

Darfur: A Wake Up Call for Africa

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Introduction

In September 2004, in an interview with an Arab media house, Professor Ali Mazrui made the following statement:

I do believe that the African People and the Arab People are, at the moment, two people in the process of becoming one. So the process has been underway for centuries and they will, one day, be virtually indistinguishable, but at the moment it is a continuum, rather than a dichotomy.

For those of us who have been closely following the Arab world's fascist plan for the African continent, this was quite a revealing statement.

The plan is fascist because it ultimately foresees the genealogical transformation of Africans into Arabs! To quote Mazrui again, in the interview mentioned above;

...that Egypt has had four Presidents since the Revolution of 1952 and two of them would have been regarded as Black in the United States: Mohammed Naguib and Anwar Sadat would have been regarded as black in the United States because both of them had Black ancestors and, in the case of Sadat, had a Black parent. They would have become Black under this system in the US, but under the genealogical system of the Arab World became subject to upward genealogical mobility. They were co-opted upward.

This theme of genealogical superiority of Arabs vis-à-vis Africans, for Mazrui, did not start with the September 2004 interview. In an even earlier interview, in his defence of the Arab-led slavery of Africans, Mazrui had this to say:

“Many children of slave mothers become Arabs, they move upwards, you see. So the entire system is different from here. There is biological cooptation into the ruling race...where so many of the people descended from slaves become part of the master race.”

Responding to the above statement, Professor Kwesi Kwaa Prah, the Director of the Centre for the Advanced Studies of African Society, asked Mazrui:

Who decided that Africans wanted "biological cooptation into the ruling race" or African "slaves become part of the master race"? In whose interest was all this social engineering conducted? Your language chafes and rubs rather badly, with uncomfortable and ghoulish reminders of some ideologues of the 20th century many will prefer to forget. I am well aware of the fact that "many children of slave mothers become Arabs"... Indeed, we know only too well from the example of the Sudan and parts of the Afro-Arab borderlands that oftentimes, the "coopted" Arabs are more vicious towards Africans than those who coopted them. Is the Arabization of Africans a "move upwards"?

As Gerard Prunier has pointed out in his book *Darfur: The Ambiguous Genocide*, the “Arabs” in the Sudan are unsure about the purity of their Arab credentials, which tends to make them all the more touchy about these being respected.

It is in light of this “social engineering” advocated by the likes of Mazrui that we need to look at what is going on in Darfur.

Sudan – An African Country

While only 39% of Sudan’s population considers itself as “Arab”, the ruling elite in Khartoum have presented Sudan as an “Arab” country and most international bodies and scholars have believed the lie!

Taking into account that Arabism in Sudan is a socio-cultural construct, only a minority of those considering themselves as “Arab” are indeed true Arabs. A story is told in Darfur about an “Arab” who went to seek medical attention in a health facility run by a Saudi Arabian charity. When asked by the Saudi doctor what his tribe was, he confidently replied “Arab”. He was totally caught off-guard by the response of the doctor: “If you are Arab, then what am I?”

There is no limit to the extent to which “Arab” Sudanese will go to becoming “congruent” with the racial identity that they have adopted. In his quite revealing article *The Crisis of Identity in Northern Sudan: A Dilemma of a Black People with a White Culture*, Al Baqir al-Afif Mukhtar says:

... An individual lacking in the standard features normally seeks to compensate or complement them. And because marriage offers these individuals an opportunity to compensate and complement, the average Northerner aspires and seeks, as far as possible, to marry a partner who is closer to the standard features and colour (what Mazrui would refer to as “marrying up”). Such a union gives the individual an immediate compensation for his or her

darkness and offers an opportunity of recovery from it in his or her offspring...

The average Northerner views dark colour as a problem that should be dealt with. Whereas females deal with it directly through local or imported colour lighteners, males usually resort to indirect methods, i.e. a conjugal union with a light-coloured partner.

The reality of the matter is that Sudan is a minority-ruled country, much like South Africa during the apartheid era. Understanding this fact will be the beginning of finding a lasting solution, not only to the current conflict in Darfur but to the problems bedevilling the whole of the Sudan.

Race as the Main Factor in the Current Darfur Conflict

All writings on the current conflict in Darfur have avoided the race factor as one avoids a plague. Yet, it is only in the acknowledgement of race as the main factor in the conflict that we can embark on finding a lasting solution. A number of scholars and experts on Darfur have started calling attention to the race factor.

In an article appropriately titled *Darfur People: Too Black for the Arab-Islamic Project of Sudan*, Dr Abdullahi Osman el-Tom, an eminent son of Darfur, points out that since independence in 1956, Sudan has been packaged to both insiders and outsiders as an outright Arab-Islamic country, that the ruling class in the Sudan have pursued this project with impeccable rigour, impertinent and oblivious to its consequences, and that this Arab-Islamic project has proceeded unhindered and survived irrespective of the democratic, socialist, military or religious credentials of the government of the day. The chosen Arab-Islamic identity is not only a symbolic tag but rather that it is a discourse through which the entire Sudan can be managed and ordered into specific social relations.

Al Baqir, in the article cited earlier, has pointed out how the North, feeling that it is Arab and Muslim, has always sought to define the whole country in these terms and resists any attempts by the non-Arab segment of the country to identify Sudan with black Africa.

Dr Moses Ebe Ochon, an African scholar based in the United States, characterized Professor Iliya Harik's (an Arab scholar also based in the US) rendering of the crisis in Darfur as,

an intolerable simplification and trivialization of a racist genocide being systematically carried out by the Arabized government in Khartoum but also an inexplicable attempt to dilute the fact that race, even if it is mediated by culture, is at the heart of the crisis in Darfur.What I do know is that in both its practical expression and its tragic consequences, the attitude of the Arabized Northern Sudanese people and their government towards Darfur is racist, and that the racist script unfolding in that part of Africa is sustained by an undying adherence to historical claims of Arab superiority over black Africans.

Mr Adeen AbdelRahman Yousif, a young African nationalist from Darfur, in a speech honoring Dr Mudawi Ibrahim Adam, the Chairman of Sudan Social Development Organization (SUDO) and recipient of the 2005 Human Rights First Award, had this to say of the role of race in the Darfur conflict:

...we have to be ready to bring all stakeholders to and to put all issues on the table, even those considered taboo. As our brother and eminent son of Sudan Francis Mading Deng once said, 'What divides us is what we don't talk about'... . . . We have to raise and discuss issues concerning what Professor Kwesi Kwaa Prah calls tensions in the Afro-Arab Borderlands, the problem of Darfur being an extreme manifestation of these tensions. . . . We have to confront the crucial issue of Arab Racism.

Gerard Prunier, in his book *Darfur: The Ambiguous Genocide* had this to say on the race factor in the Darfur conflict:

So what was the real logic of the war...? The answer was blunt and was related to a word which Nazism, the demise of colonialism and the development of scientific anthropology have marginalized into intellectual exile and political opprobrium: the word "race". . . . 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. . . . The situation was pregnant with the potential for enormous destruction because it fitted only too well within the broader context of racial prejudice in the Sudan.

While the international community has tried to avoid the race factor, both the perpetrators and victims of the conflict in Darfur have always recognized the central role of race in this conflict. In reports detailing the activities of the dreaded Janjaweed, the attackers portray themselves as "Arabs" and the civilians that they are attacking are called "Blacks" or "slaves". From the perception of the victims, mainly Fur, Masaleit, and Zaghawa, the genocide and related atrocities "are attempts to drive all "Africans" away from Darfur".

From the foregoing evidence, the argument that race is at the heart of the Darfur crisis is sustained.

The Arab World's Designs on the African Continent

What is happening in Darfur is part of a wider scheme that some in the Arab world have hatched to turn the African continent into an Arab one. Ali Mazrui has even coined a name for an Arabized Africa – *Afrabia*.

While this scheme has been in the making since the coming into contact of the Arabs with the African continent in the 7th century, the scheme went into high gear following the Islam in Africa Conference organized by the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) and held in Abuja, Nigeria from 24 to 28 November 1989. In his foreword to the published proceedings of this conference, Omar Hassan Ahmad Al Bashir, President of the Sudan stated:

Africa and Islam embraced each other ever since the inception of the latter in the Seventh century AD, when Muslims, persecuted in Mecca, arrived as refugees in Ethiopia. They were subsequently welcomed as saviours and liberators from Byzantine persecution and oppression in Egypt...

...Not surprisingly, imperialists and other enemies of Africa and African independence have redoubled their efforts to split the ranks of the Africans. With that end in view, and in order to blunt the revolutionary and liberating impact of Islam on African societies, imperialist quarters have consistently tried to falsify and distort the image of Islam and to identify it in the minds of the unwary and the innocent with such things as slavery, terrorism and backwardness. This is a challenge which all Africans, and African Muslims in particular, have to meet. But it is a challenge which Islam, with its liberating values and its genius for linking ideals with realities and thus transforming men and situations, is more than adequately equipped to meet.

The argument is that, Islam is capable of liberating Africa from the transplanted cultural forms and values imposed on it by the colonial powers and building on the continent's home-grown originality so that it will make an original contribution to humanity.

At the conference, it was decided that the participants strive to turn Africa into the first wholly-Islamic continent. Several papers were presented at this conference looking into the ways and means of achieving this objective.

While there is nothing inherently wrong with such an objective if pursued in a legitimate and fair manner, it becomes dangerous, if behind it, there lays a hidden agenda that may not even be known to some of the proponents of the objective. Secondly, if the methods used in the attempt to achieve such an objective do not meet the standards of decency and fair play, then the proponents of such an objective have to be opposed by all means.

It is my informed opinion that behind the objective to Islamize Africa lays a more sinister agenda – the Arabization of Africa. It is sad to note that African leaders as well as scholars are playing right into the hands of the fascist Arab proponent of this sinister agenda – Muammar Gaddafi of the Libyan Arab Jamahariyah, now turned African champion! Islam is the main tool being employed in the furtherance of this sinister agenda. Two other tools are used to assist in the advancement of Islam – economics and politics.

The agenda advances in four stages. Firstly, Islam is introduced as a religion in the targeted area or country. Secondly but concurrently, Arabic is introduced as a language, purportedly to enable converts to read the Koran but with the hidden purpose of destroying the indigenous languages of the targeted people. Thirdly, Arab culture is introduced to obliterate indigenous cultures of the targeted people. Lastly, biology is employed with the purpose of changing the very biological make up of the population by the lightening of the black skin through continuous procreation with lighter skinned Arabs.

It is in the above light that we need to understand the many rapes that have accompanied the atrocities that have been committed, and continue to be committed in Darfur. The perpetrators believe that they are doing the women they rape a favour. I am afraid to say that Darfur is now considered to have reached stage four - hence these atrocities.

Let us now look at how this agenda has played itself out in Darfur. The following narratives seek to shed light on the fact that the advancement of the Arabization agenda starts off peacefully but turns violent if the peaceful overtures fail.

Darfur and the Bataheen

In 1994, a group of about 25 people from the Bataheen tribe (the tribe of Professor Al Zubeir Bashir Taha – the Sudanese Minister for Interior) went from Bahri in Khartoum North to Jebel Marrah, Darfur. In Guldo, they sought an audience with Mr. Osama Mahir who was the Officer in Charge of the Administrative Unit. Mr Mahir is from the same Bataheen tribe. He organized for the visitors to be provided with accommodation. While in their guesthouses, the group started to speak informally with the residents who came to greet them.

Eventually, an official meeting was called by Mr. Mahir and the Native Administration to which all citizens of Guldo were invited. At the meeting, the visitors explained that the main purpose of their visit to Jebel Marrah was to create a concrete relationship between the Fur and Bataheen tribes, and that for this to happen, there was a need for intermarriage between the two tribes. They proposed that a group of men and women from the Fur tribe should take wives and husbands from the Bataheen tribe and vice versa. When questioned why such a relationship was necessary, two reasons were advanced, one religious and the other economic.

On religious grounds, one of the visitors replied that the Fur were the largest and most peaceful tribe in Darfur and were very good Muslims, this made them brothers and sisters to fellow Muslims. He further stated that the Fur held the Koran in their hearts but could interpret it. Therefore, there was a need for the Fur to be taught how to read the Koran, and this could be done by the Bataheen.

Economically, they said that since the Fur produced large amounts of fruits, there was a need for the processing and marketing these fruits, and that the Bataheen were in a position to bring fruit processing equipment to Jebel Marrah, and to market the produce in Khartoum.

In order to advance this cause, a group from the Fur tribe was invited to make a reciprocal visit to the Bataheen tribe in Bahri, Khartoum North.

In response, Omda Saleh Yousif Abdallah, the assistant to the Shartay of Luing, who was the head Shartay for the area, stated that the proposal presented to the Fur tribe was not an easy one and that there was need for further consultations amongst the other members of the tribe who were not represented at the meeting. He made a request for more time before a reply could be given to the visitors. At the time, under the Native Administration, Jebel Marrah was divided into four units namely – Luing (under Shartay Jalal Abuelbashir Yousif), Merri (under Shartay Hassan Abakar), Kebe (under Shartay Tigani Saefeldin Babikr), and Turra (under Shartay Abdmoula Mohamed Salama). The visitors returned to Bahri to await a reply from Darfur.

After the departure of the Bataheen visitors, Shartay Jalal Abuelbashir Yousif called for a meeting of the Fur tribe in Kurang'a. Representatives from the four units under the Native Administration attended the meeting, and resolved to reject the Bataheen proposal totally. This decision was conveyed to the Bataheen tribe.

Darfur and the Jawama

In 1998, Mr Alamin Mahmoud Mohammed, a member of the National Islamic Front, attempted to inject "Arabs" from Kordofan into Darfur. He himself is a Fur from Daya village, Rokero, Jebel Marrah. He previously served as the Commissioner of Sharg-a-nil Locality in Bahri, Khartoum North. He was then transferred to Um Ruwaba in North Kordofan as Commissioner.

While in Um Ruwaba, a group from the Jawama tribe came to him and told him that they were originally from Jebel Marrah and were Fur, by tribe and that their original home was in Turra but circumstances had forced them to relocate to Kordofan. After discussions with the group, Mr Alamin Mahmoud Mohammed believed them and being the Commissioner, he organized a trip for them to Darfur. Since these people did not know anybody in Turra, Mr Alamin Mahmoud Mohammed volunteered to escort them, lest they be lynched as impostors.

However in his efforts, Mr Alamin Mahmoud Mohammed broke protocol. The issue he was dealing with fell under the responsibility of the Native Administration. It was required by procedure for him to contact the Makdum, Adam Abdrahman Rigal in Nyala. This he did not do and neither did he inform Shartay Abdmoulah Mohamed Salama in Turra. Instead, he put the Jawama delegation in three cars and headed for Turra.

In Turra, because he was a highly respected citizen, he called for and held several meetings with the people to introduce the Jawama delegation. The delegation repeated the tale they had told Alamin. However, the people of Turra rejected this story. Women composed a song to castigate Alamin saying, "Alamin Dar Saba yang'a nama Kurong'a si bela" which loosely translates as Alamin went eastwards and brought us people looking like red monkeys so how can he live with us?

With this kind of opposition, Alamin left with the delegation and headed for Zalingei. In Zalingei, there are people who migrated from Turra and settled in an area of the town which they named Turra after their home area in Jebel Marrah. These are the people to whom Alamin took the Jawama delegation. Again, he organized meetings with the people in Zalingei and again the delegation was rejected by the people with the exception of Muhammad Ahmad el Nur, the father of Abdelwahid Muhammad Ahmad el Nur, the leader of the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army.

The elder el Nur, who is related to Alamin on his mother's side, stated that historically they were Arab who originated from Tunisia during the days of the Darfur Sultanate. He narrated the story of Ahmad Magur and Suleiman Solong and how the two disagreed leading to Suleiman cutting Ahmad on the leg with a sword and this caused him to limp, hence the nickname Magur. The disagreement led to a split between the two and Ahmad Magur and his group returned to Tunisia with the Fur language which they still speak to this day. He also said that there are other Fur people who migrated elsewhere and lost their language. This he said in order to convince the people that the Jawama tribe was originally Fur. This did not convince the Turra people in Zalingei. They rejected Alamin and his delegation, who in turn returned to Um Ruwaba.

Because Alamin had failed to convince the Fur people that the Jawama tribe was related to them, when the delegation returned to Um Ruwaba, they started causing problems for him. They accused him of stealing iron sheets meant for a mosque and money which he had used to set up a flour mill in Turra. On another occasion, they held a public demonstration against him chanting that they did not want to be governed by an "al gurab al aswad" which means black crow. As a result, the government decided to transfer him from Um Ruwaba to Kurmuk in Blue Nile. Shortly after his arrival in Kurmuk, he was

relieved of his duties as Commissioner which was seen as a punishment for his failure to have the Jawama tribe recognized as part of the Fur tribe, and for them to resettle in Turra.

Darfur and Economic Enticement

Having failed in their attempt to introduce Arabs into Darfur, it was decided to try the economic tool. In late 1998, a tourism project was mooted. Mr Sanoosi Bashar, the then Minister for Finance in West Darfur, whose portfolio was responsible for tourism, approached Mr Najib Abdelrahman Yousif, an old classmate at university and a colleague in the National Congress Party, who was at the time in Dankuj on his farm. He introduced the tourism project to him and promised that since the government of West Darfur did not have a ministry of tourism at the time, if the project was successful, the ministry would be created and that he would be appointed as Minister for Tourism.

According to the project, several tourist hotels were to be built in Golol, Baldong, Udio, Kutrum, Dursa, and Manabu. Tourist villages were to be established in Martajello, Nertiti, Nyilma, and Kibili. It was stated that in the exact locations where these constructions would take place, the owners would be compensated for their land and trees separately. When construction started, local means of transport would be used to ferry construction material in order to enable the local people to benefit from the project.

Because the project proponents had seen a lot of wheat in Jebel Marrah, they said that a wheat milling factory would be established in Kibili to mill the wheat and thus bring economic benefits to the people. They held discussions with the people, including a Mr. Alsab, a leading wheat farmer in Kibili who even offered a part of his farm for the construction of the factory.

Investigations of the proposed projects by some sons of the Fur community in Jebel Marrah, especially Adeen Abdelrahman Yousif, the younger brother of Najib Abdelrahman Yousif, and Abubakar Saefeldin, revealed that the projects were related to a Palestinian businessman who ran a restaurant called Haifa along the airport road in Khartoum and another one called Azuwada in Bahri, Khartoum North. Abubakar was based in Nertiti while Adeen was moving around collecting information in Khartoum and other places. With the collected information, they started dissuading the people from the project which they felt had ulterior motives. Some citizens agreed with them while others, because of the promised benefits, disagreed with them. Gradually, most of them were convinced. This was mainly because Adeen, as a brother to Najib, was expected to support the project. But since he was one of those opposing it, they felt that there was a reason for concern. When the project sponsors found out about the opposition to the project, they called for public meetings to convince the people about the project. However, most people stayed away from such meetings.

When the Federal Minister for Tourism and Natural Resources decided to inspect the progress of the project, having approved it as a private sector investment initiative, he found that the project had not taken off and that most of the local people were against it. As a result, the project was quietly abandoned in the year 2000.

Darfur and Musa Hilal

In 1999, Musa Hilal (the notorious leader of the *Janjaweed* in the current conflict) started the killings, looting and burning of villages in Shoba, North Darfur, an area bordering Jebel Marrah. He then extended his activities to Kutula and Sonasona in Jebel Marrah. Concerned citizens reported these incidents to the government. The government responded by sending soldiers to Kutula and Sonasona to deal with the problem. Musa Hilal's fighters ambushed the government army contingent, killing 19 of them including a

Southern Sudanese Major in the government army. The fate of this Major is quite telling. Even though he was already dead, Musa Hilal's fighters cut him up into pieces, desecrating his body. Was it because he was an African from the South? This brings back the memories of the El Daein Massacre that took place in 1987 and was investigated by Mr Suleiman Baldo, currently with the International Crisis Group. This massacre of over 1,000 innocent Southern IDPs, who had taken refuge in Darfur, is a glaring illustration of the Arab's devaluation of African life.

While the government's intervention had cooled the situation in Kutula and Sonasona, Musa Hilal and his fighters moved to other areas like Sagadir and Saganaga, again in Jebel Marrah. Because of the havoc that Musa Hilal and his fighters were causing in Darfur, the *Wali* (governor) of North Darfur Mr Ibrahim Suleiman in whose State Kebkabiya, the home of Musa Hilal lay, called him to El Fashir, the capital of North Darfur. Musa Hilal refused to go to the *Wali* saying that the *Wali* was a soldier and he himself was also a soldier. When the *Wali* heard this, he dispatched a contingent of about 20 troops to arrest him. He was arrested and his hair shaved off for insubordination. They then took him to El Fashir and presented him before the *Wali*. After due process, he was dispatched all the way to Port Sudan to be imprisoned. In circumstances that at the time were not clear to most people, Ali Osman Taha, the then First Vice President of Sudan, had Musa Hilal released from prison in Port Sudan and brought to a hotel in Medani where the two held a meeting. With the current conflict in Darfur and with Musa Hilal as the undisputed leader of the *Janjaweed*, we do not have to guess the reason why Ali Osman Taha had this convicted criminal released from prison.

Musa Hilal and the Current Conflict in Darfur

The *Janjaweed* infamy, regarding the current conflict in Darfur provides us with a link to that meeting in Medani between Ali Osman Taha – then First Vice President of the Sudan and a convicted criminal – Musa Hilal.

In response to the armed insurrection that started in February 2003, the government of Sudan decided to use Arab militias – a strategy perfected by Sadiq al Mahdi in his own genocidal war against the people of South Sudan – as the boots on the ground. Musa Hilal already had experience in this strategy from his activities detailed earlier. He was thus the perfect choice. Using his former fighters as the nucleus of a larger militia to deal with the latest insurrection, he would be facilitated to recruit and equip new members into his militia and place it at the disposal of the government of Sudan.

Since the beginning of this rebel insurgency the government of Sudan has pursued a military strategy that has violated fundamental principles of international humanitarian and human rights law. It has failed to distinguish between military targets and civilians or comply with the principle of proportionality in the use of force. Its strategy deliberately targets the civilian population through a combination of indiscriminate and deliberate aerial bombardment, a “scorched earth” campaign, and denial of access to humanitarian assistance. This has resulted in millions of people being displaced from their homes into camps within Darfur and hundreds of thousands fleeing across the border to refugee camps in Chad.

Darfur – Islam's Killing Fields

This was the title of an online symposium on Darfur in FrontPageMagazine.com on September 10, 2004. The question under discussion was: Why is it that - yet again - *another* Arab League member is massacring its minority populations? Why is the Western media reluctant to identify the religion and ethnicity of the mass murderers and rapists?

As pointed out earlier, it is important to correct the wrong perception that Sudan is an Arab country and that Africans are a minority, implied in the question under discussion on the online forum.

The gist of the question was that; if Darfur is almost 100% Muslim and the government in Khartoum is an Islamist one, how come Muslims are killing Muslims?

To get an answer to this question, we have to take into account one basic truth that is mostly ignored: Arabs did not bring Islam to Darfur. Instead, the religion came from West Africa, brought by African Muslim pilgrims on their way to Mecca.

The following are transcripts of communications between Sudanese Air Force pilots and Sudanese Army ground commanders in the on-going conflict in Darfur:

“Any village you pass through you must burn. That way, when the villagers come back, they will have a surprise waiting for them”

An Antonov pilot ordering a ground commander of a government army battalion in Darfur.

“There is nothing under me except grass cottages, Sir.”

An Antonov pilot over Darfur reports to his Khartoum commander

“I order you to bomb them and expel their religion (tally deenhum; render them unbelievers)”

The commander orders back.

From the foregoing, it is very clear that the Darfur genocide is racially motivated and needs to be understood in that light, if a lasting solution is to be found. It is my hope that this article will prick the consciences of Africans and get them out of their slumber to do something about this 21st Century genocide.