregation. The case of Attal Mannan, former governor of South Darfur is revealing in this regard. Attal Mannan is also reputed to be the head of Kash (Northern Entity), referred to earlier in the article. At the height of the Darfur war, in 2005, the then governor roared in a public rally in Sheiryia town: “The Zaghawa have to look for another planet to live on.” His speech came in open support of attempts by Arab Janjaweed to drive the Zaghawa out of the area.

The actions and movements of the Arab Congregation cannot be kept secret for another reason: The intensity of security surveillance in Darfur makes it impossible for the Arab Congregation to operate behind government eyes. As allies in the Darfur war, at least the need for co-ordination makes secrecy unnecessary, if not totally counterproductive.

## Concluding Remarks

This article examines a number of documents issued by the Arab Congregation and its branches over the last two decades. While these documents are available in Arabic, this article presents them to the English reader in their entirety. This is where the value of this article resides. Hence, the article does not attempt an exhaustive analysis of the documents. That job is left to the reader and to a different work in a different space.

Documents contained in this article should be read as complementary to Sudan's discourse of genocide. They provided an ideology that made the Darfur genocide possible. At the same time, the ideology underlying these documents is not a recent phenomenon. Rather, it has been set in motion ever since Sudan was declared an Arab-Islamic state. Moreover, Sudan's project is part of a continental project that seeks to expand Arab influence, expressed as the "Arab belt", further south into Sub-Saharan Africa.

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