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“U.S. Policy Toward Sudan and South Sudan”

House Committee on Foreign Affairs
Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organization

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Written Testimony on “Sudan’s Five Crises and U.S. Policy”

Honorable Chair Representative Chris Smith
Honorable members of the Sub Committee

I would like to thank you for extending to me an invitation to address the sub-regional Sudan-related crises involving the violent history of the North-South confrontation, the lingering tensions between the Khartoum regime and the Juba government, the present and ongoing crisis within the state of Southern Sudan, and the large-scale human rights abuse inside Northern Sudan also known as the Republic of Sudan. I hereby request from the Chair to include my written testimony in the record.

It is my honor and pleasure to testify before this Congressional subcommittee based upon three decades of personal research published in several languages, on my close observations regarding the ethnic-religious and ideological roots of the Sudan-related conflicts, and on my own communications with NGOs and researchers from the six groups engaged in tensions with Khartoum: The nation of South Sudan, Darfur, the Nuba Mountains in the south, East Sudan minorities, Northern Sudan Nubians, and the reformer and democratic opposition inside Northern Sudan.

This assessment will briefly review the historical evolution of the several Sudan-related crises over the past two decades and will address the latest strategic findings regarding each crisis separately while connecting the relationship between each crisis and the regime in the center. My testimony will also note a growing concern over a regional threat in the Red Sea area in connection to Sudan’s government, and last offer suggestions for a U.S. policy reevaluation regarding Sudan.

Long standing work on Sudan

My testimony is based on twenty five years of publishing, research and observation of the Sudan conflict. Following are selected examples: My first book, published in Arabic in 1979, “*al Taadidiya fil Aalam*” (Pluralist societies in the World), included a section on South Sudan secession; a series of articles on South Sudan was published in the weekly magazine *Mashreq International* in the 1980s; I served as an advisor for an NGO federation dedicated to the rights of ethnic minorities in the Middle East, including Sudan, in the 1980s; I advised the student organization Slavery Watch at Florida Atlantic University and was a board member of the American Anti-Slavery Group in Boston during the 1990s; I testified on the persecution of Christians and other minorities to the U.S. Senate in 1997; my scholarly article on the Struggle for South Sudan was published in the *Middle East Quarterly* in 1998¹; I was appointed rapporteur to a Conference on Middle East and North Africa minorities in the U.S. Senate in June 2000; I served as academic advisor for the Coalition for the Defense of Minorities in the Muslim World 1994-2004 and then as advisor to the Middle East American Coalition for Democracy, including on South Sudan and Darfur affairs 2004-2014; a chapter on South Sudan’s self-determination was included in my book *The Coming Revolution: Struggle for Freedom in*

¹ Walid Phares, "The Sudanese Battle for American Opinion" *Middle East Quarterly*, March 1998, pp. 19-31

the Middle East, 2010; Sudan's several crises were analyzed in my book (in French) *Du Printemps Arabe à l'Automne Islamiste* published in Paris in November 2013; my forthcoming book next month, *The Lost Spring*, also dedicates segments to the democracy struggles inside North and South Sudan. Regarding the nature of the Jihadi regime in Khartoum, I have covered its ideology and strategies in several works including: *Future Jihad: Terrorist Strategies against America*, 2005; *The Confrontation: Winning the War against Future Jihad*, 2008; briefings to the Anti-Terrorism Caucus of the U.S. House of Representatives, 2007-2013; briefings to the Transatlantic Parliamentary Group on Counterterrorism, 2008-2014; briefings at the European Parliament in Brussels and to legislative assemblies and think tanks in Madrid, Prague, Paris, London, Berlin, Bucharest, Budapest and Rome, 2005-2014. In January 2011, I monitored the participation of American-Sudanese communities in the popular referendum which granted independence to the state of South Sudan.

Historical background

As Congress, the current administration, and the public knows from over three decades of developments the essence of the conflict in Sudan and its evolution, I will begin by summarizing the historical background of the confrontations in Sudan and their persistence despite the several international and U.S. attempts to address them and solve their causes. The state of Sudan was granted independence by the British in 1956, and that same year the country began its first civil war, ending in 1972 as a result of the Addis Ababa peace agreement. The civil war exploded again in 1983 as a result of an uprising conducted in Juba, the administrative capital of the south, against the imposition of Sharia law by the government of President Nimeiri on the entire country—including its southern provinces where the majority of residents were non-Muslim. The second Sudan war, the most devastating, lasted until Sudan's Comprehensive Peace Agreement of 2005 was signed in Nigeria, granting southern Sudan its legitimate right to self-determination. As a result of an internationally monitored referendum on January 9, 2011, South Sudan was recognized by the United Nations as a separate and independent country and new member of the United Nations. The two devastating wars between 1956 and 2011, the longest conflict in Africa, took the lives of more than two million south Sudanese while also witnessing the enslavement of about 500,000 Africans from South Sudan and the displacement of another three million or more men, women, and children inside and outside the southern provinces of the country.

The two conflicts were rooted in identity crises and ideological clashes. Between 1956 and 1972, the south rose against the ruling elite in Khartoum as the latter imposed an Arab ethnic identity over the south, which is primarily African Nilotic. The southern leaders had been promised during the British occupation that a federal system would be created to absorb and recognize the ethnic differences. However, after the departure of the colonial power, the northern elites in Khartoum negated their commitment and enforced one Arab culture and language over the African south. The first Sudan war ended with the Addis Ababa agreement, which granted the south the right to establish its own provinces with Juba as a district capital. In 1983, President Nimeiri decided to enforce Islamic Sharia across all of Sudan, including the mostly Christian south, prompting another rebellion and generating a second bloody war. In 1989, a military coup in Khartoum brought an Islamist regime to power in Sudan under the leadership of General Omar al Bashir and his ally, Dr. Hassan al Turabi, an Islamist Salafi ideologue and a former member of Sudan's branch of the Muslim Brotherhood. Dr Turabi launched the National Islamic

Front, as political support group to General Bashir. The new regime waged a war of ethnic cleansing against the south, pushing the rebels almost to the international borders with Uganda, Ethiopia and Kenya. Bashir and Turabi aimed at eliminating the southern rebellion and imposing an Islamist state even on the southern mostly non-Muslim provinces. Their policies were opposed not only by the southern rebellion but also by northern moderate groups.

In the 1990s, as the war against the south was escalating, the Khartoum regime hosted a number of Jihadist organizations and leaders, including Osama Bin Laden who was Turabi's guest in the country. In 1992-1993, Turabi, under the auspices of Bashir, gathered an international conference of Jihadists, attended by almost all operational radical Islamist groups in the world, including Hamas, Islamic Jihad, the Muslim Brotherhood, the Algerian FIS, and many groups who would later form the Taliban and al Qaeda. The conference, among other goals, decided to support the campaign by the Sudanese regime against the southern rebels as they were seen as an obstruction to the erection of the Caliphate in Africa. However, toward the end of the 1990s and around the turn of the century, the southern rebellion represented by the Sudan Popular Liberation Movement (SPLM) and led by Dr John Garang made notable advances liberating a number of towns and villages in the south. More peace talks were generated as a result. Since the 9/11 attacks and as the United States declared War on Terrorism, particularly after the Afghanistan and Iraq campaigns, the Sudan regime agreed to seriously negotiate, agree on several steps during the talks at Lake Naivasha, and eventually signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement CPA in January 2005 in Nayayo Stadium in Nairobi, Kenya, granting the south its right to self-determination.

While Khartoum pragmatically moderated its position on south Sudan, however, it also hardened its stance on several African ethnic minorities inside the Northern part of the country. In 2004, the world learned with horror about another genocide perpetrated in the Western provinces known as Darfur when more than 250,000 civilians had been killed. The highly publicized Darfur Genocide eventually led the International Criminal Court in The Hague to indict President Omar Bashir and some of his aides. During the same period of time, the Jihadi regime waged other suppression campaigns against three more ethnic communities in the country. In the south of what became Northern Sudan, Khartoum suppressed another rebel African community in the Nuba Mountain region (also known as the South Kordofan) and in Blue Nile State, conducting military operations and air raids against their villages and towns and flooding their land and ancient artifacts by damming the Nile River. In the Eastern provinces, Bashir deployed his security services and troops in Port Sudan and along the coasts of the provinces to suppress yet a third ethnic community rejecting his attempts of forced Arabization and land grab, the Beja tribes. Last but not least, in the north of the country along the borders with Egypt, the Sudanese regime is suppressing a fourth African community, the Nubians, depriving them of their native language and culture. Even as South Sudan was released, four more African peoples have been oppressed by a regime under international war crimes indictment. In addition, inside the northern central areas, including Khartoum and Um Durman, a notable anti-regime movement is rising, attempting to unsettle the regime or at least force the government to concede to major reforms. At this point, the Islamist regime of Bashir is meddling in the security and stability of the independent Republic of South Sudan, suppressing four African uprisings, and clamping down on its own political opposition, all while granting facilities to the Iranian regime and its terror-connected organizations.

Southern Sudan: Two Crises

Until the beginning of domestic strife inside the Republic of South Sudan this year, the main tension since independence in 2011 between Khartoum and Juba had been over the oil rich province of Abyei, controlled by the northern forces and claimed by South Sudan. The population of Abyei, mostly Dinka, have wholeheartedly stood with the south and have been an integral part of the decades-long southern struggle. Khartoum is claiming the province to be part of the north because a number of Arab tribes have been settling the area for years. Despite the independence of South Sudan, the Islamist northern Government has dispatched its troops to occupy Abyei and from time to time conducts air attacks against SPLM units and civilians. The Abyei clash is rooted in two issues. First is a struggle between north and south over resources, particularly oil. Both Khartoum and Juba's elites wish to receive oil dividends from the vast reserves in that province. But another issue remains at hand. Although the Khartoum regime has accepted the secession of the south in the legal sense, they have not yet accepted the loss ideologically and theoretically. Hard core northern elements believe that a failed state in the south would eventually accept a form of tight economic and political cooperation, leading to a confederation between the two countries. The Jihadi ideology ruling the north refuses to concede that a land that was ruled by an Islamist state, and thus potentially part of a future Caliphate, could break away from the center. Only a new democratic regime in the north willing to opt for a pluralist and secular government would truly recognize South Sudan as a legitimate entity.

But the Republic of South Sudan has been plagued with a worse internal confrontation since its access to independence in 2011. According to **the most credible** reports from the ground, the country's **former** Vice President Riek Machar has led a military coup attempt against President **Salva** Kiir. Both Machar and Kiir were aides to the founder of the SPLM movement and leader of the southern resistance, John Garang, **but Machar defected to Khartoum in 1991, and his forces were responsible for the killing of thousands of civilians in Bor, in Jonglei State, in what is now known as the Bor Massacre.** The **current** clashes between the forces loyal to the president and those supporting Machar have left thousands of victims dead and wounded. **Tragically, Machar's White Army has committed another massacre in Bor in the current crisis.**

But the Republic of South Sudan has been plagued with a worse internal confrontation since its access to independence in 2011. According to the most credible reports from the ground, the country's former Vice President Riek Machar has led a military coup attempt against President Silva Kiir. Both Machar and Kiir were aides to the founder of the SPLM movement and leader of the southern resistance, John Garang. But according to open sources from the time, Machar had defected to Khartoum in 1991, and his forces were accused of killing thousands of civilians in Bor, in Jonglei State, in what is now known as the Bor Massacre. However as of the independence in 2011, a reunification took place under the new Government in Juba under President Silva Kiir. Sadly, the recent clashes between the forces loyal to the president and those supporting Machar have left thousands of victims dead and wounded. Tragically, Machar's "White Army" has been accused of committing another massacre in Bor in the current crisis. Violence from all sides has caused civilian casualties across the country.

The country's fragile economy is in decline, oil production is threatened, and hatred between tribes is increasing, particularly between the Dinka close to Kiir and the Nuer close to Machar. Note that while the opposition has leveled corruption charges against the government led by Kiir, critics of Machar remind us of his past collaboration with the Khartoum regime against John Garang, leader of the south Sudanese struggle and the dramatic consequences on the southern population, even during their resistance against the Khartoum regime. In principle, both leaders have responsibility for the deterioration of security in the south and should at once stop the confrontation and go back to the negotiation table. However, there is still a need for a commitment from Machar's forces to ceasing hostilities and ending the endangering of the cohesion of the new country.

South Sudan is the newest country in the world, a republic whose people have suffered genocide at the hands of a Jihadist regime and whose future was promising because of natural resources and internal unity against the terror inclinations of the north. On a strategic level, the destruction of South Sudan is detrimental to peace in the region and to the national security interests of the United States. This country is an ally in the war against the terrorists; its forces have had the longest experience in resisting the Jihadi forces and, as a young African country, it was poised to become a voice of moderation and democracy in the area linking the Sahel to the Horn of Africa. South Sudan is blessed with water and oil as well as other natural resources. Its population is ready for progress and prosperity, and its political culture is immune to the radicalization effects of Jihadi ideology. The ongoing quasi civil war over power can only harm this promising future and profit the strategic interests of the Khartoum regime.

It is unfortunate that the United States administration did little on diplomatic and political levels to pressure the two factions inside South Sudan into a cessation of hostilities and a reunification of the country. While envoys were dispatched to the region and to both North and South Sudan and talks have been generated, the treatment of such a crisis needs direct involvement of the President of the United States personally. In view of his stature as the leader of the free world, and in view of the fact that the United States has contacts with both factions, I had suggested months ago that the White House might call on a cease fire in South Sudan and invite the two fighting leaders to come to Washington for talks with the administration and Congress on how to end this unnecessary and bloody conflict. The president can impose greater pressure on the two fighting sides because the U.S. is the primary political partner of South Sudan. Regrettably, short of such unusual pressure coming from the top, the fight may go on inside the Republic of South Sudan. Not only will this conflict empower Khartoum to expand its nefarious activities outside its borders again, but it allows the northern government to focus on its support to terror organizations and increase the suppression of its own populations.

Darfur's drama

While the question of Darfur was highly publicized ten years ago, thanks to American diplomacy and celebrities, there have been no significant advances toward the resolution of this drama as of yet. According to Darfur's civil society leaders, on the ground and in exile, the government of Sudan is still equipping and arming factions reminiscent of the feared Janjaweed militias in order to conduct raids inside Darfur and kill civilians. Over the past five years, Khartoum has been

successful in splitting the Darfur liberation movements, engaging some and isolating others, in a maneuver to weaken their cause. Furthermore, the Jihadi regime of Bashir has pressured neighboring countries such as Chad and the Central African Republic to cease their both logistical and humanitarian support to Darfur's liberation movements. Khartoum's propaganda machine tries to convince international public opinion that it is conducting talks with the Darfur movements while in reality it is waging systematic campaigns against them. Darfur's civilian conditions are deteriorating and the Western media visibility given to their cause has waned. Darfur leaders in exile have reported that the talks moderated by Qatar have only served to divide delegations and have had a negative effect on the cause of Darfur. Civil society NGOs have been telling us that the past international publicity for Darfur has created an impression that their conditions have improved while in reality the regime moved against them and has been indicted by the ICC on those very grounds continues to harass this African population despite international sanctions.

South Kordofan: Nuba Mountains

The region of South Kordofan is technically inside the north, within the Republic of Sudan, but its population is ethnically non-Arab and identifies as African—and mostly Muslim. More importantly, they have fought with the southern Sudanese against a regime they perceive as extremist and oppressive. Like the Darfuris, they have been submitted to oppression at the hands of Khartoum for decades. A local resistance based inside what is known as the Nuba Mountains continues to resist Khartoum forces, which occupy their lands and bomb them from the air. The cause of the Nuba Mountains population is not well known in the West but is no different in nature from that of Darfur.

East Sudan: The Beja

Between the Egyptian and Eritrean borders, a band of land forming the East Sudan region with Port Sudan as its local capital is inhabited by the African population known as Beja. This community, part of the African and marginalized segments of the northern Sudan population has also been rebelling against the Islamist regime of Bashir. The Beja, Black Muslims, have formed their own resistance movement but have been under tremendous pressure by government troops who reign in their province. Beja civil society leaders have been accusing Khartoum of ethnic cleansing—eliminating their tribes and replacing them with settlers brought from the center of the country. The Beja population lives under dire economic conditions and its members are deprived of jobs and opportunities in their own regional capital, Port Sudan, the largest maritime outlet of the regime.

Northern Sudan: Nubians

Last but not least, another African population living in the north of the country is also submitted to a systematic persecution and cultural suppression by the same regime at the center of the other crises. The Nubians, well-known in ancient history, are the original population of northern Sudan and have been marginalized, pushed into smaller areas by the systematic flooding of their land by Khartoum's damming of the Nile, and deprived of their own language and community

identity. The Nubians, another African Muslim community of northern Sudan, are calling on the international community to pressure Khartoum to stop the cultural genocide of their community.

Arab Sudan's Civil Society

We can conclude that the Khartoum regime has been conducting an all-out multidimensional campaign of persecution against the southern Sudanese, who are mostly Christians, and four of its own marginalized populations—mostly Black Muslims, with Christians and Muslims in the Nuba Mountains. However, in addition to the ethnic warfare waged by this regime, which is already indicted by the ICC, Khartoum is suppressing its own Arab Sudanese population in the center of the country. Sudanese political opposition and civil society NGOs have been reporting, at least since 2011, several demonstrations and uprisings by students, workers, women and liberal groups calling for a change of regime, or at least of those representing it. The northern democratic opposition stigmatizes the persecution of marginalized African groups in the country and is calling for a new democratic pluralist Sudan. The opposition inside northern Sudan is a parallel movement to that of Egypt, which rose against the Muslim Brotherhood regime. The civil society movement in Khartoum is not recognized, nor is it sufficiently engaged by the West in general or the United States in particular. Moreover, the U.S. government is insisting on adding Islamist parties as part of the “opposition” that also have the agenda of establishing a Caliphate and imposing strict Sharia. Such pressures aren't helping in supporting the rise of a reformer civil movement. Instead the U.S. should be encouraging the Salafi Islamists to consider reforms and join the democratic pluralist culture.

Iran presence

Sudanese opposition sources and Beja leaders have been warning the international community about an increasing activity in and around Port Sudan by Iranian operatives and envoys. According to the Beja NGOs, there is a sporadic maritime presence of Iranian military and an increasing network of Iranian backed terror groups in eastern Sudan. This route, used in parallel to the Red Sea, has been utilized by parties shipping weapons from the Indian Ocean to Hamas in Gaza and to the Jihadists fighting in the Sinai. Beja leaders have also noted that the Muslim Brotherhood organization is building their own bases of operation in that area with the goal of backing their insurrection in Egypt. But the presence of Iranian assets and networks in Eastern Sudan, while the buildup of missiles continues in Iran is not only dangerous to the region, but also to the United States and its allies.

U.S. Policy on Sudan

U.S. policy has been limited on solving South Sudan's internal conflict, weak on Darfur and almost nonexistent regarding the four marginalized African populations within northern Sudan. The United States has a vested regional interest and a significant national security interest in adopting a stronger, more assertive policy toward Sudan, both the north and the south. We recommend the following guidelines and suggestions to be considered:

- 1) On South Sudan, we strongly recommend a U.S. presidential statement on the internal crisis in that country, backed by a Congressional statement and a clear call from Washington's highest leadership for both factions to immediately stop the violence. These calls should be followed by an invitation to representatives from both factions to come to Washington for consultation with the goal of finding a definitive solution to the divisions. Constitutional order in South Sudan, issued from the first democratic elections, should be respected until the next election. Early elections or referendums can be considered.
- 2) On the four marginalized populations of northern Sudan, we also recommend a call by the President and Congress on the regime in Khartoum to cease its suppression of the Darfur, Nuba Mountains, Beja, and Nubian populations and to recognize their identities and their demands. Washington should call a UN Conference to gather representatives from the central government in Khartoum as well as from the four regions in order to initiate talks on the future of the Sudan in light of its multiethnic identity.
- 3) We also recommend that the administration and Congress extend moral and logistical support to the civil society NGOs of northern Sudan to enable them to flourish and expand and spread the political culture of democracy.
- 4) We recommend instructing U.S. funded foreign broadcast media to address these questions and to develop special programs in the ethnic languages of the marginalized populations of northern Sudan.
- 5) We recommend to your committee to call a special hearing on the marginalized population of northern Sudan and invite representative NGOs from their communities in the U.S. as well as leaders from these groups from inside Sudan or those in exile. The voices of the marginalized peoples of Sudan must be heard by lawmakers directly and, through them, by the American public.

Walid Phares, PhD
Washington DC
February 24, 2014

APPENDIX MAPS

MAP ONE: SUDAN AS CREATED BY THE BRITISH: 1956-2005



14 February 1994, the nine states comprising Sudan were divided into new states. The new state boundary alignments are undetermined.

Sudan

- International boundary
- State boundary
- National capital
- State capital
- Railroad
- Road
- Track

0 100 200 Kilometers
0 100 200 Miles
Lambert Conformal Conic Projection, SP 8N/32N

Boundary representation is not necessarily authoritative

MAP NUMBER THREE: THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN



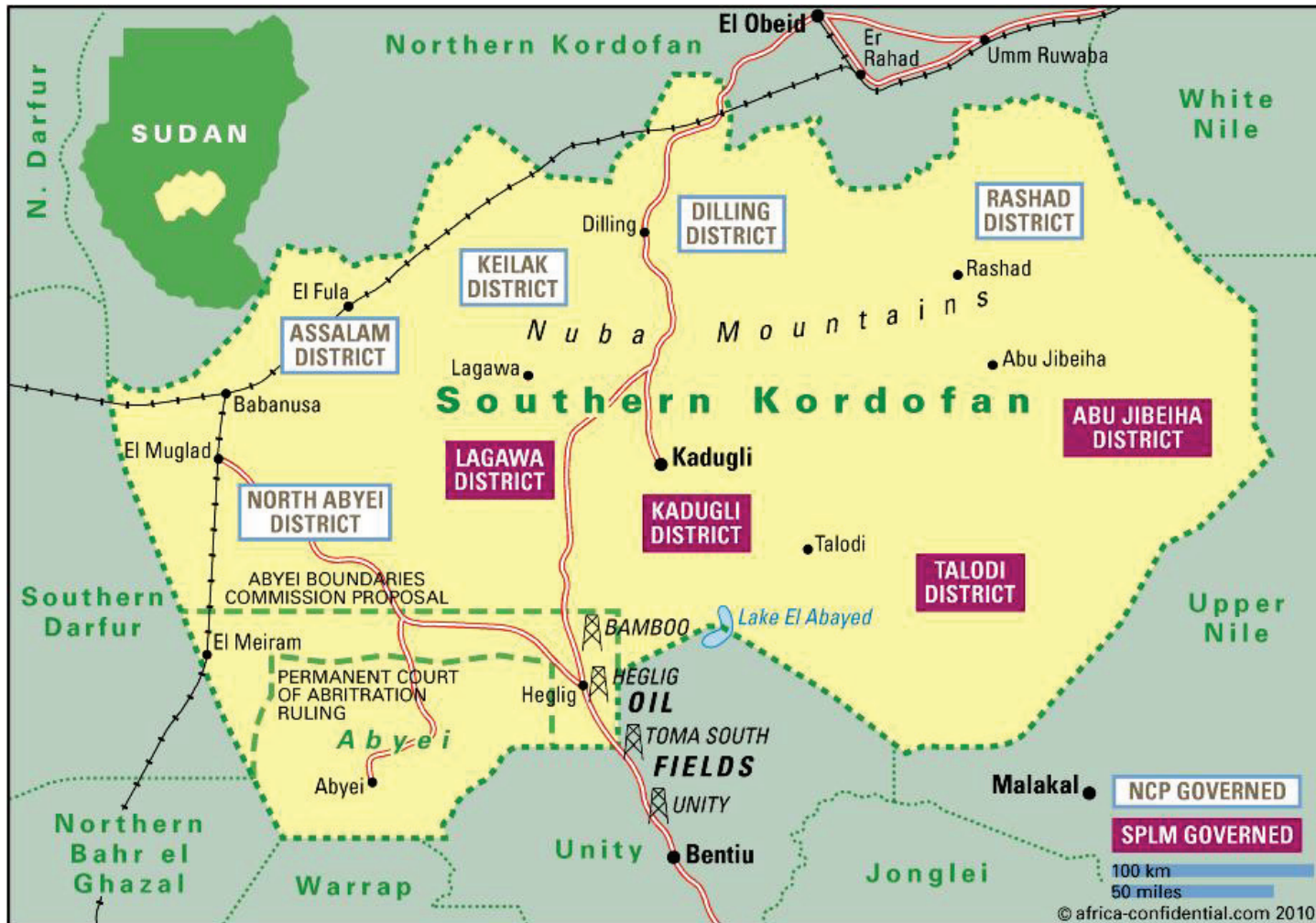
Map Number Four: The Abyei Province of South Sudan



MAP NUMBER FIVE: DARFUR



Map Number Six: Nuba Mountains and Southern Kordofan



MAP NUMBER SEVEN: THE FOUR ETHNIC UPRISING INSIDE NORTHERN SUDAN



MAP EIGHT: IRANIAN ACTIVITIES IN EASTERN SUDAN

