



Conflict Factsheet

Conflict between the Awlad Zeid and Zaghawa in Sudan

Type of conflict
Sub

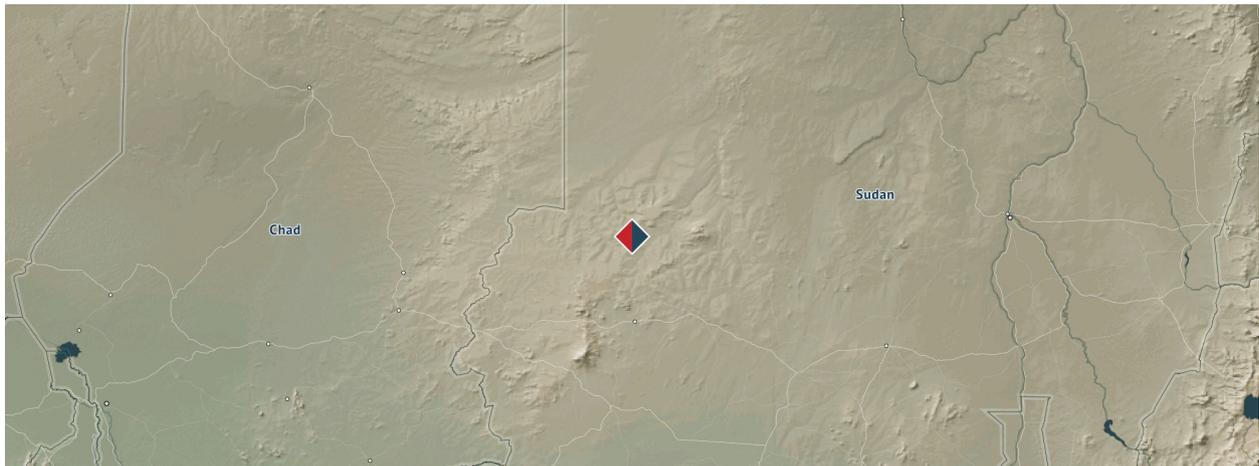
Intensity
2

Conflict Locality
Northern Africa

Time
1980 –ongoing

Countries
Sudan

Resources
Agricultural / Pastoral Land, Water



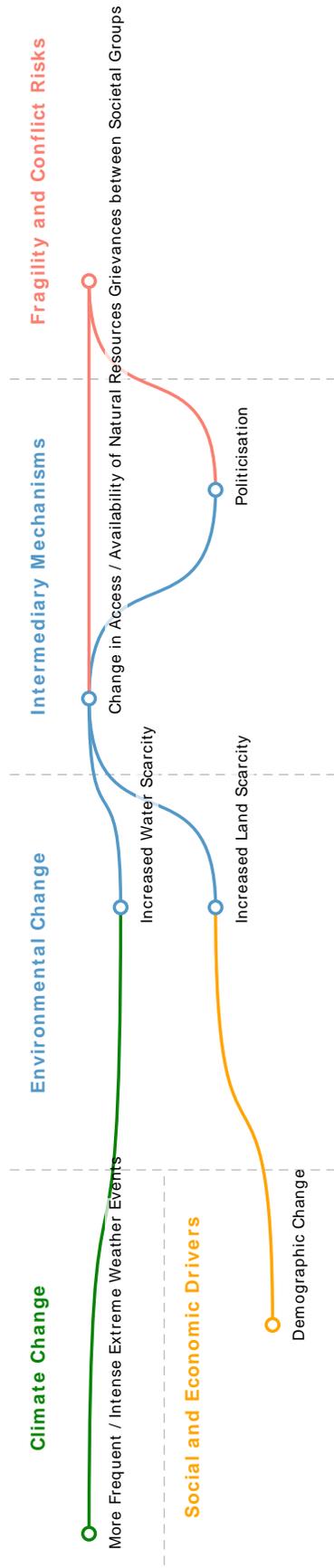
Local resource
competition

Conflict Summary

Since the early 1980s, conflicts over land and water between Awlad Zeid and Zaghawa pastoralists have become more violent due to a variety of reasons including increased drought frequency and severity. In 2001, clashes between the two groups over the use of the Bir Taweel wells left more than 70 people dead.



Conceptual Model



Context Factors



Agricultural / Pastoral Land, Water

Insecure Land Tenure
Water-stressed Area

History of Conflict
Low Level of Economic Development
Political Marginalization
Weak Institutions



Conflict History

The Awlad Zeid and Zaghawa have repeatedly clashed over water and land since the early 1980s. By the mid-1990s, relations between the two communities further deteriorated as ethnic divides were exploited by the Sudanese government as part of counter-insurgency strategies in Darfur. The tensions between the two groups escalated in May 2001, leaving more than 70 people dead in a dispute over the Bir Taweel wells in northern Darfur ([UCDP, 2015](#)). The implication of the Sudanese government in this event as a weapon supplier to the Awlad Zeid added to Zaghawa grievances and precipitated the formation of the rebel movement SLM/A (Sudan Liberation Movement/Army) ([Brosché and Rothbart, 2013](#)).

Water and grazing land have become an increasingly scarce resource in Sudan due to a variety of reasons such as increased drought frequency and severity, caused by climate change and an increased demand for cattle due to high population growth ([Bromwich, 2008](#)). This situation has led to frequent clashes between the Awlad Zeid and the Zaghawa since the 1980s. In 2001, the Zaghawa created four self-defence camps in response to continuous threats of violence from Awlad Zeid. The tensions between the groups climaxed in May 2001 when the Awlad Zeid staged an attack on the Zaghawa at the Bir Taweel wells ([UCDP, 2015](#)).

The implication of the Sudanese government has further fuelled local conflict along ethnic lines by favouring groups with an “Arab” identity, such as the Awlad Zeid, over those with an “African” identity, such as the Zaghawa. In its need for allies against nascent rebel movements such as the SLM/A, the central government in Khartoum armed Arab militias and encouraged them to loot and destroy villages of African communities suspected to support the rebels. The conflict between the Awlad Zeid and Zaghawa has to be seen in this context of counter-insurgency strategies by the Sudanese government ([UCDP 2015](#); [Brosché, 2012](#); [Bradbury et al., 2006](#)).

Resolution Efforts

After the violent incident in 2001, the Sudanese Army was deployed in the area to stop the fighting and keep the Zaghawa from the wells. In the same year, a peace conference was organized by the Government of Sudan to resolve the conflict. It failed to improve the situation and the Zaghawa perceived the conference as biased. As the government was unable to successfully address grievances between the two groups, many Zaghawa joined the SLA (Sudan Liberation Army), while many Awlad Zeid joined Arab Janjaweed militias, which would become notorious for their exactions during the Darfur civil war ([Bradbury et al., 2006](#); [UCDP, 2015](#)).



Intensities & Influences

1 2 3 4



INTENSITIES

International / Geopolitical Intensity

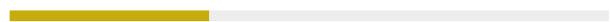


Human Suffering



INFLUENCES

Environmental Influences



Societal Influences



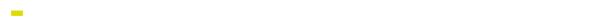
Violent Conflict

Yes



Mass displacement

None



Cross Border Mass Displacement

No



Resolution Success

Reduction in Violence

There was no reduction in violence.

-

Reduction in geographical scope

There has been no reduction in geographical scope.

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Increased capacity to address grievance in the future

There is no increased capacity to address grievances in the future.

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Grievance Resolution

Grievances have been completely ignored.

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Causal Attribution of Decrease in Conflict Intensity

There has been no reduction in intensity

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Entry Points for Resilience and Peace Building

Dialogue

In 2001, the Sudanese government organized a peace conference to resolve the conflict. However, it failed to improve the situation.

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Resources and Materials

References with URL

[Uppsala Conflict Data Program \(Date of retrieval: 2015/05/18\) UCDP Conflict Encyclopedia: www.ucdp.uu.se/database, Uppsala University](http://www.ucdp.uu.se/database)

[Bradbury, M., Ryle, J., Medley, M. & Sansculotte-Greenidge, K. \(2006\). Local Peace Processes in Sudan, A Baseline Study. Rift Valley Institute.](#)

[Brosché, J. & Rothbart, D. \(2013\). Violent Conflict and Peacebuilding: The Continuing Crisis in Darfur. Abingdon: Routledge](#)

[Bromwich, B. \(2008\). Environmental degradation and conflict in Darfur: implications for peace and recovery. London: Humanitarian Exchange Magazine ISSUE 39 July 2008.](#)

[Brosché, J. \(2012\). Conflicts over the Commons - Communal Conflicts in Darfur and Eastern Sudan. Bloomington: University of Indiana](#)

Further information

<https://factbook.ecc-platform.org/conflicts/natural-ressource-conflict-between-awlad-zeid-and-zaghawa-darfur-sudan>