

**PhD Title: War and Peace in the Sudan and its Impact on
Ethiopia:
The Case of Gambella, 1955 - 2008
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ABSTRACT

The decolonization process of the Sudan and the transition period to independence in the first half of the 1950s witnessed north-south violent clashes. In the negotiation the south was transferred from the British colonial structure to that of the northern Sudanese nationalists. After independence the peoples of the periphery both in the north and south were not properly integrated into the state structure. The southerners feeling of alienation from the national centre grew from the past history of plundering and slave raids by the northerners, by the colonial policy of separation between the north and south, as well as by the cruel civil war and cultural oppression after independence.

The southern Sudanese insurgency began with the 1955 Torit Mutiny of Equatoria Corps. The Torit incident sparked a nationalist uprising throughout the southern Sudan and marked the beginning of the longest civil war in the country. After independence the subsequent measures taken by Khartoum political leaders against the south led to the increasing resentment and distrust which eventually gave rise to a secessionist armed revolt led by the guerrilla group known as the Anya Nya. As rebellion spread in the south government armed forces bombed and burned villages which caused thousands of southerners to flee the country and seek refuge in the neighbouring countries. For the Gambella region of Ethiopia which hosted several thousands of southern Sudanese refugees and served as military training base for guerrillas, the spill-over effects of the conflict in southern Sudan was considerable. The continued influx of refugees into Gambella, the factional fighting and the flow of arms in the region had intensified the long standing ethnic friction between the Anuak and Nuer of Gambella. The establishment of military training camps and guerrilla bases had considerably contributed to the insecurity and violent conflict in Gambella.

With the outbreak of the civil war in Eritrea in 1962, the influx of refugees and insurgents across the Ethio-Sudan border increased. Internal political and socio-economic problems in Ethiopia and the Sudan and their hosting of insurgents from each other's territory as well as the super power rivalries in the Horn brought about periods of rising tensions between the two countries. The long and poorly demarcated common boundary and the use of the Nile waters were other contentious issues which influenced Ethio-Sudan relations.

During the first civil war armed bandits and insurgents continued plundering and abducting local communities. The Addis Ababa Agreement in 1972 between the Numeiri government and the Anya Nya fighters offered a breathing space to the long civil war in the Sudan and opened friendly Ethio-Sudan relations. Most of the southern refugees returned home, many Nuer Anya Nya guerrillas remained in their camps and bases in Gambella. Many Nuer refugees established permanent settlements in the Gambella region displacing the Anuak.

In 1983 Numeiri abrogated the Addis Ababa Agreement which unleashed the second and bloodier chapter of the civil war led by the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A). John Garang, the leader of the movement whose view was to create a united "New Sudan" was backed by the *Derg*. The *Derg* provided the SPLA with military and logistical support, supply routes, training facilities, a radio station and sites for establishment of refugee camps. However, the undisciplined and heavily armed SPLA troops had committed considerable atrocities against the Anuak of Gambella.

The CPA which was signed on 9 January 2005 brought an end to one of the longest civil wars in the history of Africa between northern and southern Sudanese. It culminated in the envisaged referendum in 2011 for southern Sudanese either to be part of the greater Sudan or establish an independent southern Sudanese government. This may be clear in the near future. But the CPA has created relative peace in the region and has made the return of southern Sudanese nationals to their home country. After the establishment of the Gambella Regional Administration in 1991, there was violent ethnic conflict in gambella. Following the signing of the CPA in 2005 there was escalation of violence along the border because of intensified cross-border cattle raids by some pastoralist groups.