

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
Department of Political Science
2011-12

Intensive POL Course (POL 498H/2801H1 F)

THE RUDDERLESS STATE: POLITICAL CRISIS AND CIVIL WARS IN SUDAN

Professor Taisier Ali

(Ph.D., University of Toronto)

Director, Peacebuilding Centre for the Horn of Africa (PCHA), Asmara, Eritrea

For decades, many scholars and political observers, within and outside Sudan, viewed the country's ethnic, cultural, religious and geographic diversity as a microcosm of Africa. Others considered it a "bridge" linking Middle Eastern and African Arabs with black Africa. Unfortunately, such images have been shattered by the result of the January 2011 Referendum in South Sudan in which 98% voted decidedly in favor of secession and the creation of a new sovereign state.

South Sudan's independence has emboldened calls for self-determination in other war-torn and marginalized communities of Darfur, Blue Nile, Nuba Mountains, Eastern Sudan and the extreme Northern Nubian territories. The disintegration of Sudan will not stop unless the ruling elite in Khartoum accept to renegotiate with other national actors on how the country should be ruled. However, such development is unlikely in the foreseeable future as President Basher's main preoccupation, and that of his National Congress Party (NCP), centers on avoiding the International Criminal Court (ICC) indictment for crimes against humanity and genocide. Leaked UN documents suggest an additional fifty-one leading ministers and members of the regime as potential accomplices. Under the circumstances power sharing arrangement will weaken NCP's grip over political power and can have dire personal legal consequences and hence their refusal to negotiate.

Worst still, there are serious fears as to whether the state in Northern Sudan can survive without the eighty per cent oil revenue which will accrue to the South with independence. Will the NCP honor the peace agreement it had signed or will it continue fanning the flames of war by financing and arming local militias in the south and elsewhere? During March 2011, the Government of South Sudan (GOSS) suspended talks with Khartoum on post-referendum arrangements in protest against the latter's attempt to overthrow it and for sponsoring militia attacks in oil producing areas. Consequently, it seems most likely that the civil war will linger on but through other means.

The course will examine the processes that prevent Sudan from realizing its economic and political potential; and, concurrently contribute to and aggravate conflicts and other crises. This state of affairs may still continue even after the secession of the South.

Course requirements

- Demonstrated knowledge of subject matter and active participation in course discussions (25%)
- Presentation on a relevant subject (15%)
- Research essay (3000 words, not including notes and bibliography) (60%)

Course Details

This intensive course is open to ten (10) 4th-year POL undergraduate students (pending Departmental approval) and ten (10) graduate students, including students from the Munk School of Global Affairs. This course counts as a half credit course and comprised of eight (8) three-hour sessions as follows:

Schedule: Tuesday, October 11, 2011, 4:00 – 7:00 p.m.
 Wednesday, October 12, 2011, 4:00 – 7:00 p.m.
 Thursday, October 13, 2011, 4:00 – 7:00 p.m.
 Friday, October 14, 2011, 4:00 – 7:00 p.m.
 Tuesday, October 18, 2011, 4:00 – 7:00 p.m.
 Wednesday, October 19, 2011, 4:00 – 7:00 p.m.
 Thursday, October 20, 2011, 4:00 – 7:00 p.m.
 Friday, October 21, 2011, 4:00 – 7:00 p.m.

Location: Sidney Smith Hall, Room 3130

Eligibility and Enrolment procedures:

Undergraduate students who are interested in taking this course should submit a copy of their transcript with a request to take the course to Elizabeth Jagdeo, Political Science Undergraduate Office, SSH 3027, no later than 5 p.m., Monday, August 22, 2011. Because of the intensive nature of the course, students are expected to have at least a 3.0 CGPA. Students will be notified by the department of the outcome of their application by Monday, August 29, 2011.

Taisier Ali

TAISIER ALI studied at the Universities of Khartoum and Toronto where he received a doctorate in the Political Economy of Underdevelopment. As an associate professor at the University of Khartoum, he was invited to lecture at the universities of Addis Ababa, Cairo, Makerere, Dar al Salaam, Asmara, York and Toronto. For over two decades, he has been involved in attempts to end civil wars in Sudan. In 1985, he was assigned by the Sudanese Trade Union Alliance (TUA) to administer peace talks with the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A). From 1986 until the military coup of 1989 he was seconded from the University of Khartoum to the Sudanese Cabinet as coordinator for the Ministerial Peace Committee. Following the 1989 military coup in Sudan, his refusal to join the Cabinet led to periods of detention and eventual dismissal from the University by a decree of the Sudanese Army "Revolution Command Council". In 1994 he was invited to testify before the Africa Subcommittee of the U.S. Congress in a hearing on Sudan's Civil War. For several years following 1996, he headed the political department of the democratic resistance movement, Sudan Alliance Forces (SAF), which in 2004 merged with the SPLM/A. In 2000, he represented the Sudanese opposition umbrella organization, National Democratic Alliance (NDA) in the peace talks in Kenya. Since 2005, Taisier Ali has been full-time Director of an independent non-governmental institution, the Peacebuilding Centre for the Horn of Africa (PCHA), based in Asmara, Eritrea that engages in capacity building training for grassroots organization from Eastern Sudan, Darfur and Somalia. He has published on the political economy of underdevelopment in Sudan and the processes of domination, resistance, conflict resolution, peacebuilding and crisis of the state in Africa.