The Crisis of the Sudanese Post-colonial State and Conflict in Darfur

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where references in the text or footnotes state otherwise, nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma of the university or other institute of higher learning, except where due acknowledgment has been made in the text.

Noah Raffoul Bassil
Sydney, Australia,
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Abstract

This thesis examines the causes of the conflict in the western Sudanese region of Darfur within the context of the crisis of the post-colonial African state. The Sudan's political instability, recurrent civil wars and crisis of identity provide an important context for understanding the pressures which motivated Darfur's rebels to take-up arms against the government in 2003.

The thesis argues that the crisis of the African state that has unfolded since independence is a basis for contextualizing the conflict in Darfur. The crisis of the African state is explained by exploring the colonial legacies and the international trajectories which have shaped the decisions made by political actors at the national and local levels. Colonial legacies are important markers for the post-colonial state in Africa but those legacies have been influenced by powerful post-colonial forces including the cold war, the 1970s economic crash, and neo-liberalism and the African economic disaster that followed.

The Sudanese post-colonial state and politics have been profoundly affected by colonial legacies and international factors but the conflict in Darfur is still inextricably entangled within questions of state-power and national identity which have been recurring problems in the Sudan. The thesis integrates Darfur into the wider machinations and dynamics of Sudanese politics to explain what influence Darfur has had on the questions of state-power and national identity, as well as how Darfur has been influenced by those same issues. Wider international forces also play a role but the vital piece in understanding the conflict is located in the changes to state-power and national-identity that occurred with the rise of the Islamist movement that

captured state power in the Sudan in the 1990s and the fracturing of the movement in 1999/2000.

The part played by the Islamist state and the politics that followed the demise of the Islamist state is the crucial final piece in forming a fuller appreciation of what led to the war in Darfur.

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Map

Sudan 2007: Provincial Boundaries and National Borders

http://www.un.org/Depts/Cartographic/map/profile/sudan.pdf