



Sudan – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 16 January 2014.

Is there any recent information on the Justice and Equality Movement – JEM?

An IRIN News briefing document, in a paragraph headed “Who are the combatants?”, states:

“The conflict in Darfur is being waged on many fronts and by different actors. It involves three main rebel groups fighting the government: the SLA(Sudan Liberation Army)-Abdul Wahid faction, the SLA-Minni Minawi faction, and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM). And while all these rebel groups are fighting under the auspices of the Sudanese Revolutionary Front, they are also divided largely along ethnic lines, with the SLA-Abdul Wahid faction being drawn mainly from the Fur tribe, and the SLA-Minni Minawi and JEM originally being drawn many from the Zaghawa tribe.” (IRIN News (15 August 2013) *Briefing: The humanitarian situation in Darfur*)

A report from the Inter Press Service news agency refers to the composition of the Sudanese Revolutionary Front (SRF) as follows:

“The SRF is made up of insurgent groups from Sudan’s western region of Darfur, including the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) and the two main factions of the Sudan Liberation Movement. The SPLM-N, which is also part of the SRF, is from South Kordofan and Blue Nile states, in south Sudan. Previously, the groups had fought relatively independently, with the Darfuri rebels’ desire for an Islamist state being a main obstacle to forming an alliance. When the JEM gave in to the SPLM-N’s offer to create a secular state in Sudan, once President Omar al-Bashir is deposed, the alliance was formed in November 2011, and it has seemingly grown in strength ever since.” (Inter Press Service (3 May 2013) *Sudanese Rebels Prepare for War*)

See also a BBC News report which states:

“Three rebel groups continue to fight the government: Two Sudan Liberation Army factions, led by Abdul Wahid al-Nur and Minni Minawi; and Gibril Ibrahim's Justice and Equality Movement (Jem). In late 2011, the three joined up with the SPLM-North rebels, who operate in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile states, in a loose alliance known as the Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF). The UN has accused South Sudan of supporting the SRF, in particular by hosting Jem on its territory, though Juba denies the charge. The formation of the SRF scared Khartoum, but it has not yet changed the military picture substantially. The Darfuri rebels operate in an archipelago of no-go areas in Darfur, and sometimes further afield.” (BBC News (29 April 2013) *Darfur conflict: Sudan's bloody stalemate*)

A report published by the Human Security Baseline Assessment (HSBA) for Sudan and South Sudan, in a section titled “Origins/composition”, states:

“In mid-2010, before a government offensive that led to heavy casualties on both sides, JEM was estimated to have more than 5,000 men armed with mounted anti-aircraft guns, rocket-propelled grenades, heavy machine guns, AK-47s, several

hundred vehicles (possibly as many as 1,000, according to one informed source), and at least two tanks, seized from the government. To this day, and despite splits in the movement, JEM remains the strongest and most cohesive military force in Darfur. Its weakness continues to be the lack of a wider constituency among Darfurians.” (Human Security Baseline Assessment (HSBA) for Sudan and South Sudan (21 August 2013) *Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) (AKA JEM-Jibril)*)

A section of this report titled “Leadership”, states:

“JEM’s late chairman, Khalil Ibrahim, was a Dutch-trained doctor, devout Islamist, and superb organizer feared by the government because of his inside knowledge of the ruling party, in which he held a number of important posts before 2003, including as an organizer of the paramilitary Popular Defence Forces. On 25 December 2011, Khalil Ibrahim was killed by a government airstrike while leading the majority of JEM’s forces east from their rear base in Wadi Huwar on the Chad/North Darfur border. Tahir al Faki was made interim leader until a JEM leadership conference could elect a new permanent chairman. On 26 January 2012, Khalil’s brother, Jibril Ibrahim, was elected chairman. On 3 February 2012, a new 18- member JEM executive office was appointed.” (ibid, p.1)

A section titled “Areas of control/activity” refers to the current activities of JEM as follows:

“In keeping with the new South Kordofan-based alliance under the SRF, the bulk of JEM’s forces were being moved to South Kordofan under Khalil Ibrahim’s command when he was attacked and killed in Wad Banda, North Kordofan in December 2011. JEM’s achievement since then has been to partially integrate itself in areas along the South Kordofan/South Darfur/South Sudan border—areas where it has no Zaghawa kin hosts. Instead, JEM has recruited mid-tier leadership and fighters among the local tribes allowing the movement to become a more ‘local’ force. The overall leadership of this force is JEM’s long-time chief of staff Suleiman Sandal. Smaller liaison units are present in Juba, South Sudan, and Kampala, Uganda. A small unit is also based in Eritrea, near the eastern border with Sudan. JEM also retained a presence in North Darfur, near its traditional bastion of Wadi Huwar under the command of JEM commander in chief, Bakheit Abdallah Abdel Karim (Dabajo). This force broke away from JEM on 11 September 2012, to form JEM-Bashar.” (ibid, p.2)

A report from the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, in a section titled “Figures and patterns of displacement”, states:

“The fragmentation of Sudan’s armed groups and parallel divisions in civil society have led to other local conflicts beyond those with the government and the militias that support it (SR on IDPs, May 2013). In Darfur, the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) have splintered into various armed groups, some of which have signed peace agreements with Khartoum. This has led to fighting between the different factions. In May 2013, the leader of a JEM splinter group was killed after his faction signed the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD)” (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (9 July 2013) Sudan; A worsening displacement crisis in need of a comprehensive response, p.5)

An article from the Sudan Tribune states:

“A former Darfur rebel faction has announced the death of its leader Mohamed Bashar and his deputy, Suleiman Arko, saying they were killed during an attack

carried out by the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) inside Chad near the Sudanese border. Bashar, who led a splinter JEM faction, was returning to Darfur from the Chadian capital before heading to Khartoum to start the implementation of a peace deal he signed with the government in Doha on 6 April. Speaking to Sudan Tribune from Chad near where the incident occurred, Bashar's adviser, Nahar Osman, said that over 30 rebel vehicles had attacked Bashar's convoy in Pamina, 4kms from the common border between the two countries. He added that Bashar and his delegation had not been under the escort of any military force, with the group accompanied to the border by only a lone Chadian security officer. Asked to comment on the claims, JEM spokesperson Gibreel Adam Bilal confirmed the 'clashes with Bashar's group', adding that their fighters repelled an attack by the splinter group." (Sudan Tribune (12 May 2013) *Former Darfur rebel leader killed near Sudan-Chad border area*)

A Reuters report states:

"Gibril Adam, spokesman for the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), one of the biggest rebels groups in Darfur, said its fighters had attacked an army position. 'We handed the army a defeat,' he said. Military spokesman al-Sawarmi Khalid said the rebels had attacked a village 'with the goal of stealing from citizens', state news agency SUNA reported. He said the army had repelled the attack and that five of its soldiers were killed, while the rebels suffered 'big losses'. Rachad is close to the state capital El-Obeid and Um Rawaba, a city which JEM and other rebels stormed for one day in April, shocking the army by moving their fight from their remote borderlands to within 500 km (300 miles) of Khartoum." (Reuters (24 July 2013) *Darfur rebels launch new attack on central Sudan*)

A newsletter published by the NATO-sponsored Civil-Military Fusion Centre, in a section titled "Sudan", states:

"Sudanese Revolutionary Front (SRF) rebels from Sudan's Darfur region, reportedly took Um Rawaba, a city in neighbouring North Kordofan state, about 500 km south of the capital Khartoum on 27 April, reports Al Jazeera. The SRF includes the Sudanese Liberation Army (SLA), the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-North), which formed an alliance in 2011 to topple Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir. SLA spokesperson Abdel Wahid Mohammed al-Nur indicated that the rebel alliance plans to push to Khartoum to topple the government, saying, 'this is a significant shift in the war in Sudan', and 'we are heading to Khartoum'. Sawarmi Khaled Saad, spokesman for the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) said government troops confronted the rebels after they reached Abu Kershola in the far north of South Kordofan; however, rebels raided Kareem Allaha village before targeting Um Rawaba. Saad accused SRF rebels of destroying a power plant, petrol stations and a telecommunications tower, and indicated that the rebels had been unable to hold the town and had fled south. A spokesperson for JEM Gibril Adam contradicted Saad, saying that rebel forces controlled Um Rawaba and other parts of North Kordofan state." (Civil-Military Fusion Centre (30 April 2013) *Mediterranean Review*)

A UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs report on the humanitarian situation in Sudan, in a section titled "Ongoing Conflict in S. Kordofan & Blue Nile", states:

"Armed conflict between the SAF and both the SPLM-N and the Sudanese Revolutionary Front (SRF) – an alliance of armed opposition movements consisting

of the SPLM-N, the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), and the SLA-MM – in combination with Arab intra-tribal conflict, continues to affect civilians in South Kordofan and Blue Nile states. According to humanitarian organisations, the fighting in South Kordofan resulted in some 90,000 newly displaced people during the first six months of 2013.” (UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (20 October 2013) *Sudan Humanitarian Update January - June 2013*, p.3)

An Agence France Presse report on fighting in South Kordofan states:

“SPLA-N fighters conducted the operation alongside the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) from Darfur, Lodi said. The two groups belong to the Sudan Revolutionary Front which seeks to topple the Khartoum regime and install a government more representative of the country’s diversity. JEM said several dozen government troops were killed and 10 taken prisoner. ‘In another battle, we captured a government compound,’ 25 kilometres (15 miles) east of Dilling, JEM spokesman Gibril Adam Bilal said.” (Agence France Presse (12 November 2013) *‘Many dead bodies’ as Sudan rebels renew attacks*)

A Sudan Tribune article comments on the treatment of JEM members in prison as follows:

“The detainees of the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) in Khartoum North Common Prison (also known as Kober prison) have begun a hunger strike on Monday protesting what they described as ‘cruel treatment’ by the penitentiary officers. JEM rebels accuse the Sudanese authorities of inflicting cruel and inhuman treatment to its members jailed in Khartoum prison, stressing that Abdel Aziz Usher, the brother in law of the group leader, is particularly targeted. JEM spokesperson Gibreel Adam Bilal said in a statement released on Sunday that the former head of JEM intelligence has been placed in a solitary confinement in Kober prison in a cell normally reserved for prisoners awaiting their turn for execution. He further added that the cell where Usher is being detained is full of rainwater with overflowing sewage stressing that such conditions prevent him from sleeping.” (Sudan Tribune (13 August 2013) *JEM members in Khartoum prison stage hunger strike*)

See also report from Radio Dabanga which states:

“Several relatives of 12 members of the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) who are into their 10th day of a hunger strike at Khartoum’s Kober Federal Prison have told Radio Dabanga that the detainees are being subjected to torture. They are concerned about ‘the serious deterioration in the health situation of the 12 prisoners as a result of psychological and physical torture, in addition to their hunger strike.’ As previously reported by Radio Dabanga, the JEM detainees began a hunger strike on 12 August, protesting what they described as ‘cruel treatment’ by prison warders. The former head of JEM intelligence, Abdel Aziz Usher, and others have allegedly been moved to the death row solitary confinement block. ‘The tortures they are subjected to include electric shocks, gouging of nails, the application of pincers to sensitive areas of the body, as well as being burned.’” (Radio Dabanga (5 September 2013) *‘JEM detainees being tortured in Sudan’s Kober prison’: relatives*)

A Radio Dabanga report on the arrest of perceived rebel sympathisers states:

“The Sudanese government reportedly launched a massive arrest campaign against citizens in the area of Abu Zabad, North Kordofan, following fierce fighting between the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) in the

area. According to multiple sources, several local residents have been arrested by the police on charges of spying for the Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF - an alliance of armed rebel groups, including JEM, and opposition parties)." (Radio Dabanga (19 November 2013) *Sudanese police arbitrarily arrest citizens in Abu Zabad, North Kordofan*)

A Sudan Tribune article on recent events in South Sudan states:

"The Sudanese rebel group, Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) has denied any involvement in South Sudan's recent conflict or any of its internal affairs. JEM, in a statement issued Monday, said it had no plans or intentions to interfere in the ongoing conflict, dismissing last week's claims that its forces were cited in parts of South Sudan's Unity state. Speaking in an interview with Sudan Tribune on Saturday, Maj. Gen. James Koang Chuol, the dissent fourth division commander in the state warned JEM fighters against taking part of the conflict, which he described as a South Sudan matter. Koang, whose forces took control of the state capital, Bentiu said he received reports from his troops on the ground that JEM fighters had crossed from Nuba Mountains in Sudan into Parieng county, after their supply route from the region was blocked. But Gibreel Adam Bilal, the spokesperson for Darfur rebel group denied the report, advising the dissident commander to recheck his sources of information." (Sudan Tribune (30 December 2013) *JEM denies involvement in South Sudan conflict*)

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research and Information Unit within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

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