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Sudan – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 23 June 2010

Information on the Darfur Liberation Movement (also information on groups with similar sounding names or similar spellings). Information on its activities, objectives, policies, leadership, membership, history and current situation in Darfur, Sudan. Information on the treatment of those who are members or are perceived to be members of the group by the government and/or society.

Under the heading ‘Sudanese Liberation Army/Movement (SLA/M), Annex B on page 180 of the April 2010 *United Kingdom Home Office Country Report* for Sudan, states:

“Sudanese Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A)

Global Security reported on its website that: “The Sudanese Liberation Army is backed by Eritrea. Until 2003, the group was known as the Darfur Liberation Front. Rebels in Darfur emerged in February 2003 under the name of Darfur Liberation Front. The Darfur Liberation Army announced no connection with the southern rebels, but it called in the middle of March 2003 for ‘an understanding’ with the opposition forces which fight the Islamist government in Khartoum. In March 2003 the Darfur Liberation Front announced it had downed a helicopter that was carrying an official in the province. On 14 March 2003 Darfur Liberation Front announced that the movement will be called the Sudan Liberation Movement and the Sudan Liberation Army (SLM/SLA). The Darfur Liberation Front was a secessionist organisation calling for the secession of the area of Darfur from Sudan. The SLA, led by Mini Arkoi Minawi, says it wants to ‘create a united, democratic Sudan’.”

In January 2006, it was reported that the Darfuri rebel movements – the SLM/A and JEM – had agreed to join forces under the banner Alliance of Revolutionary Forces of West Sudan. (AFP, 22 January 2006)” (United Kingdom Home Office (Border Agency) (16 April 2010) *Country of Origin Information Report; Sudan*, p.180)

A document published by *Global Security.org* refers to the ‘Darfour Liberation Front’, as follows:

“The Sudanese Liberation Army is backed by Eritrea. Until 2003, the group was known as the Darfur Liberation Front. Rebels in Darfour emerged in February 2003 under the name of Darfour Liberation Front. The Darfour Liberation Army announced no connection with the southern rebels, but it called in the middle of March 2003 for ‘an understanding’ with the opposition forces which fight the Islamist government in Khartoum. In March 2003 the Darfour Liberation Front announced it had downed a helicopter that was carrying an official in the province. On 14 March 2003 Darfur Liberation Front announced that the movement will be called the Sudan Liberation Movement and the Sudan Liberation Army (SLM/SLA). The Darfur Liberation Front was a

secessionist organisation calling for the secession of the area from Sudan. The SLA, led by Mini Arkoi Minawi, says it wants to 'create a united, democratic Sudan.'" (Global Security.org (9 March 2010) *Darfur Liberation Front Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) Justice and Equality Movement (JEM)*)

A BBC News article from May 2006 states:

"The two groups fighting in Sudan's Darfur region - the Justice for Equality Movement (Jem) and the larger Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) - have very different ideological backgrounds.

The SLA has its roots in unrest that began in Darfur 17 years ago.

In 1987 after a devastating famine, an Arab alliance was established, with official encouragement, to oppose the African farming communities of the Fur, Zagawa and Masalit.

The government quietly armed the Arabs, while at the same time disarming the Africans.

The SLA drew their first recruits from Fur self-defence militia that arose as the conflict of 1987 - 1989 spread.

The Zagawa joined the militia after the government failed to enforce the terms of a peace agreement requiring Arab nomads to pay blood money for the Zagawa they had killed, including prominent tribal leaders." (BBC News (5 May 2006) *Who are Sudan's Darfur rebels?*)

A report from the *International Crisis Group*, in a section titled "The SLA", notes:

"A group of young men coming primarily from the Fur, Zaghawa and Massaleit tribes launched the SLA in February 2003. Fighting against economic and political marginalisation by the central government, it achieved early military successes against government installations, which helped it bring in thousands of recruits and rapidly expand its support base throughout Darfur. Also contributing to its popularity was the scorched earth response, in which government forces and government supported Janjaweed militias burned hundreds of villages and displaced more than a third of the population. Yet, the SLA has become paralysed by a debilitating leadership dispute, which has made progress in the negotiations impossible. Its weak political structures have been unable to cope with the movement's rapid expansion, and personal disputes within the leadership have degenerated into divisions along tribal lines. Efforts to unify the movement have been unsuccessful, though they are ongoing. Until the internal disputes can be overcome and the SLA leadership returns to Darfur, there is little hope for substantial progress in the AU-led political negotiations. (International Crisis Group (6 October 2005) *Unifying Darfur's Rebels: A Prerequisite for Peace*, p.1-2)

References

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This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre 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.

Sources consulted

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UN News Service

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