



Sudan: Global Trade, Local Impact

Arms Transfers to all Sides in the Civil War in Sudan

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List of Abbreviations

- ANC** African National Congress, the ruling party in South Africa
- EDF** Eritrea Defence Forces, the armed forces of Eritrea
- EIJ** Eritrean Islamic Jihad, a Sudan-based rebel group operating in western Eritrea
- EU** European Union
- IGAD** Intergovernmental Authority for Development. Members include Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda. Previously known as the Intergovernmental Authority for Drought and Development (IGADD)
- LRA** Lord's Resistance Army, a Sudan-based rebel group operating in northern Uganda
- NDA** National Democratic Alliance, a coalition of political and military Sudanese opposition groups, with headquarters in Asmara, Eritrea
- NIF** National Islamic Front, the de facto ruling party in Sudan, now known as the National Congress
- NGO** Nongovernmental Organization
- OAU** Organization of African Unity, an intergovernmental African body with headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
- OLS** Operation Lifeline Sudan, a U.N.-coordinated cross-border emergency relief operation with Southern Sector headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya, and Northern Sector headquarters in Khartoum, Sudan
- PDF** Popular Defence Forces, paramilitary units organized by the government of Sudan
- POW** Prisoner of War
- SAF** Sudan Alliance Forces, an Eritrea-based opposition group operating in eastern Sudan, and a member of the NDA
- SCP** Sudan Communist Party, a member of the NDA
- SFDA** Sudan Federal Democratic Alliance, a member of the NDA
- SNP** Sudan National Party, a member of the NDA
- SPLM/A** Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army, the main armed opposition force in southern Sudan and the Nuba Mountains, and a member of the NDA
- SSIM/A** South Sudan Independence Movement/Army, a rebel faction that broke away from the SPLM/A in 1991, allied itself with the government of Sudan in 1996, and regrouped with other former rebel factions in 1997
- UDSF** United Democratic Salvation Front, a coalition of southern Sudanese rebel groups that aligned themselves with the government of Sudan
- UPDF** Uganda People's Defence Forces, the armed forces of Uganda
- WNBF** West Nile Bank Front, a Ugandan rebel group

I. Summary and Recommendations

More than one million people may have died, with millions more forcibly displaced, since today's ongoing civil war broke out in Sudan in 1983.¹ The fighting—at times pitting rival opposition factions against each other, as well as against the government—has caused enormous hardship to the civilian population, particularly in the south, where human rights violations by all sides in the fighting are chronic, and war-caused famines have become a recurring event. This conflict is spreading to other regions of the country and is linked to guerrilla wars in neighboring Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Uganda. A steady flow of arms into the Horn of Africa for the past half century has fueled the fighting and multiplied its lethal impact on the civilian population.

Human Rights Watch began its investigation of the arms trade feeding the Sudanese civil war in 1996, concentrating on types of armaments, sources of arms supply, channels of arms distribution, and the connection between arms flows and already identified human rights abusers, rather than the documentation and analysis of violations of international human rights and humanitarian law (the rules of war).²

This research documented a steadily intensifying series of conflicts and conflicts-within-conflicts generally ignored by the international media, but not by global arms traders: The evidence shows a pattern of significant arms transfers to long-established human rights abusers—the government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA)—that is serving to intensify the conflicts within and around Sudan and increasing their impact on civilians there. Ever larger civilian populations are at risk, often due directly to the types of weapons used (for example, antipersonnel landmines) or to the way in which they are used. The entire region remains awash in cold war-era arms, while the spread of combat in the 1990s has prompted further arms imports that are aggravating an already dangerous situation.

¹ This figure includes deaths from war-related injury, as well as from other factors such as hunger and disease. All casualty figures are estimates, as no reliable numbers are available. See Millard Burr, *A Working Document: Quantifying Genocide in the Southern Sudan 1983-1993* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Committee for Refugees, October 1993), p. 2.

² For an analysis of human rights abuses in Sudan by the government and by opposition forces, see Human Rights Watch, *World Report 1998* (New York: 1997), pp. 72-78; and Human Rights Watch/Africa, *Behind the Red Line: Political Repression in Sudan* (New York: May 1996). For specifically war-related abuses, see Human Rights Watch/Africa, *Civilian Devastation: Abuses by All Parties in the War in Southern Sudan* (New York: June 1994).

According to at least one report, Sudan, one of the world's poorest countries, experienced the biggest relative arms build-up in the world in 1995, a rise in arms purchases and military aid received that is estimated at 44 percent over the previous year.³ Neighboring Uganda ratcheted up its military budget from \$81 million in 1994 to \$131 million in 1996.⁴ The wars involving these states and the movements which they support have already taken an appalling civilian toll. During the first half of 1998, the regions of Bahr El Ghazal and Western Upper Nile, both in southern Sudan, were the scenes of so many attacks on civilians and civilian objects that by mid-July about 2.4 million southerners were at risk of famine, almost one-tenth of the entire Sudanese population.⁵ The continuation of this trend unchecked is likely to accelerate large-scale migrations and could also fuel a disastrous regional war, with all its predictable consequences on the civilian population.

Today, weapons continue to be transferred to the various armed forces involved in the conflict at an alarming rate. The flow of arms is also becoming more complex, involving Sudan as a hub for weapons distribution to armed groups operating in countries in the immediate region and beyond, as well as for transshipment to warring parties as far away as the Middle East and Eastern Europe, while Sudan's neighbors arm opposition groups trying to topple the Khartoum government.

Global Trade

The circle of countries and individual actors involved in this escalating violence stretches from the immediate region across Central and North Africa, the Middle East and the Persian Gulf to Eastern Europe and Asia, drawing in some of the world's major arms dealers—mainly China and former Soviet republics and other former Warsaw Pact states. This appears to be a largely profit-driven trade, rather than politically-motivated intervention. The largest of these arms merchants, China, also deals freely with Sudan's hostile neighbors, Eritrea and Ethiopia. The striking exceptions in this regard are Iran, Iraq, and Malaysia, whose involvement stems from political commitments to the present government in Khartoum.

The external actors most directly involved in arming the Government of Sudan have been China, former Soviet bloc states, South Africa, and Iran, while Iraq has been a key provider of

³ For details, see the Bonn International Centre for Conversion, cited in Kevin Liffey, "Decade of Disarmament Brings Slow Peace Dividend," *Reuter*, April 16, 1996. Holdings of major weapons in Sudan increased by one hundred percent from 1989 to 1996. B.I.C.C., *Conversion Survey 1998* (Oxford University Press: London, 1998), p. 298.

⁴ International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance: 1997-98* (London: Oxford University Press, October 1997), p. 231.

⁵ World Food Program, Press Release, New York, July 10, 1998.

technical assistance and military training, and Malaysia has provided crucial funds for arms purchases. Iran's support has included hundreds of advisors who provided political and security training; in particular they have overseen the organization and expansion of Sudan's main armed militias, the Popular Defence Forces (PDF). Iranian advisors have also supported armed Islamist groups from other countries which are based in Sudan. There is also evidence that Iran has helped finance some of Sudan's arms purchases. Iran's role as a direct arms supplier increased as the government faced escalating military challenges from the opposition in 1997. Another country that has supported the government of Sudan, at least until 1995, is France, which pursued a policy unique among western nations. Its support has included sharing satellite intelligence with Sudan on SPLA movements in 1994, as well as providing military training and technical assistance, and assisting the government of Sudan in negotiating access to neighboring francophone states to carry out attacks on the SPLA.

The arms flows to Sudan illustrate a pattern characteristic of the post-cold war international arms trade: armaments, and the ammunition that goes with them, are increasingly acquired in discrete units from a wide range of sources which do not necessarily have relationships with any of the other suppliers, rather than as comprehensive packages from a single political patron (or from a bloc of political allies). The government of Sudan has such patrons in Iran and Iraq—an odd couple under any circumstances—each of which is aiding Sudan's war effort above and beyond its immediate economic interests. However, neither Iran nor Iraq has the capacity to meet Sudan's arms needs by itself, so Khartoum continues to do a brisk business in the global arms bazaar. In the mid-1990s, the government of Sudan began to pump oil from long dormant wells in south-central Sudan, mainly for internal consumption. This enhanced the country's international credit and helped make it possible for the government, which is essentially mortgaging future oil revenues, to step up its arms purchases. The government of Sudan itself has been actively engaged in training, equipping, and in other ways supporting armed groups which are spreading violence throughout the immediate region and beyond, for example the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), which has operated in southern Sudan and northern Uganda.

For their part, the Sudanese opposition groups, operating under the umbrella of a coalition known as the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), have received political, military and logistical support from key neighboring states. Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Uganda appear firmly behind efforts to overthrow the current Sudanese government and install the opposition in its place in Khartoum. They have been engaged in arming and training Sudanese opposition forces, and the Sudanese government has charged that the armed forces of these states have been directly engaged in combat within Sudan's borders. The Human Rights Watch

investigation confirmed that Uganda has provided access and supplies to the SPLA operating in southern Sudan, while Ugandan forces have at times participated directly in combat within Sudan in joint operations with the SPLA targeted at both Sudanese government forces and Ugandan rebels. Ethiopia has provided access and supplies to the SPLA and the Sudan Alliance Forces (SAF) in western Ethiopia and has ferried supplies to the SPLA in northern Uganda. Eritrea has provided bases and training in western Eritrea for a wide range of anti-government groups, including but not limited to the SAF, the SPLA and the Beja Congress. Eritrea assisted the SPLA with tanks and tank trainers and with reconnaissance units in the major SPLA attack in southern Sudan of March-April 1997. The NDA has its headquarters in Eritrea.

Uganda, Ethiopia, and Eritrea all have large stores of cold war-era arms at their disposal left over from the U.S., Israel, the former Soviet Union, Eastern European states, North Korea, and other arms suppliers. Soviet aid to Ethiopia in 1977-90 alone totaled more than \$12 billion and included heavy armor, artillery, and aircraft, as well as vast quantities of light and medium arms. More recently, these three states have received military and political support from the United States, which also has imposed unilateral economic and military sanctions on Sudan. In 1997, the U.S. provided Uganda and Ethiopia with arms and military training for their participation in an African Rapid Deployment Force, as well as “nonlethal” military equipment, explicitly to assist them against attacks launched from armed opposition groups based in Sudan.

Local Impact

In recent years, the government of Sudan has continued to enhance its conventional arms capability through the acquisition of large quantities of light and medium arms and ammunition, medium tanks, and artillery and air power. Increasing use of the Sudanese government’s air power since 1996, including random attacks on non-military targets, has adversely affected civilians, injuring or killing some and displacing others. The documented use in combat of Mi-24 helicopter gunships, acquired in 1996-97, and the increased use of MiG fighter-bombers and Antonov-26 and other transport planes for bombing runs reflect this new direction in Sudan’s long-running civil war. These attacks have had considerably more impact on civilians than on combatants, and have contributed to the displacement of tens of thousands of civilians in eastern and northeastern Sudan, the sites of new fighting in 1997 and 1998.

The acquisition by the government of Sudan in 1997 of substantial numbers of a modified version of the classic Soviet T-54 tank—a Chinese-made model, known as the T-59—suggests

a possible further intensification of the conflict. If, in addition, the government of Sudan has managed to acquire SCUD missiles, as is alleged by a Sudanese diplomat who defected in 1997, the potential exists for a widening of the regional scope of the conflict, and possibly an intensification of the fighting itself.

Among the other weapons having a direct impact on civilians in the war are antipersonnel landmines. Human Rights Watch observed hundreds of landmines of many types—some whose origins traced back to the 1950s and 1960s, others of recent vintage—in Sudanese government military storage areas in southern Sudan captured in 1997 by opposition forces.⁶ Human Rights Watch also observed large numbers of landmines of the same types and nearly identical lot numbers in areas of neighboring Eritrea and Uganda, taken from rebel groups supported by the government of Sudan. While all sides of the conflicts within Sudan and in neighboring states have accused each other of deploying landmines, the main evidence Human Rights Watch saw of their use was by the government of Sudan. Human Rights Watch intends to monitor the government of Sudan's compliance with the new international treaty banning the production, trade, stockpiling and use of antipersonnel landmines, which the government signed in December 1997.

For its part, the SPLA has a substantial mechanized fleet of tanks and armored cars, some of which it claims to have captured from the government of Sudan in 1996 and 1997. Others were provided by Ethiopia in the 1980s or obtained from sources on the international arms market via Uganda in the 1990s. The SAF is also known to have acquired T-55 tanks—capturing them from the government of Sudan in April 1997—and is said by its own leaders to be using them in combat. The presence of such arms, as well as artillery, makes it likely that there will be further bouts of conventional warfare in and around major population centers, such as Juba, Wau, and Malakal in the south and Gedaref and Kassala in the northeast.

The conflict has already contributed to food shortages in Juba and other southern garrison towns, many of which have been under prolonged siege, while attacks by government-supported forces on civilians in Bahr El Ghazal over the past few years have been instrumental in causing the 1998 famine there, as was the two-month ban on all relief airdrops by Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS) to that region in February and March 1998. The government of Sudan has frequently halted deliveries to other SPLA-controlled rural areas

⁶ According to the United Nations, there are probably “between 500,000 and 2 million landmines in the ground in Sudan.” U.N. Department of Humanitarian Affairs, Mine Clearance and Policy Unit, “The Landmine Situation in Sudan: Assessment Situation, Mission Report,” August 1997, p. 10.

and, on occasion, bombed relief sites, killing and injuring destitute civilians. The disruption of emergency relief operations by pro-government forces fighting each other in Western Upper Nile in 1998—both factions armed heavily by the government—has threatened the civilian population there with starvation. The danger of famine will only worsen if the attacks on civilians, fueled by the arms race, continue.

Violations of Human Rights and the Call for an International Arms Embargo

Human Rights Watch holds that armed forces that commit serious violations of international human rights or humanitarian law (the laws of war), be they governmental or rebel groups, should not be further armed by members of the international community. When it concerns gross violations of an ongoing nature, an international embargo with which states must scrupulously comply should be imposed on all parties that commit such violations, if offenders are to be pressed to end their abusive conduct. The implementation of the terms of such an embargo represents one means through which the international community can avoid complicity in continuing abuses in Sudan.

Violations of human rights and the laws of war have been widespread, systematic, and prolonged throughout the civil war in Sudan. Government forces have committed gross abuses of international humanitarian law, including looting of civilian property and enslaving women and children during raids on villages; indiscriminate aerial bombardment by high-flying aircraft; the use of antipersonnel landmines; torture, “disappearance,” and the summary execution of captured SPLA combatants and civilians; and the repeated denial of access for humanitarian agencies to areas of assessed civilian need without regard to human deprivation. The government has also banned political parties and restricted expression, except in debate by members of the National Islamic Front (NIF), the de facto ruling party in Sudan, now known as the National Congress, and has committed other abuses arising from its declared intention to create an Arab Islamic state, including discrimination against Sudanese non-Arabs and non-Muslims.⁷

The SPLA, the most influential member of the NDA, has also committed gross abuses of human rights and the laws of war, including indiscriminate attacks on civilians; the forced recruitment of underage boys; looting and diversion of food; and torture, “disappearance,” and summary executions.⁸

⁷ See Human Rights Watch, *World Report 1998*, pp. 72-75.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 75-76.

From a moral perspective, it is unconscionable for states to continue to provide military support to forces that commit gross violations of human rights and the laws of war. Moreover, a continuous flow of weapons and other forms of military support encourages further abuses, as it provides the recipients with both military materiel with which to wage war, a sense that the international community condones their activities, and therefore a sense of impunity. For this reason, although curbing the flow of arms to Sudan alone is not likely to end serious violations of human rights immediately, measures aimed at stemming the flow ought to be considered as a way of sending a strong signal to all sides in the war that their abusive conduct will no longer be accepted by the international community.

The Council of the European Union (E.U.) instituted an embargo on the export of arms, ammunition, and military equipment to Sudan that came into effect on March 16, 1994.⁹ The implementation of this embargo, which covers “weapons designed to kill and their ammunition, weapon platforms, non-weapon platforms and ancillary equipment,” as well as “spare parts, repairs, maintenance and transfer of military technology,” is the responsibility of the E.U. member states, but effective monitoring mechanisms do not exist. Moreover, the European Court of Justice is not competent to rule on “Pillar Two” (foreign policy) issues, leaving remedies for violations of the embargo within the political ambit of the council. The United Nations Security Council, which has considered the possibility of imposing an arms embargo on Sudan, so far has failed to institute one, although it has imposed other sanctions on the government of Sudan.¹⁰ These sanctions were a response not to the grave human rights situation in Sudan or the serious violations of international humanitarian law that have occurred in the civil war, but to Sudan’s failure to extradite three men suspected of having been involved in the attempt on the life of the Egyptian president, Hosni Mubarak, in Addis Ababa on June 26, 1995.

In light of the continuing grave human rights situation in Sudan, Human Rights Watch calls on the international community to immediately institute an arms embargo against both the government of Sudan and anti-government insurgents united in the NDA in order to send a strong signal to all sides in the war that their abusive conduct will no longer be tolerated. The European Union’s arms embargo on Sudan appears by and large to have been effective; it now needs to be extended to the international community as such. An international embargo should remain in place until all sides have put a halt to serious violations of

⁹ “Council Decision of 15 March 1994 on the common position defined on the basis of Article J.2 of the Treaty on European Union” (94/165/CFSP), *Official Journal of the European Communities*, No. L 75/1 (March 17, 1994). Arms supplied under contracts signed prior to the entry-into-force of the embargo are not included in the embargo.

¹⁰ In 1996, the Security Council adopted Resolution 1054, calling on U.N. member states to institute travel restrictions on Sudanese government officials, and Resolution 1070, imposing a ban on flights by Sudanese Government-controlled aircraft.

international human rights and humanitarian law, and have brought to justice serious offenders.

Recommendations

In order to stem the flow of arms to all sides in the wars within Sudan and in the conflicts that involve Sudan-based rebel groups operating in neighboring countries, Human Rights Watch calls on the international community and individual states to implement the following set of recommendations:

- Impose an international arms embargo on the sale or supply of arms and ammunition, as well as military material and services, against all sides in the civil war in Sudan—principally the government of Sudan and the SPLA and other groups within the NDA, but also including the ethnically-based and other militias operating in Sudan with Sudanese government support and the rebel groups operating in neighboring countries with Sudanese government support. The embargo on any party to the conflict should continue until its responsible authorities have put an end to serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law, and have brought to justice serious offenders.

In all cases, two key conditions should obtain: First, an arms embargo should be applied equally to the principal sides. This means that neighboring states which have armed, trained and equipped Sudanese opposition forces must be put under binding obligation to implement the embargo fully and show evidence that they have done so. Secondly, the embargo should be enforced actively and systematically by the international community in order for it to be comprehensive and credible.

As long as there is no international arms embargo on parties to the war in Sudan, individual members of the international community should prohibit the transfer of weapons and military goods to any of the sides, and prohibit the licensing of private sales to these forces. Once they institute such a national embargo, they should announce the decision publicly.

- Strengthen and extend the E.U. arms embargo now nominally in effect for Sudan. Although the E.U. is theoretically a more cohesive political body than the U.N., it has a similar voluntary system of monitoring its arms embargoes, based upon information provided by its members. The E.U. should develop monitoring

mechanisms, investigate reported violations, and hold member states and their nationals accountable for such violations.

- Impose an Organization of African Unity (O.A.U.) moratorium on the sale of arms and ammunition to the warring parties in Sudan. In recent years, African states have become major sources for the direct supply and/or transshipment of arms to other countries and non-state military forces throughout the continent. The interrelationships among warring parties in the Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes region underline the need for an African initiative to bring peace and stability to the region before these conflicts escalate and spread further.
- Insist on strict adherence to the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty, which bans the manufacture, transfer, use, and stockpiling of antipersonnel landmines, and press the warring parties to desist from deploying antitank mines against civilian targets by such means as placing them on roads used by civilian traffic.
- Deploy U.N. or O.A.U. military observers at key border crossings, airstrips, and ports in the Horn of Africa, including, and especially, in Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Uganda, as well as in Kenya and Congo. Refusal of access or obstruction of the tasks of these military observers by any one of the governments in question should be reported publicly by the authority (U.N. or O.A.U.) charged with carrying out this mandate.
- Convene a regional conference on arms trafficking, security and human rights in the Horn of Africa and Great Lakes region under the auspices of either the O.A.U., the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD)—whose members include Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Somalia, Kenya, and Uganda—or an ad hoc group of states in the region.
- Establish a regional arms control agency under the O.A.U., building on the conflict resolution programs of both the O.A.U. and IGAD. This agency should be empowered to investigate members' compliance with the international arms embargo, the O.A.U. moratorium, and other arms control mechanisms, and prepared to report its findings to the U.N. Security Council, the O.A.U., and IGAD. This agency could emerge from the regional security conference.
- Create national mechanisms to support an international arms embargo, including the establishment of offices in states neighboring Sudan whose tasks would be to monitor, implement, and enforce the operation of the embargo on their own territory.
- Enact and implement domestic legislation enabling the prosecution of nationals who sell weapons, ammunition, military materiel (including dual-use equipment) or military services to the warring sides in Sudan or to forces operating elsewhere from bases in Sudan, even if such nationals operate on the territory of other states.

- Create a voluntary register of movements and acquisitions of small arms, ammunition, and military materiel and personnel to which all states in the Horn of Africa would submit full information about their purchases and knowledge of transactions on an annual basis.
- Provide resources for comprehensive demining and mine victim assistance programs in Sudan and in neighboring states where rebel groups have been laying landmines.
- Make public all arms transfers since 1983 to the government of Sudan and the SPLA, as well as other members of the NDA, including types and quantities of weapons, ammunition, military materiel (including dual-use equipment), and military services.
- Strictly enforce existing export controls on weapons (especially light weapons and small arms) and military and security services.
- Create a voluntary U.N. register of light weapons and small arms that would complement the existing U.N. conventional arms register.
- Adopt a code of conduct on arms transfers by international or regional entities like the U.N., the O.A.U, IGAD and others.
- Support new initiatives aimed at curbing the flow of arms into conflict-ridden zones, such as the new E.U. program to combat the illicit traffic in conventional arms.

To States Neighboring Sudan, in Addition to the Above Measures:

- Comply with the sanctions and embargoes imposed on Sudan, and extend their scope to Sudanese armed opposition groups operating within or outside Sudan.
- Refrain from issuing false end-user certificates for weapons destined in reality for the government of Sudan, militias, or rebel forces, and prevent Sudanese nationals acting on behalf of the government of Sudan, militias, or rebel forces from procuring, importing, or transshipping weapons in the name of your government.

To the Government of Sudan:

- Respect international humanitarian law and human rights law, particularly the prohibitions on targeting civilians and civilian objects, indiscriminate attacks, looting, and unnecessary destruction of civilian property.
- Cease to arm and support allied rebel groups that have committed abuses of international human rights and humanitarian law, such as the Lord's Resistance Army.
- Ratify the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty as soon as possible and respect its provisions immediately, particularly the prohibitions on any use or transfer of antipersonnel mines. Begin the destruction of stockpiled mines. Take steps to establish a

systematic nationwide mine clearance and mine awareness program, including a national survey.

- Sign and accede to the 1993 Chemical Weapons Convention, and accede to the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention, the 1980 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, and the 1977 Protocols I and II Additional to the 1949 Geneva Conventions.

To Rebel Groups Belonging to the National Democratic Alliance:

- Respect international humanitarian law and human rights law, particularly the prohibitions on targeting civilians and civilian objects, indiscriminate attacks, looting, and unnecessary destruction of civilian property.
- Respect the provisions of the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty, particularly the prohibition on any use of antipersonnel mines. Facilitate efforts aimed at mine clearance and mine awareness in areas which groups affiliated with the NDA control.

Human Rights Watch calls on the international community and individual member states to implement the above measures. It also calls on states named in this report to investigate the allegations made here, and prosecute persons found to have violated these states' own national laws or international laws binding on these states.

A Note on Methodology

The findings of this report are based on an investigation by the Arms division of Human Rights Watch conducted between mid-1996 and the first half of 1998, including visits to Eritrea (September 1996 and February-March 1997), Ethiopia (September 1996 and February-March 1997), Uganda (July 1997), eastern Sudan (March 1997), southern Sudan (July 1997), and Khartoum (November 1997). In addition, a researcher with the Africa division of Human Rights Watch visited southern Sudan and the Nuba mountains in October 1997 and again in May 1998, and she and a second researcher visited northern Uganda in April-May 1998.

During this extended investigation, Human Rights Watch interviewed numerous and varied sources, including: officials of the governments of Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Uganda; officials and commanders of the NDA, SPLA and SAF; Sudanese Army defectors; Sudanese prisoners of war (held by the SPLA and the SAF); child soldiers who had escaped from the Lord's Resistance Army; diplomats; and representatives of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in the region. This investigation has also relied on extensive document research. To the best of its ability, Human Rights Watch cross-checked information obtained from these various sources against information provided by other sources to assure its accuracy. Allegations and denials voiced by government or rebel officials have been reported here as

such. Several important eyewitnesses whose information was used for this report were recent defectors from the Sudanese armed forces or other government agencies with specific knowledge of certain events by which their claims could be cross-checked. To protect these eyewitnesses, we have, where necessary, withheld reference to the specific circumstances under which they obtained their information.

Human Rights Watch was permitted to see and photograph arms said to have belonged to the government of Sudan but held by rebel forces, and was able to see, but prohibited from photographing, weapons used by rebel forces. Human Rights Watch also collected arms debris in areas where fighting had occurred. During a visit to Khartoum in November 1997, Human Rights Watch was told it could visit garrison towns to view arms the government of Sudan claimed to have captured from rebel forces, but repeated subsequent requests to the Sudanese embassy in Washington, D.C., had failed to meet with a positive response as of the middle of August 1998.¹¹

In March 1998, Human Rights Watch wrote to the governments of Belarus, Bulgaria, Chile, China, Croatia, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Iraq, Iran, Romania, the Russian Federation, South Africa, Uganda, Ukraine, and the United Arab Emirates, requesting a response to specific information linking them to the provision of arms and/or other forms of military support—by these governments or by their nationals—to either or both sides in the Sudanese civil war. By the middle of August 1998, responses were received only from the governments of Chile, Ethiopia (both in writing), and Bulgaria (by telephone), while the government of South Africa wrote to say that it had received our correspondence and was looking into the matters raised in it. The responses from the governments of Chile, Ethiopia, and Bulgaria have been included in this report.

¹¹ After government officials in Khartoum made their oral commitment to a visit by Human Rights Watch in November 1997, Human Rights Watch wrote to the Sudanese ambassador in Washington, Dr. Mahdi Ibrahim Mohamed, on December 16, reiterating the request. On January 23, 1998, Dr. Mohamed informed the executive director of Human Rights Watch's Arms Division, Joost Hiltermann, by telephone that his government welcomed a second visit by Human Rights Watch but that it would have to be postponed as an expected and imminent rebel offensive in the south had raised concerns in Khartoum about the mission's safety. Human Rights Watch wrote again to Ambassador Mohamed on April 2, April 29, and June 11, 1998, pointing out that the situation in the south had stabilized, and that journalists, for example, had been permitted to visit the garrison town of Juba. No reply to these letters was received.

II. The Civil War

Sudan's size—it is the largest country in Africa, with borders that touch Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Congo, Central African Republic, Chad, and Libya—coupled with its strategic location straddling the Nile River and abutting the Red Sea, made it the target of revolving-door superpower intervention and massive arms transfers throughout the cold war. As unstable civilian governments alternated with governments installed via military coups after independence in 1956, the country slid deeper into economic malaise and social crisis, accentuated by lengthy outbreaks of civil war. The U.S. alone provided successive Khartoum governments with close to \$1 billion dollars in arms in the late 1970s and 1980s, usually in the guise of fighting Soviet influence, after pouring hundreds of millions of dollars in arms into Ethiopia from 1952 through 1977. For its part, the Soviet Union provided arms to Sudan in the early 1970s and then supplied Ethiopia with over \$12 billion in arms between 1977 and 1991. As the Horn of Africa lost significance to the departing superpowers, Sudan was allowed to wither in arms-bloated poverty, but many of the cold war-era arms are still present throughout the region and are in use by forces on all sides of the conflicts, as direct observation of the arsenals of the warring parties by Human Rights Watch confirmed.

Sudan is one of the most ethnically diverse countries in Africa, with a population estimated in 1992 at close to 27 million from nineteen major linguistic groups and nearly 600 sub-groups. According to a 1956 census—the last for which accurate figures are available—those who identify themselves as Arabs make up the largest group (40 percent), followed by the southern Dinkas (12 percent), the Bejas of northeastern Sudan (7 percent), and West African immigrants (6 percent). Some 60 percent of the total population identified themselves as Muslims, while Christians made up another 4 percent (a figure likely to have risen since the 1950s due to extensive conversions in the south), and traditional religions the rest.¹²

The current crisis radiates out in concentric circles from the civil war in southern Sudan, going on for thirty-two of the past forty-three years (1955-72, and 1983-present). Like most of the former European colonies along the Sahara's southern rim—the Sahel—Sudan comprises an Arabic-speaking Muslim north and an African south inhabited by ethnically-diverse Christians and practitioners of traditional religions, as well as numerous other politically and economically marginalized groups in the central, eastern and western parts of Sudan which have not been completely Arabized or Islamicized. Since independence, rival northern parties have vied to control the country and to dominate the south. Large-scale injections of

¹² Human Rights Watch/Africa, *Behind the Red Line*, p. 2.

weapons magnified these regional, ethnic and political divisions. Rebel forces in the south were armed through Ethiopia by Israel in the 1960s and by the Soviet Union and its allies in the 1980s. This was matched by larger arms flows to successive northern governments, by the Soviets in the 1960s and then by the U.S. in the late 1970s and the 1980s, after the two superpowers switched sides in the region.

The arms race in Sudan accelerated after Gen. Ja'far al-Nimeiri seized power in 1969—touting a program of pan-Arab nationalism and expressing pro-Soviet sympathies. At that time, Sudan went onto the U.S. enemies list, while Washington stepped up its arms aid to Ethiopia, ruled then by the strongly pro-western Emperor Haile Selassie I, whose U.S.-trained and equipped armed forces had earlier participated in United Nations “peacekeeping” missions in Korea and the Congo. After an abortive Communist Party coup in Sudan in 1971, Nimeiri did a political about-face and sought aid from the U.S., but Washington at first remained hostile to his overtures as a “punishment” for having transferred to Egyptian custody, where they were subsequently released, members of a Palestinian guerrilla group—Black September—and others convicted of assassinating the U.S. ambassador to Sudan in 1973. In 1977, however, three years after a military coup in neighboring Ethiopia that led to that country’s realignment with the Soviet Union (and after the confirmation of large oil reserves in southern Sudan), the U.S. reversed its policy and embarked upon a massive military build-up in Sudan, which totaled over \$81 million in the first year alone.¹³

After this regional power realignment, Sudan became the pivotal state in a U.S.-supported alliance aimed at containing Soviet influence that included Somalia and Kenya, as well as military facilities which the U.S. leased from Britain on the Indian Ocean atoll of Diego Garcia. By the close of the 1980s, Sudan was among the largest overall recipients of U.S. military aid in the world and by far the largest in sub-Saharan Africa. During this period, U.S. advisers, engineers, and military trainers descended on Khartoum. The U.S. embassy was fortified and reconstructed to include a rooftop helicopter pad for rapid evacuation, while dollars were also dispensed in generous and generally unmonitored economic aid grants. The result, however, was a spate of poorly-conceived and mismanaged “development” projects that did little to relieve the country’s chronic poverty and spiraling debt.¹⁴ At the same time, strains within the country intensified, as the corrupt military government, bloated with new U.S. arms, became convinced it had the power to impose its will on the oil-rich south.

¹³ 13 U.S. military sales to Sudan in 1977, the year the arms trade began, totaled \$81,591,000. Between 1977 and 1989, the year it ceased to trade arms with Sudan following the coup d’etat that brought Gen. Omar el-Bashir to power, the U.S. delivered \$326,049,000 in military equipment to the government of Sudan. U.S. Department of Defense, Defense Security Assistance Agency, “Fiscal Year Series—As of September 30, 1997” (Washington, D.C., 1998), p. 344.

¹⁴ Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, *Sudan: A Country Study* (Washington, DC, 1991).

The latest round of civil war started in 1983 after the Nimeiri government gutted a regional autonomy agreement that had ended the first round at a peace conference convened in Addis Ababa in 1972. In 1977 Nimeiri brought into government northern forces opposed to the Addis Ababa agreement, including the Islamists. In 1978 he proposed to refine oil discovered in the south in a northern city. In June 1983 he dissolved the institutions of southern self-government, the Regional Assembly and the High Executive Council, and divided the southern region into three, each with administrators appointed by Khartoum.⁴⁵

Shortly before Gen. Nimeiri imposed Islamic *shari'a* law throughout the country in 1983, southerners resumed their armed uprising and formed the SPLA. The rebel group chose as leader a defecting Sudanese military officer, Dr. John Garang, and acquired the patronage of the Soviet-backed Ethiopian government of Col. Mengistu Haile Mariam. The SPLA also was provided with Soviet-made arms in the early 1980s by Libya. The war took the form of a hit-and-run guerrilla conflict, with rebels operating at will throughout large swathes of the countryside and the government holding most towns and cities. This changed in 1987 when stepped-up Ethiopian aid in the form of artillery and tanks gave the SPLA the capacity to fight positional battles and to capture and hold population centers.

When famine ravaged the Horn of Africa in 1984, U.S. food aid poured into Sudan, both for Eritrean and Ethiopian refugees and for hungry Sudanese, but it failed to rescue Nimeiri's flagging popularity in the face of chronic corruption and economic disaster. After large-scale civilian protests in 1985, Nimeiri was overthrown by dissident military officers, who immediately pledged to hold national elections the following year. However, the civilian government elected in 1986, under the leadership of Prime Minister Sadiq al-Mahdi of the Umma Party, did little to change the country's basic policies. During the next three years of indecisive, faction-ridden civilian rule, direct U.S. aid declined but did not end. Meanwhile, the country's continuing slide into chaos—with the economy in perpetual crisis, the political class riven by fratricidal competition, and the civil war with the south dragging on—set the stage for a coup by Islamist forces, days before a peace agreement was slated to be signed between the government and southern rebels. On June 30, 1989 a military junta led by Lt. Gen. Omar Hassan el-Bashir seized power. In the ensuing months the National Islamic Front (NIF) emerged as the power behind the coup, further polarizing the country along ethnic and religious lines, just as the cold war wound down. Support from Iran, which rushed to strengthen relations with its first sub-Saharan African ally, enabled the NIF-controlled government to make massive arms purchases from China and former Soviet republics, which

⁴⁵ Abel Alier, *Southern Sudan: Too Many Agreements Dishonoured* (Ithaca, NY: Ithaca Press, 1990), pp. 246-60.

it used to step up the war in the south in an effort to end the protracted civil war with a military victory.

Under NIF leadership, the government of Sudan banned political parties, trade unions, and other “nonreligious institutions.”¹⁶ It imposed tight controls on the press and strict dress and behavior codes on women. More than 78,000 people were purged from the army, police and civil administration, thoroughly reshaping the state apparatus, while dissidents were routinely detained in “ghost house” torture centers. Conscription of child soldiers by both sides increased, and forms of slavery, first reported in the late 1980s, appeared to spread.¹⁷ Under a 1992 policy termed the “Comprehensive Call,” the NIF merged religious indoctrination and conversion with education, social services, economic development, and political mobilization. The NIF also established “Peace Camps” in the Nuba Mountains under the paramilitary Popular Defense Forces as part of its strategy to promote Arabization and Islamization.¹⁸

Following a strategy going as far back as 1983, the new NIF-dominated government stepped up support for ethnic militias and breakaway factions of the SPLA in an effort to further divide the southern opposition against itself.¹⁹ A major split within the SPLA occurred in 1991 after three military commanders attempted a coup but failed to unseat Garang as chairman of the movement. The group that broke away then, led by Riek Machar, came to be known in 1995 as the Southern Sudan Independence Movement/Army (SSIM/A). A second force, headed by William Nyuon, a Nuer who defected from the SPLA in August 1992 with many Nuer followers, joined Machar’s mostly Nuer forces, as did the mostly Dinka forces of former SPLA commander Kerubino Kwanyin Bol after his escape from long-term arbitrary detention by the SPLA in late 1992. As a result of fighting among rival armed factions of the SPLA, government forces managed to recapture a number of garrison towns and to regain the use of some roads and communications infrastructure in 1992. Estimates of the civilian

¹⁶ A February 1997 report to the U.N. Human Rights Commission by the U.N. special rapporteur on Sudan, Gáspár Bíró, warned that “all Sudanese citizens living in areas controlled by the Government of Sudan are potential victims of human rights violations and abuses.” Commission on Human Rights, *Situation of Human Rights in the Sudan*, E/CN.4/1997/58 (U.N. Economic and Social Council, February 3, 1997), introduction.

¹⁷ See Human Rights Watch/Africa, *Behind the Red Line*. For a detailed analysis of the use of child soldiers, see Human Rights Watch/Africa and Human Rights Watch/Children’s Rights Project, *Children of Sudan: Slaves, Street Children and Child Soldiers* (New York: Human Rights Watch, September 1995).

¹⁸ See Human Rights Watch/Africa, *Behind the Red Line*, pp. 192-220.

¹⁹ Sudan’s minister of defense under Prime Minister Sadiq al-Mahdi gave full approval to the arming of ethnic militias for counter-insurgency purposes in 1987, starting with the Baggara Arabs of southern Darfur. Human Rights Watch/Africa, *Behind the Red Line*, p. 274.

casualties of the intercommunal conflict in this period run to the tens of thousands.²⁰ Thousands were internally displaced by incessant cattle raiding and asset stripping by all warring parties that forced whole communities to migrate in search of food; some became refugees in Uganda, Kenya, and Ethiopia.

A series of cease-fires brought some respite in 1995, but negotiations to end the fighting failed to get off the ground. In April 1996, the government of Sudan entered into a political charter with the SSIM/A, signed by commanders Riek Machar and Kerubino Kwanyin Bol and other minor commanders.²¹ On April 21, 1997, this charter was institutionalized in the Sudan Peace Agreement by representatives of the government of Sudan and a group of breakaway SPLA factions and pro-government militias. On April 28, the leaders of the six southern factions that had signed the peace agreement then signed an agreement in which they united all their forces under the name of the United Democratic Salvation Front (UDSF) headed by Dr. Riek Machar. Coalition members included the SSIM/A led by Machar, breakaway SPLA factions led by Kerubino Kwanyin Bol and Arok Thon Arok (who died in a 1998 plane crash), the South Sudan Independents Group, the Equatoria Defence Force, and the Union of Sudanese African Parties.²² At the same time, the government of Sudan entered into a separate peace agreement with the SPLM/Nuba Mountains, itself a coalition of two Nuba mountains factions, led by Muhammad Harun Kafi.²³ In August 1997 Machar was rewarded with a cabinet-level post in the government of Sudan with the title of President of the Coordinating Council of the Southern States and Assistant of the President of the Republic.²⁴ Kerubino was reinstated in the Sudan armed forces in August 1997 with the rank of major general, and made Deputy Chairman of the Coordinating Council of the Southern States and Minister of Local Government and Public Security in Southern Sudan in January 1998. In late January 1998, he defected from the government of Sudan, realigned his

²⁰ Human Rights Watch estimate. The OLS estimated that excess mortality for 1993 was 220,000 in southern Sudan when factional fighting produced extreme displacement, disease, and hunger. OLS press release, "UNICEF Preparing for Renewed Emergency in Southern Sudan," Nairobi, January 31, 1994.

²¹ See John Prendergast, *The Outcry for Peace in the Sudan* (Washington, DC: Center for the Strategic Initiatives of Women, October 1996), pp. 1-29, and Human Rights Watch/Africa, *Behind the Red Line*, pp. 293-97.

²² BBC Monitoring Service: Middle East: Republic of Sudan Radio, "Former Rebel Leader Machar Calls on Garang to Join Southern Factions," Omdurman, Sudan, April 29, 1997. See also, Republic of Sudan, *The Sudan Peace Agreement* (Khartoum, April 21, 1997). The SPLM-United (a Shilluk faction of the SSIM headed by Dr. Lam Akol) entered into the Peace Agreement on September 21, 1997 via an amendment to the agreement that was negotiated by Dr. Akol (who became the government of Sudan's minister of transport shortly thereafter); signed by Cmdr. Akwoch Mayong Jago; Maj-Gen Bushra Uthman Yusuf, secretary of military affairs, Upper Nile military area; and Cmdr. Awad Jago Musa al-Mek Kur, member and animal resources minister; and witnessed by His Majesty Reth Kwongo Dak Padiet, the reth (king) of the Shilluk.

²³ BBC Monitoring Service: Middle East, Republic of Sudan Radio, "Peace Accord with Rebel Factions Signed in Khartoum," Omdurman (Sudan), April 21, 1997.

²⁴ While Dr. Machar's business cards indicate he is the president of the council, he is often referred to as the council's chairman.

forces with the SPLA, and with the SPLA launched surprise attacks on government forces in three towns in Bahr El Ghazal. These attacks failed. As a result of the fighting between 60,000 and 150,000 civilians fled the towns into the rural areas, where 250,000 were already predicted to be at risk of famine. This, and the immediate two-month ban on relief flights imposed on Bahr El Ghazal by the government substantially contributed to the 1998 famine in Bahr El Ghazal.

During the early 1990s, the government of Sudan also opened its doors to rebel groups from countries in the region and throughout Africa and the Middle East. These included two opposition groups from neighboring Eritrea—a new organization known as Eritrean Islamic Jihad (EIJ) and factions of the Eritrean Liberation Front, which had split into rival groups in the 1980s during Eritrea’s thirty-year war for independence from Ethiopia—as well as armed groups from Ethiopia and Uganda. By 1993, the Eritrean groups, operating from bases in northeastern Sudan and drawing on the large impoverished Eritrean refugee population there, were carrying out sporadic raids and ambushes within Eritrea.²⁵ Informal talks between Eritrea and Sudan carried out through a regional forum, the Intergovernmental Authority for Drought and Development (IGADD, later renamed the Intergovernmental Authority for Development, IGAD), failed to reach an agreement to end the cross-border raids. Finally, after an attack in December 1994 in which Eritrean forces claimed to have killed a half dozen guerrillas, including at least two from other countries, the Eritrean government broke diplomatic relations with Sudan and publicly called for the overthrow of the NIF-controlled government.²⁶

Unrelenting domestic repression limited the prospect of serious internal challenge from within Sudan, but armed rebellion by groups with bases outside the country increased steadily after 1995 when the Eritrean government opened its doors to the Sudanese opposition. Eritrea hosted two opposition conferences by an emerging political and military coalition, the NDA, and gave them the Sudanese embassy in Asmara for their headquarters. An unsuccessful assassination attempt on Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Addis Ababa on June 26, 1995, allegedly carried out by an Egyptian hit-squad armed and trained in Sudan, nudged the Ethiopians into a tacit alliance with Eritrea behind the NDA.

²⁵ The first Eritrean war refugees arrived in Sudan in 1967. Disputes between the governments of the newly independent Eritrea and Sudan and disagreements between the government of Eritrea and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) over the shape and funding of resettlement programs have delayed repatriation of nearly 250,000 Eritreans (mostly Muslims from Eritrea’s western lowlands) since Eritrea’s war for independence from Ethiopia ended in 1991.

²⁶ See *Eritrea Profile* (Washington, D.C.), December 1994-January 1995. *Eritrea Profile* is a publication of the Eritrean Ministry of Information and Culture.

The failure of the government of Sudan to honor an Ethiopian extradition request for three of the assailants, who fled to Khartoum on a Sudan Airlines flight, also led the U.N. Security Council to impose limited sanctions on the government of Sudan.²⁷ Meetings later that year among Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki, Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, and Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni consolidated regional support for the NDA.²⁸

The SPLA provided the core of the new coalition's military capacity, with SPLA leader John Garang appointed the NDA's military commander. The alliance's largest political constituents, apart from the SPLA, were the traditional northern parties—the Umma Party and the Democratic Unionist Party, which had dominated Sudanese politics since independence—but neither one initially fielded military forces. The newly formed SAF—a grouping of primarily Arab but also non-Arab Sudanese dissidents, military and civilian, led by former military officers—developed a military force that operated from bases in Eritrea and Ethiopia. The Beja Congress, whose social base was among peoples living along the Eritrea-Sudan border and whose origins as a social movement date to the 1950s, also received Eritrean support and fielded a small military force that operated in northeastern Sudan. Among the smaller NDA constituents with little or no military capacity were the Sudan Communist Party (SCP), the Sudan National Party (SNP), and the Sudan Federal Democratic Alliance (SFDA). The SCP, the oldest communist party in Africa, enjoyed support in trade unions and on university campuses up through the late 1980s, when government repression and post-cold war defections sharply reduced its membership. The SNP, originally a legal political party which fielded candidates for office when Sudan held multiparty elections, drew its membership from the Nuba Mountains. The SFDA drew support from the Darfur region of western Sudan.

In April 1996 and again in September, Asmara-based officials of the SAF claimed that their units had attacked Sudanese government positions near Kassala in northeastern Sudan, killing fifteen government troops in each of the two raids.²⁹ Almost two years later, after a string of cross-border raids and ambushes, SAF leaders claimed to have killed ninety-one government troops in an attack with artillery and infantry at al-Dud, an island garrison

²⁷ See, U.N. Security Council, "Report of the Secretary-General Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1044 (1996)," S/1996/179, March 11, 1996; U.N. Security Council Resolution 1054 (1996), S/RES/1054, April 26, 1996; and U.N. Security Council Resolution 1070 (1996), S/RES/1070, August 16, 1996.

²⁸ Human Rights Watch interviews with Eritrean and Ethiopian officials and SAF leaders, Asmara and Addis Ababa, September-October 1996 and March 1997.

²⁹ "Sudanese Rebels Say They Kill 15 Government Troops," Reuters, April 22, 1996, and "Radio Reports Rebel Attack on Sudanese Government Post," *Voice of the Broad Masses of Eritrea*, reported by BBC Monitoring Service, September 9, 1996.

located between tributaries of the Atbara river on the Sudan-Ethiopia border.³⁰ In each case, the government of Sudan charged that Eritrean troops led the attacks. Whether or not Eritrean forces were involved in the fighting, the launch of a northern armed opposition to the government of Sudan, first from bases in Eritrea and later from Ethiopia, that was allied with the southern opposition—already operating within Sudan with logistical support through Ethiopia and Uganda and developing bases in the northeast with Eritrean support—posed an additional threat to the central government. This further characterized the conflict as a multi-front war—with dangerous regional implications: the growing involvement of neighboring states could lead to an expansion of the fighting to their territories as well as Sudan. At the same time, the creation of the SAF by (primarily) northern Arab Muslims and the opening of an eastern front have added to the weight provided by the SPLA's Nuba wing against the SPLA settling the conflict on southern separatist grounds.³¹

The SAF's military operations in the northeast were often coordinated with the New Sudan Brigade (which was under the command of the SPLA) and the Beja Congress. Each of these forces was trained at bases in western Eritrea.³² For its part, the main body of the SPLA was in southern Sudan and the Nuba mountains, where it controlled substantial areas of territory, initially captured in the 1980s and expanded after 1995. The SPLA supplied these forces primarily through Ethiopia and Uganda, while it maintained its principal external political offices in Nairobi, Kenya.

In January 1997, the SAF and the New Sudan Brigade (the SPLA's branch in eastern Sudan) launched attacks in the east from positions within Ethiopia, and the SAF and the New Sudan Brigade carried out joint operations in the northeast along the Red Sea coast from bases in Eritrea. In each instance, the opposition forces threatened key economic targets—the Roseires Dam near Damazin in the Blue Nile region and the highway linking Port Sudan with Khartoum in the northeast. In March 1997, the SPLA launched a major attack on government positions along the Uganda-Sudan border, taking Yei, moving up into Bahr El Ghazal, and capturing a string of garrison towns in that region for the first time. The campaign on the

³⁰ Sudanese government officials, while not confirming these claims, responded to this attack by calling for a major civilian mobilization in Gedaref state. See "Sudan seeks mobilisation after rebel attack on army," Reuters dispatch from Khartoum, February 8, 1998.

³¹ The Nuba wing of the SPLA has since 1986 contributed thousands of combatants to the war in the south and since 1989 operated separate fronts in the Nuba mountains.

³² Human Rights Watch interviews with NDA leaders and members, Tessenei and Asmara, September 1996.

West Nile bank was dubbed Operation Thunderbolt by the SPLA; that on the East Nile bank was called Operation Jungle Storm.³³

Sudanese government officials dispute rebel claims of credit for these military advances, charging that the campaigns were led and waged by the armed forces of Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Uganda on behalf of opposition forces, who were later given control of captured territory.³⁴ Nevertheless, reports of the victories encouraged other NDA parties—chief among them, the Umma Party—to mobilize military units to do battle with government forces. For its part, the government responded to these new armed incursions with a call for a national mobilization and a renewed quest for arms from its global suppliers, while charging its neighbors with invading its territory.

³³ Human Rights Watch interview with Thomas Cirillo, a former Sudanese military officer who has commanded the SPLA's 4th Division since defecting in 1992, Yei (Sudan), July 11, 1997. The SPLA took several thousand Sudanese soldiers prisoner near Yei.

³⁴ Human Rights Watch interview with Dr. Mutrif Siddiq Ali, deputy director-general of the External Intelligence Agency, Khartoum, November 19, 1997.

III. Armed Forces and Armaments

In 1997 Sudan's armed forces were estimated by the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies to number 79,700 troops, all but 4,700 of whom were in the army (including 20,000 conscripts), and some 85,000 reserves, as well as 15,000 active irregulars in the paramilitary PDF militia (under the Sudanese Army).³⁵ The army had almost doubled in size from the start of the decade, while the Iranian-trained PDF militia further expanded the government's available manpower.³⁶ With the addition of at least 20,000 more troops under the command of former SPLA leaders who broke with the mainstream rebel movement in the early 1990s, together with members of various tribal militias operating in southern Sudan in alliance with the government, this gave the government of Sudan by far the largest fighting force in the region. Several thousand re-defected with Kerubino Kwanyin Bol to the SPLA in January 1998. In 1997, the International Institute for Strategic Studies estimated the SPLA to number 20-30,000 troops, the SAF less than 2,000, and the other armed opposition groups based in the north less than 3,000.³⁷

Weapons Stocks

During a July 1997 visit to SPLA-held areas, Human Rights Watch observed large stocks of arms, ordnance and landmines that were stored in former government military bases in Yei, Lanya, Morobo, and Kaya, as well as along the roads at small bases between these towns. This weaponry was in such a condition (dirt- and dust-covered, as if in place for considerable lengths of time, much of it degraded and of no use on the battlefield) as to give credibility to SPLA claims that it had been captured from the government of Sudan in battles three months earlier, when government forces were routed in surprise attacks.³⁸ SPLA cadre were removing the ordnance that was of current military use and transporting it to their own storehouses nearer the front lines. SPLA officials attempted to block Human Rights Watch from photographing or observing at close range arms and ordnance marked for delivery to Uganda, which they said belonged to the SPLA and had not been captured from Sudanese

³⁵ International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance: 1997-98* (London: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 259-60.

³⁶ *World Weapons Review*, No. 136 (May 1997), p. 12.

³⁷ International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance: 1997-98*, p. 260.

³⁸ Journalist James Hooper, who later published an article on Sudan in *Jane's Intelligence Weekly*, told Human Rights Watch that he entered Yei on March 21, 1997, twelve days after the SPLA captured the town, and saw large stocks of arms and ammunition taken from the government and not yet catalogued by the SPLA. Interview, London, May 24, 1997.

military forces, while leaving them at liberty to photograph without supervision caches of weapons they claimed they had captured from government forces.³⁹

The hodgepodge of ordnance observed in southern Sudan and the surrounding region is representative of the duration of the conflict and the complex history of Sudan's political patronage—going to both the government of Sudan and the rebels—and that of its neighbors since the 1950s. An assessment of Sudan's current arsenal shows that its armed forces are saddled with a diverse and often incompatible assortment of aging NATO and Warsaw Pact weapons systems, with different caliber munitions. However, this also typifies the post-cold war black/gray arms market, where older and cheaper weapons are sold to the highest bidder.

The “weathering” of some of the equipment observed in southern Sudan and its western origin indicated that it had been in the region for a long period. Large quantities of arms and munitions originated in China and were of more recent vintage. However, a significant portion of newer ordnance originated in Iran, as indicated by Farsi markings stenciled onto it. This included large quantities of G-3 assault rifles, landmines, and mortar ammunition.⁴⁰ Among the weapons and ammunition that had allegedly been captured from Sudanese government forces and which Human Rights Watch observed directly and was able to photograph were:

Artillery and Tanks

- 73mm SPG-9 recoilless guns (China or former Soviet Union)
- 105mm Type 75 recoilless guns (China)
- 122mm M-30/Type 54-1 howitzers (China or former Soviet Union)
- 122mm M-30 howitzers (former Soviet Union)
- 122mm Type 54-1 howitzers (China or former Soviet Union)
- 122mm D-30 howitzers (China or former Soviet Union or possibly former Yugoslavia)
- 122mm BM-21 multiple rocket launchers mounted on trucks (former Soviet Union)
- T-54/59 tanks (China or former Soviet Union)
- T-55 tanks (former Soviet Union)

³⁹ Several of the crates, of which Human Rights Watch has a photograph, were marked in a framed rectangle: “MOD Uganda J4951208WMH,” and underneath the rectangle “DAR ES SALAAM ITEM(B) NOS.250.” “MOD” presumably stands for “Ministry of Defense.” At least one of the crates contained rocket-propelled grenades (photograph available).

⁴⁰ The G-3 is a German Heckler and Koch assault rifle that is manufactured under license in a number of countries, including Iran.

T-59 tanks (China)
Alvis Saladin armored car with 76mm L5-A1 gun (U.K.)

Antipersonnel Mines

PMD-6 Box Mines (Russia—blast mine)
No. 4 Pedal Mines (Iran—green plastic with Farsi writing, shoe mines)
PMN (Russia, China or Iraq—black rubber top, round, with brown bakelite case)
M-14 (U.S.—plastic case, Vietnam era)
Type 72 (China and South Africa—size of a hockey puck)
Type 69 (China—bounding mine)
TS-50 (Italy—small, round, plastic with rubber pressure cap)
POMZ-2M (Russia, China, former East Germany, North Korea—fragmentation stake mines)
VS-T (Italy—illumination stake mines)
Maus (Italy—very old)

Antitank Mines

YM-III (Iran, copied from Chinese Type 72 mine)
PRB M-3 (Belgium, transferred from Saudi Arabia)
TM-57 (China, former Soviet Union, Iraq, or Bulgaria)
TM-46 (former Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Poland, Egypt, or Israel)
Type-72 A (China)
TMA-3 (Yugoslavia)
TMD-B (Russia)
M-15 (U.S.)

Rifles, Machine Guns, Light Support Weapons & Anti-Aircraft Guns

7.62mm AK-47/Type 56 assault rifles (China, Bulgaria, or former Soviet Union)
7.62mm AKM assault rifles (developed in the former Soviet Union and produced in many countries)
7.62mm Heckler and Koch G-3 assault rifles (developed in Germany and produced under license in many countries—these were from Iran)
7.62mm AND-65 assault rifles (Hungary)
7.62mm PKM/type 80 machine guns (China or former Soviet Union)
7.62mm MG-3 machine guns (developed in Germany and produced under license in several countries)
12.7mm Type W-85 machine guns (China)

12.7mm Type W-77 machine guns (China)
12.7mm Type 54 machine guns (China)
37mm Type 55-1 automatic anti-aircraft gun (China)
37mm M-1939 automatic anti-aircraft gun (former Soviet Union)
40mm Armscor 176L-6 shot grenade launcher (South Africa)

Ammunition

7.62mm ammunition for Type 56 (AK-47/AKM) assault rifles (China)
7.62mm ammunition for Type 53 light machine gun (China)
12.7mm Type 54 machine gun ammunition (China)
12.7mm AP-I B32 machine gun ammunition (former Soviet Union)
30mm grenades for AGS-17 grenade launcher (former Soviet Union)
2-inch mortar shells SMK MK-2 (Israel—smoke shells)
37mm HE-T high-explosive shells for Type 55 anti-aircraft gun (China)
40mm M893 1A1 red phosphorus smoke grenade (South Africa)
57mm OR-281 for S-60, SZ-60/Type 59 anti-aircraft gun (former Soviet Union)
60mm M 73 HE mortar shells (former Yugoslavia)
60mm HE mortar shells (Iran—many)
60mm HE mortar shells (China)
73mm HE/HEAT projectiles for SPG-9 recoilless gun (former Soviet Union)
76mm HEAT L45-A1 and HEAT L40-A1 ammunition of uncertain origin
82mm HEAT projectiles Type 65 (China)
82mm HEAT projectiles BK-881M (former Soviet Union)
82mm HE fragmentation projectiles O-881A (former Soviet Union)
84mm HEAT rounds (Sweden)
85mm rounds for Type 56 field gun (China)
100mm HE OF-412 projectiles (Bulgaria)
100mm HE OF-412 projectiles (former Soviet Union)
106mm HEP-T rounds (U.S., obsolete)
106mm HEAT cartridges M-344 (probably U.S., possibly Iran)
107mm HE rockets Type 63 (China)
120mm Type 55 HE mortar shells (China)
120mm mortar shells (Iran)
122mm HEAT projectiles (former Soviet Union)
122mm HE projectiles (China)
122mm D-30 HE projectiles (China)
PG-7M HEAT projectiles (Iran)

MILAN wire-guided anti-tank rockets (France)

blank training ammo (U.K.)

In the Yei area alone, Human Rights Watch saw eight damaged Chinese 122mm towed howitzers, one Russian 122mm howitzer, five Chinese-made T-59 tanks and one Chinese 37mm anti-aircraft gun, which appeared to have been abandoned when Sudanese government forces fled the town hours after being attacked by the SPLA in March 1997. On the SPLA side, Human Rights Watch observed two new 4-barrel 12.7mm anti-aircraft guns of unknown origin.

The Use of Landmines

The most common antitank mines observed by Human Rights Watch among captured government stocks were Iranian YM-III and Belgian PRB M-3 plastic mines, and Russian TM-57 and TM-46 metal mines. The most common antipersonnel mines were No. 4 pedal mines (found in especially large quantities in Kaya, on the border with Uganda, with Farsi writing stenciled on the sides, indicating they were produced by—or at least supplied by—Iran) and Chinese Type-69 bounding mines.⁴¹

A U.N. mine-assessment team surveying the landmine problem in Sudan in 1997 found landmines from Italy, Iran, Belgium, Egypt, Russia, the U.S., China, the former Czechoslovakia, and Israel. Antitank mines found by the team included the M-15 (U.S.), TM-46 (USSR), Type 69 (China), PRB M-3 A1 (Belgium), TM-57 (USSR), Type 72 (China), PRB M-409 (Belgium), TM-72 (USSR), and VS-3.6 (Italy). Antipersonnel mines found by the U.N. team included, M-14 (U.S.), No.4 (Israel), PMD-6M (USSR), POMZ-2 (USSR), Type 58 (China), VS-MK2 (Italy), M-16 (US), OZM-3 (USSR), PMD-7 (USSR), POMZ-2M (USSR), Type 69 (China), Valmara 69 (Italy), Maus (Italy), OZM-4 (USSR), PMN (USSR), T/79 (Egypt), Type 72 (China), and VS-T Illumination (Italy).⁴²

Sudanese government officials gave various, sometimes contradictory, accounts of the use by government forces of antipersonnel landmines. Maj. Gen. Muhammad Sanousi Ahmed, deputy chief of staff for military intelligence in the Sudanese armed forces, told Human Rights Watch that government forces have laid and recorded landmines in front of permanent defensive sites in an effort to “slow down the enemy,” but he claimed that the

⁴¹ A pedal mine looks much like a shoe box with a hinged cover. It is activated when pressure on the “lid” crushes the fuze, which ignites the explosive. A bounding mine (also known as a “Bouncing Betty”) operates with two separate explosive charges when disturbed. The first charge propels the mine into the air and then, at a predetermined height (usually three to four feet), the second detonation will scatter metal fragments in all directions.

⁴² U.N. Department of Humanitarian Affairs, Mine Clearance and Policy Unit, “The Landmine Situation in Sudan: Assessment Situation, Mission Report” (August 1997), pp. 10-11.

mine fields were marked and fenced.⁴³ Another government official claimed that the government does not use antipersonnel mines at all in the conflict, and that antitank mines are deployed only in a limited, defensive manner, using maps.⁴⁴

Dr. Riek Machar, a former rebel field commander holding a cabinet-level position with the government of Sudan and commander-in-chief of the South Sudan Defence Force (the armed wing of the United Democratic Salvation Front), told Human Rights Watch that it was common government practice to use antipersonnel mines around garrison towns, laying them at night and removing them in the morning. He also claimed that rebel forces placed landmines at watering points, as well as on routes they knew government forces used.⁴⁵ A Sudanese government official interviewed later claimed that the government of Sudan had not laid antipersonnel mines in fifteen years and that any such mines discovered in the ground would be the responsibility of either a previous Khartoum government or the rebels.⁴⁶ Other sources claimed that government forces based in Malakal, a garrison town in Upper Nile, laid landmines around their positions each night, clearing them in the morning. When it rained, the mines were often left in place, resulting in high levels of civilian casualties.⁴⁷

Sudanese army defectors claimed that the government stepped up the use of landmines after 1994, using large quantities of mostly plastic mines to block infiltration by opposition forces in contested areas. One defector said he saw tens of thousands of such mines at army garrisons in southern Sudan, shipped in large black boxes. The antipersonnel mines he said he saw were the size of a lemon, green in color, and weighing perhaps half a kilo. They were used to defend the perimeter of military positions, often temporary ones, and were not removed when troops changed location, after being buried five centimeters under the

⁴³ Human Rights Watch interview with Maj. Gen. Muhammad Sanousi Ahmed, Khartoum, November 20, 1997. Be that as it may, landmines are known to shift position in the rainy season, as they are sucked up in the mud, and it is during this season that increased casualties are reported.

⁴⁴ Human Rights Watch interview with Ambassador Ghaffar A. Hassan, director of the Department of Technical Cooperation at the Ministry of External Relations, Khartoum, November 20, 1997.

⁴⁵ Human Rights Watch interview with former SPLA/SSIM commander Riek Machar, since 1997 president of the Coordinating Council of the Southern States, Khartoum, November 22, 1997. He also said that when his forces were fighting in the south prior to his alliance with the government in 1997, they used to improvise booby traps of varying strengths by tying a string to the pin of a grenade and either burying the grenade or hanging it from a tree, by attaching a mortar shell to the grenade with a string to create a massive explosion, or by stacking an antitank mine under an antipersonnel mine to increase the explosive impact when the former was detonated. For additional information on the government's use of antipersonnel landmines, see Stephen Buckley and Karl Vick, "A Peaceful People Caught Up in a War with No End," *Washington Post*, June 8, 1998.

⁴⁶ Human Rights Watch interview with Ambassador Awad Muhammad Hassan, director of the Department of Environment, Disarmament, War and the New World Order at the Ministry of External Relations, Khartoum, November 19, 1997.

⁴⁷ Human Rights Watch interview, November 1997.

ground with no warning anywhere in evidence, the defector said.⁴⁸ One Sudanese government official acknowledged the mixed use of antipersonnel and antitank mines for what he termed “permanent defenses.”⁴⁹ A U.N. assessment team determined in 1997 that “evidence in the South shows that the GOS [government of Sudan] routinely uses large numbers of AT [antitank] and AP [antipersonnel] landmines both to defend positions and to prohibit movement.”⁵⁰ Human Rights Watch interviewed victims of both antipersonnel and antitank landmines in Kenya, southern Sudan and the Nuba Mountains in October 1997.

On a visit to Gulu in northeastern Uganda, Human Rights Watch was shown stores of landmines and other ordnance which Ugandan military officials claimed were taken from Lord’s Resistance Army units operating in northern Uganda and which former LRA abductees claimed had been supplied to them by the government of Sudan. The landmines were stored at a UPDF barracks. Human Rights Watch also interviewed escapees from the LRA—formerly kidnaped children who had been forced by the LRA to participate in execution-style murders of other children and in other LRA operations. (See chapter 5.) Two LRA escapees interviewed separately and alone by Human Rights Watch claimed that rebel units were given training, equipment, uniforms and arms by the government of Sudan at bases inside Sudan and that among these arms were landmines for use inside northern Uganda.⁵¹

Both the antitank mines and the antipersonnel mines seen and photographed by Human Rights Watch in Gulu matched landmines (in type and markings) that the team observed and photographed in Eritrea on earlier missions. These mines included some that were in the hands of Eritrean officials who claimed they had dug them up on rural roads and one landmine that Human Rights Watch directly observed when it was discovered buried in a well-traveled roadway on which the researchers were then driving. They also matched captured stocks of government landmines Human Rights Watch observed and photographed in southern Sudan. These findings tended to confirm claims that the government of Sudan supported rebel groups operating in both Eritrea and Uganda.

Officials of the Sudanese government interviewed by Human Rights Watch gave differing versions of the government’s current landmines policy. Two high-ranking officials interviewed in November 1997, who claimed that landmines have only been used for

⁴⁸ Human Rights Watch interview with a former Sudanese military officer who was based in Torit in southern Sudan until he defected on February 15, 1997, Tessenei (Eritrea), March 10, 1997.

⁴⁹ Human Rights Watch interview with Maj. Gen. Muhammad Sanousi Ahmed, deputy chief of staff for military intelligence, Sudan People’s Armed Forces, Khartoum, November 20, 1997.

⁵⁰ U.N. Department of Humanitarian Affairs, “The Landmine Situation in Sudan,” p. 8.

⁵¹ Human Rights Watch interviews with two teenagers who had been forced to join the LRA, Gulu (Uganda), July 15, 1997.

defensive purposes, said that the government was planning to sign the Mine Ban Treaty banning production, trade, stockpiling, and use of antipersonnel landmines, and was planning to seek international help to destroy current stocks.⁵² The government signed the treaty in December 1997. Sudanese officials have estimated that there are upwards of three million antipersonnel mines in the country, mainly in the east and south, extrapolating from surveys carried out in Libya and Egypt and drawing on reports from their own military. One official claimed that as many as 50,000 landmine victims were on the waiting list for medical rehabilitation at the end of 1997.⁵³ A representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross suggested a 4-5 percent rate of landmine injury among patients treated at the ICRC hospital for Sudan in Kenya.⁵⁴ One government official insisted that the government of Sudan was prepared to sign an agreement establishing “safe corridors” for demining teams and that the government had no reservations on the monitoring of the Mine Ban Treaty.⁵⁵ However, another official said that demining could not begin until peace was established.⁵⁶

A freelance U.S. journalist traveling with the SPLA in southern Sudan in March 1997 saw direct evidence that the SPLA planted landmines in territories under its control, when he got out of a truck near Aswa, an abandoned camp for displaced people. He was warned by SPLA officials not to step off the road as the surrounding area was mined. Though these officials claimed that local residents knew the locations of the mines, the journalist saw no markings.⁵⁷ Dr. Riek Machar acknowledged to Human Rights Watch that his rebel forces had commonly used antipersonnel and antitank mines, especially during sieges of towns and during the withdrawal from engagements when they wanted to delay any pursuing force. The antipersonnel mines included what he termed “one-leg” (i.e., stake) mines, “shoe” mines, booby traps, and “form-2” mines made by China and former Warsaw Pact nations. The

⁵² Human Rights Watch interviews with Maj. Gen. Muhammad Sanousi Ahmed, deputy chief of staff for military intelligence, Sudanese People’s Armed Forces, Khartoum, November 20, 1997, and former SPLA/SSIM commander Riek Machar, Khartoum, November 22, 1997.

⁵³ Human Rights Watch interview with Dr. Hussein Elobeid, general commissioner, Humanitarian Aid Commission at the Ministry of Social Planning, Khartoum, November 20, 1997.

⁵⁴ Human Rights Watch interview, Khartoum, November 19, 1997. This figure excludes members of the armed forces of the government of Sudan (who are not treated at the ICRC hospital in Kenya).

⁵⁵ Human Rights Watch interview with Ambassador Ghaffar A. Hassan, director of the Department of Technical Cooperation at the Ministry of External Relations, Khartoum, November 20, 1997.

⁵⁶ Human Rights Watch interview with Dr. Hussein Elobeid, general commissioner, Humanitarian Aid Commission at the Ministry of Social Planning, Khartoum, November 20, 1997. The use of landmines directly affects current and future development and economic activity for much of the population of southern Sudan, with the mining of roads, railways, and canals disrupting transportation. This is one of the reasons why international aid agencies ship most of their relief food by air and barges. According to the U.N., 50 percent of the funds for relief operations is spent on air transportation. U.N. Department of Humanitarian Affairs, “The Landmine Situation in Sudan,” pp. 12-13.

⁵⁷ Human Rights Watch interview with James Hooper, London, May 24, 1997.

antitank mines included U.S.-made M-15s and Russian-made TM-57s. All of these types were still in use in 1997, he said.⁵⁸ The Executive Committee of the SAF pledged, in a statement on January 2, 1998, to comply with the Mine Ban Treaty.⁵⁹

New Arms Acquisitions

New conventional arms reaching the government of Sudan since 1996 include helicopter gunships, medium tanks, artillery—some of it with enhanced guidance systems—and large quantities of light arms, ammunition, and landmines. The reported introduction of SCUD missiles, if true, has a potential for fueling a regional arms race, and therefore a broadening of the conflict.⁶⁰ The government of Sudan also makes use of large numbers of foreign military advisers and technicians, especially from Iran and Iraq, who play an important role in the execution of military operations by Sudan's regular armed forces as well as by the many irregular forces based there but operating in other countries.⁶¹

In addition to this, Sudan has become a transshipment point for arms going to rebel groups operating in the immediate region as well as to armed forces as far away as Eastern Europe, where Slovene authorities broke up an arms smuggling ring at the Maribor airport in 1993 after seizing twelve crates containing automatic rifles, mortars, rocket-launchers, landmines, and ammunition that had arrived from Khartoum and was destined for Bosnian Muslim fighters.⁶² In June 1997, during a visit to Bujumbura, Burundi, Human Rights Watch discovered that Aeroflot flights were delivering arms, ammunition, and armored vehicles to Burundi at least twice a week, arriving from Ostend, Belgium, via Khartoum.⁶³

One aspect of the civil war of devastating impact on the civilian population has been the growth in the Sudanese government's use of air power. A government official acknowledged

⁵⁸ Human Rights Watch interview with Dr. Riek Machar, president of the Coordinating Council of the Southern States, Khartoum, November 22, 1997.

⁵⁹ Sudan Alliance Forces, "Resolutions of SAF Executive Committee," January 2, 1998.

⁶⁰ Former Malaysia-based Sudanese diplomat Abdelaziz Ahmed Khattab charged in November 1997 that China had sold sixty SCUD missiles to Sudan at the end of 1996 or early 1997, "just before Ramadan." Human Rights Watch interview, The Hague, November 15, 1997. In an earlier public statement, the former diplomat said that the deal had been financed in part by a Malaysian government loan. "Statement by the Administrative Attaché, Embassy of Sudan, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: To the People of the Sudan and World Public Opinion," signed by Abdelaziz Ahmed Abdelaziz Khattab, the Netherlands, September 29, 1997. In the same statement, he also said that the NIF's aim in acquiring the SCUDs was to be able to strike Asmara, "the regime's stated justification being that Eritrea is harboring Sudanese opposition groups."

⁶¹ Human Rights Watch interviews with defecting Sudanese military officers in Tessenei (Eritrea), and with diplomatic sources, Asmara, Addis Ababa and Nairobi, September 1996 and March 1997.

⁶² "Slovene Gun-runners," *Jane's Foreign Report*, August 5, 1993.

⁶³ Human Rights Watch observations and interviews, Bujumbura, June 1997. See also, Human Rights Watch Arms Project, *Stoking the Fires: Military Assistance and Arms Trafficking in Burundi* (New York, 1997), p. 54.

to Human Rights Watch that the government has transport aircraft from both the U.S. (C-130s) and Russia (Antonovs), that it has since 1989 acquired fighter bombers from both China and Russia, and that it has Russian-model helicopter gunships, acquired from various unnamed sources since 1996.⁶⁴ Antonovs have frequently been used as bombers and not just as cargo planes. For example, an Antonov reportedly bombed civilian targets in Achana, eighteen miles east of Wau, in February 1998, killing and wounding a number of civilians.⁶⁵ On March 5, 1998, a Sudanese Air Force plane dropped thirteen bombs on the hospital in Yei, of which five hit the hospital directly, destroying the operating theater and a bomb shelter on the hospital grounds. Fifteen persons were killed and another forty wounded. The one-hundred-bed hospital was run by the international NGO Norwegian People's Aid. Two other hospitals in the SPLA-held towns of Labone and Chukudum (Eastern Equatoria) were attacked in February 1998.⁶⁶ A Sudanese government official claimed in November 1997 that the air force only targeted "the military camps of foreigners—Eritrean and Ugandan bases inside Sudan."⁶⁷

Relief agencies based in Nairobi with operations in southern Sudan say that the introduction of the Mi-24 helicopter gunships has had an additional significant impact on civilians in the south. One attack by helicopter gunships was directly observed by relief workers and occurred in the town of Kotobi at 9:35 a.m. on August 23, 1996. According to the U.N., "the attack destroyed the village and resulted in six deaths and 41 wounded."⁶⁸ SAF sources claimed their forces shot down a helicopter gunship with anti-aircraft fire near Hamesh Koreb, along the Eritrea border, in January 1997. Sudanese government sources acknowledged the loss of the gunship, but claimed it was shot down by Eritrean forces using a SAM-7 ground-to-air missile.⁶⁹ A SAF source claimed this attack helicopter was one of four provided to the government of Sudan in 1996 by one of the former Soviet republics, which were airlifted to Khartoum and reassembled by Russian experts.⁷⁰ Diplomatic sources have

⁶⁴ Human Rights Watch interview with Maj. Gen. Muhammad Sanousi Ahmed, deputy chief of staff for military intelligence, Sudan People's Armed Forces, Khartoum, November 20, 1997. *African Business* reported in February 1998 that Sudan has several dozen F-7s, ten MiG-21s, nine F-5s (U.S.), nine JSs (MiG-17) (China), and nine J6s (MiG-23) (China). Quoted in Emmy Allio, "Battle Set for Juba," *New Vision* (Kampala), February 12, 1998.

⁶⁵ "What Is Really Happening in the Town of Yei," Africa News Service (Nairobi), May 4, 1998.

⁶⁶ Africa News Service, *Complex Emergency Situation Report*, May 12, 1998.

⁶⁷ Human Rights Watch interview with Maj. Gen. Muhammad Sanousi Ahmed, deputy chief of staff for military intelligence, Sudan People's Armed Forces, Khartoum, November 20, 1997.

⁶⁸ U.N. Department of Humanitarian Affairs, "1997 United Nations Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for the Sudan, January-December 1997," February 18, 1997.

⁶⁹ Human Rights Watch interview with Dr. Mutrif Siddiq Ali, deputy director-general of Sudan's External Intelligence Agency, Khartoum, November 19, 1997.

⁷⁰ Human Rights Watch interview with SAF commander Esam Mirghani, Asmara, March 2, 1997.

identified Ukraine, Belarus, and Romania as possible suppliers of the gunships. (See chapter 4.)

Sudan has also used cluster bombs, according to relief workers in Nairobi, who said that field representatives witnessed the aftermath of the attacks in Chukudum in 1996.⁷¹ During a visit to southern Sudan in October 1997, Human Rights Watch interviewed a prison official at the SPLA's camp for detained government combatants (whom the SPLA terms "prisoners of war," POWs) at Yei who described how an Antonov, flying high, had dropped "about a hundred bomblets in one bomb that floated to the ground" on October 10, 1997. Some of the bomblets fell into one large room in the camp, killing three Sudanese prisoners.⁷² Human Rights Watch saw and photographed the cluster munitions, which appeared to be of Chilean design. (See chapter 4.) These weapons are highly inaccurate when dropped from high altitudes—as has been the practice in the civil war in Sudan—as they scatter from larger canisters upon release over a wide area while still airborne. Those which fail to explode upon impact then function much like antipersonnel landmines, putting civilians at risk from unexploded ordnance.

The government of Sudan also has used a variety of long-range arms of a type whose impact in a war of shifting military positions and mobile guerrilla operations is often felt most directly by resident civilian populations. Among them were 120mm mortars manufactured in China, Russia, and Iran; Russian- and Iranian-made and modified 122mm artillery, known as D-30s (with Russian experts teaching a conversion course for the new versions, according to one former NCO trained at the special center for artillery in Atbara, Sudan, in August 1993);⁷³ Chinese-made 130mm howitzers; and 12-, 30-, and 40-barrel 122mm multiple rocket launchers, often generically termed "BMs" by field sources, and made in Iran, China, North Korea, the former Yugoslavia and former Soviet republics, including Russia and Ukraine.⁷⁴

One SAF field commander claimed that the government was introducing new arms onto the battlefield in northeastern Sudan, citing SPG-9s, a 73mm recoilless gun first produced in the former Soviet Union but probably copied by China, and T-59 tanks, which are Chinese copies of Russian T-54s. He also claimed that the government of Sudan was laying large quantities

⁷¹ Human Rights Watch interview with international relief agency representatives, Nairobi, September 5, 1996.

⁷² Human Rights Watch interview, Yei (Sudan), October 22, 1997.

⁷³ Human Rights Watch interview with a former military officer who defected in February 1997, Tessenei (Eritrea), March 10, 1997.

⁷⁴ Human Rights Watch interviews with a former noncommissioned officer based in Juba in 1994 and Damazin in 1995-97, and two former military officers, western Ethiopia, March 29, 1997; and with other defectors, Tessenei (Eritrea), September 1996 and March 1997. "BM" stands for BM-21, the truck-mounted version of the multiple-rocket launcher.

of antitank mines in this area. The rebel commander, a former Sudanese brigadier, said he was based in Karora, Sudan, and was responsible for SAF forces in territory captured in March and April of 1997, stretching from the Eritrean border north along the Red Sea coast to Marafit and inland to Togan, outside Kassala. This source also said that most of the equipment the SAF captured from Eritrean Islamic Jihad in the Togan area of northeastern Sudan in April 1997 bore Farsi writing and was Iranian-made, from boots to light weapons.⁷⁵

Allegations of Chemical Weapons Production and Storage

Some NDA leaders have charged that Sudan has stored chemical weapons for Iraq at the Yarmouk Military Manufacturing Complex, located in Sheggera, twelve kilometers south of Khartoum. Sudanese opposition leaders, supported by officials in Eritrea and Ethiopia and by diplomatic sources in the region, have also charged that the government of Sudan has been working to develop a chemical weapons capacity. However, government officials have strenuously denied the charges.⁷⁶

In a written statement given to Human Rights Watch in February 1997, the NDA claimed that the government of Sudan established a special committee in early 1995 to investigate the possibility of manufacturing chemical weapons.⁷⁷ The secretary general of the NDA, Mubarak al-Mahdi, told Human Rights Watch that two Iraqi army colonels were responsible for the operation, an engineer and a security officer, with twelve Sudanese chemical engineers working for them on the project. He charged that Bulgarian experts trained Sudanese participants and remained in Sudan at least through 1996 to work directly with the trainees.⁷⁸

Meanwhile, a Sudanese diplomat who defected in the summer of 1997 told Human Rights Watch that he was present during discussions on chemical weapons at the Sudanese embassy in Kuala Lumpur at the end of 1996 that were led by Sudan's deputy minister of external relations, Dr. Mustafa Osman Ismail. According to the defector, Dr. Ismail declared in a meeting with the ambassador, the deputy chief of mission, and himself that the

⁷⁵ Human Rights Watch interview with SAF field commander Esam Mirghani, Asmara, June 28, 1997.

⁷⁶ Human Rights Watch interview with Maj. Gen. Muhammad Sanousi Ahmed, Khartoum, November 20 1996. See also "Sudan Government Uses Chemical Weapons in the Country's Civil War," a report issued by the opposition National Democratic Alliance on November 30, 1997.

⁷⁷ Human Rights Watch interview with Gen. Fathi Ahmed Ali, the former head of the Sudan armed forces under the Sadiq al-Mahdi government, Asmara, September 10, 1996. The NDA document referred to has the title, "The NIF Regime is Producing Chemical Weapons" (in Arabic), and is dated June 1996.

⁷⁸ Human Rights Watch interview with Mubarak al-Mahdi, Asmara, March 8, 1997.

government of Sudan was planning to take stronger action in conflict areas rich in minerals, including the Nuba mountains, and that he was going to Iran to shop for chemical weapons.⁷⁹ When Human Rights Watch asked Dr. Ismail about these charges, he declined a direct answer, but referred instead to “rumors in the newspapers” to the effect that Sudan was buying chemical weapons abroad. He then added: “Anybody who wants to come and check on whether we have chemical weapons can do so, including a United Nations technical mission. But they would have to make a clear declaration at the end that there is nothing there.”⁸⁰

Sudan has so far declined to sign the 1993 Chemical Weapons Convention or to accede to the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention banning these weapons, though most government officials insisted that this was only a “procedural” problem. However, one high-ranking official in the Ministry of External Relations claimed that Sudan was holding back out of concern that Israel had not signed or acceded to these conventions.⁸¹ Meanwhile, the government of Sudan maintains a special unit on chemical warfare with an office in the Amarat section of Khartoum. The senior military officer there insisted that the government of Sudan has neither acquired nor used chemical weapons, but told Human Rights Watch that new army recruits were trained in the use of protective clothing and overhead cover, as well as instructed about the effects of specific weapons.⁸²

⁷⁹ Human Rights Watch interview with Abdelaziz Ahmed Khattab, The Hague, November 15, 1997.

⁸⁰ Human Rights Watch interview with Dr. Mustafa Osman Ismail, Khartoum, November 20, 1997. In February 1998, Dr. Ismail became Sudan’s minister of external relations.

⁸¹ Human Rights Watch interview with Amb. Ghaffar A. Hassan, director of the Department of Technical Cooperation at the Ministry of External Relations, Khartoum, November 20, 1997.

⁸² Human Rights Watch interview with Lt. Col. Abd-al-Rahman, head of the governmental Administration of Chemical Warfare, Khartoum, November 22, 1997.

IV. Arms Transfers to the Government of Sudan

A number of states have supplied arms, military equipment, or military training to the government of Sudan, or have failed to prevent their nationals from providing arms or services to Sudan. Very few of these transfers have been publicly documented (for example, via submissions to the U.N. register on conventional arms). Below we list some of the transfers that have surfaced; they are by no means exhaustive, but merely indicative of the scope of the trade. Human Rights Watch has written to a number of governments to inquire about particular transfers or training arrangements. The replies received are referred to below.

China

The People's Republic of China, which has sold arms to successive Sudanese governments since the early 1980s, became one of the country's principal arms suppliers in 1994 and remained so into 1998, largely because China had what Sudan wanted and attached no conditions, other than monetary ones and oil concessions, to their sale. Chinese weapons are relatively cheap, and much of what Sudan has been purchasing is fairly old stock. In perhaps one of the most significant transactions, China is said to have sold the government of Sudan SCUD missiles at the end of 1996 in a deal underwritten by a \$200 million Malaysian government loan against future oil extraction, according to a high-level Sudanese defector, who claimed the deal, which he said he witnessed, was arranged by Sudan's state minister for external relations, Dr. Mustafa Osman Ismail.⁸³ SCUD missiles are notoriously inaccurate medium-range rockets that have been used against civilian population centers in past conflicts, such as the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq War and the 1991 Gulf War.

⁸³ Human Rights Watch interview with Abdelaziz Ahmed Khattab, The Hague, November 15, 1997. Khattab also claimed, in a written statement, that the Malaysian national oil company was used as a cover to ship arms to Sudan: "Arms deals agreed upon have been shipped by sea in the name of the Malaysian National Petroleum Company and that of the Chinese National Petroleum Company, under the guise of petroleum exploration equipment according to an agreement concluded between the government in Khartoum and these companies in Kuala Lumpur under which they provide weaponry and military equipment in exchange for being given concessions for oil explorations." "Statement by the Administrative Attaché, Embassy of Sudan, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: To the People of the Sudan and World Public Opinion," signed by Abdelaziz Ahmed Abdelaziz Khattab, the Netherlands, September 29, 1997. Human Rights Watch has been unable to independently confirm this allegation. The Canadian oil company Arakis Energy Corporation is known to have been involved with a number of partners in an oil-exploration and development scheme in Sudan, the Sudan Petroleum Project, since November 1996. According to news reports, two of Arakis's partners in the project, China National Petroleum Corp. and Petronas, the Malaysian state oil company, have covered start-up costs, giving credit to Arakis for its spending from 1993 until the formation of the consortium in November 1996. In July 1998, Arakis's attempt to raise enough funds for its share in the development appeared to be faltering. Jeffrey Jones, "Cash crunch may force sale of Canada's Arakis Energy," Reuters, July 7, 1998. See also, "Arakis Announces 1997 Results," Company Press Release, Business Wire, Calgary (Canada), April 1, 1998.

The government of Sudan began to increase its purchases of new weapons from China under the Nimeiri government, according to ex-Sudanese military officers based in Eritrea who were in the government of deposed president Sadiq al-Mahdi at the time these transactions took place.⁸⁴ But these and other purchases have risen in the 1990s due to Sudan's enhanced capacity to pay for new arms as a result of financial support from Iran and Malaysia and enhanced international credit based upon efforts to exploit the country's oil reserves. Weapons deliveries since 1995 include ammunition, tanks, helicopters, and fighter aircraft. According to at least one published report, in late 1995 China supplied the government of Sudan with fifty Z-6 helicopters, a hundred 82mm and 120mm mortars, and other equipment.⁸⁵ Sudan reportedly also bought six Chinese Chengdu F-7s (MiG-21s) financed by Iran.⁸⁶ In 1997, the government of Sudan also was reported to have a new type of Chinese-made, light-weight antitank weapon in its arsenal—probably a Chinese copy of the Russian SPG-9—mounted on two wheels that could be pulled by hand by soldiers.⁸⁷ One Sudanese army defector, formerly with an air defense unit, claimed he witnessed Chinese experts assembling Chinese-supplied jet fighters at the Wadi Saydna base north of Omdurman in 1993.⁸⁸ China also became a major supplier of antipersonnel and antitank mines to Sudan after 1980, according to a high-ranking government official, who claimed, however, that Sudan has not received any new landmines since 1993.⁸⁹

While China's motivation for this trade appears to be primarily economic, it has provided easy financing for some of these purchases, including one soft loan payable in 2005, according to a high-ranking Eritrean military official who said he pointedly criticized these arms transfers in discussions with Chinese officials, who in turn defended their right to make the sales.⁹⁰ Human Rights Watch wrote to the government of China in March 1998 to solicit its comments on some of the above allegations, as well as the discovery of large amounts of Chinese weapons, especially landmines, in captured Sudanese army stocks (see chapter 3), and as of mid-August 1998 had not yet received a reply.

⁸⁴ Human Rights Watch interviews with Gen. Fathi Ahmed Ali and other officers, Asmara, September 10, 1996.

⁸⁵ *Indian Ocean Newsletter*, December 23, 1995.

⁸⁶ *International Security Digest* (London), January 1996.

⁸⁷ Human Rights Watch interview with a Sudanese prisoner in SPLA custody, a noncommissioned officer who said he was captured by the SPLA on March 22, 1997, western Ethiopia, March 29, 1997.

⁸⁸ Human Rights Watch interview with a former Sudanese military officer, western Ethiopia, March 29, 1997.

⁸⁹ Human Rights Watch interview with Maj. Gen. Muhammad Sanousi Ahmed, deputy chief of staff for military intelligence, Sudan People's Armed Forces, Khartoum, November 20, 1997.

⁹⁰ Human Rights Watch interview with Gen. Sebat Ephrem, chief of staff of the Eritrean Defense Forces, Asmara, September 10, 1996.

Iran

Iran has given the government of Sudan a wide range of military assistance, from the provision of arms and financing to purchase arms to internal security training. This support has also included: financing the expansion of the harbor at Port Sudan; selling oil to Sudan at concessionary rates; providing spare parts for aging U.S. C-130 transport planes and other western equipment acquired (in both cases) under previous governments; and furnishing its forces with both small arms and ammunition.⁹¹ In addition, Iran has financed non-Sudanese armed Islamist groups based in Sudan, according to a defecting former Sudanese army officer.⁹²

Iran's military support comes in part from its own growing arms industry, as the country has become a significant arms producer in recent years, exporting its equipment to the Middle East and Africa, among other expanding markets. Major product lines include missiles, military vehicles, communications, marine equipment, chemical products, and aviation. Each line is organized as a separate industry under the Defence Industries Organization, run by the Ministry of Defence. Among its new products are rockets for RPG-7s and SPG-9 antitank weapons. Iran also makes 122mm rockets for Russian BM-21 multiple rocket launchers, large-caliber ammunition for tanks, artillery and mortars, and a wide range of small arms and ammunition.⁹³

A high-ranking Sudanese government official confirmed that Iran had supplied Sudan with G-3 rifles, but he claimed they were of such poor quality that the government was shifting to Kalashnikov assault rifles. He also told Human Rights Watch that the government had purchased medium-range artillery from Iran.⁹⁴ One former army captain, who had recently defected, told Human Rights Watch in 1996 that he personally saw G-3 rifles, mortars (60mm and 82mm) and ammunition unloaded at the Khartoum airport that had come from Iran.⁹⁵ He also claimed that he had met an Iranian citizen at Sudan's military headquarters in Khartoum who held a managerial position at the Sudan Military Industries Corporation.

⁹¹ Human Rights Watch interviews with former Sudanese military officers, Tessenei and Asmara, September 1996 and March 1997.

⁹² Human Rights Watch interview with a defector, Tessenei (Eritrea), March 10, 1997.

⁹³ "Built in Iran: the push for self-sufficiency," *Jane's Defence Weekly*, October 15, 1997.

⁹⁴ Human Rights Watch interview with Maj. Gen. Muhammad Sanousi Ahmed, deputy chief of staff for military intelligence, Sudan People's Armed Forces, Khartoum, November 20, 1997.

⁹⁵ Human Rights Watch interview, Tessenei (Eritrea), September 15, 1996. Re-interviewed by Human Rights Watch in March 1997, he confirmed the details of his earlier testimony.

Sudanese army defectors from units throughout the country independently confirmed that Iran has long been a major supplier of light arms and artillery, with Iranian experts coming to Sudan to provide special training for these weapons. The only U.S.-supplied Sudanese C-130 still functioning in 1997 was used to ferry light arms and ammunition, such as medium-range mortars and G-3 assault rifles, directly from Iran to Khartoum, according to a former army officer who claimed that he witnessed the arrival of these flights in Khartoum.⁹⁶ Other sources said that Iran accelerated its airlift of arms and ammunition to Khartoum after Sudan's battlefield losses in January 1997. The new arms included 120mm mortars, antitank rockets, and ammunition.⁹⁷

Other defectors from artillery units based in several different regions and interviewed separately confirmed that Iranian-supplied artillery, accompanied by Iranian military experts, has arrived steadily in Sudan since 1990. One cited three 130mm long-range artillery pieces he saw transported by river steamer and truck to Juba in November 1996, adding that he had only seen a single such gun in the south prior to that.⁹⁸

Iran has also provided Sudan with thousands of advisers who have carried out both ideological and internal security training, according to many former Sudanese army officers, enlisted men, and other sources interviewed separately over the course of this investigation.⁹⁹ In 1992 there were as many as 2,000 Iranian political advisers in Khartoum training mainly Sudan's Popular Defense Forces (PDF).¹⁰⁰ Iran later began to play a lead role in advising Khartoum on matters of internal security, including the reorganization of both Sudan's police and military forces, in a continuing effort to purge potentially disloyal elements and to develop a loyal level of NIF cadres, according to defecting military officers and enlisted men.¹⁰¹

⁹⁶ Human Rights Watch interview with former Sudanese military officer, Tessenei (Eritrea), September 15, 1996.

⁹⁷ *Small Arms World Report*, vol. 7, nos. 3 & 4 (March 1997), p. 48.

⁹⁸ Human Rights Watch interview with a former noncommissioned officer, Tessenei (Eritrea), March 9, 1997.

⁹⁹ Among those interviewed on these issues by Human Rights Watch were a former noncommissioned officer based in Juba in 1994 who claimed he saw Iranian security trainers there; a military veteran of eighteen years who claimed he saw Iranian specialists training Sudanese troops in the use of twelve-pipe multiple rocket launchers provided by Iran; and a military officer who claimed he saw six Iranian military trainers in Juba in 1995.

¹⁰⁰ Robert Lowry, "Sudan Strengthens Forces as Fighting is Stepped Up," *Jane's Defence Weekly*, May 9, 1992.

¹⁰¹ Human Rights Watch interviews with former Sudanese military officers, Tessenei and Asmara, September 1996 and March 1997.

Two former Sudanese army officers told Human Rights Watch that Iran has helped to train a new “People’s Police” side by side with, and under separate command from, the National Police.¹⁰² NIF cadres were also sent to Iran for special training, these sources said. Their mission was “to carry out security work under the camouflage of police work.” The NIF has also slowly purged members of the National Police, with 1,200 new officers replacing some 2,500-3,000 officers who have been discharged since the NIF seized power in 1989. A similar process of purging and replacing officers and mid-level cadres was underway in the army, they said.¹⁰³

Human Rights Watch wrote to the government of Iran in March 1998 to solicit its comments on some of the above allegations, as well as the discovery of large amounts of Iranian weapons, especially landmines, in captured Sudanese army stocks (see chapter 3), and as of mid-August 1998 had not yet received a reply.

Iraq

Iraq’s main form of military support to the government of Sudan has come in the form of technical assistance and training. The role of the Iraqi technicians was pieced together from interviews with over a dozen Sudanese army defectors who claimed to have had direct experience with the Iraqis and whose independently acquired testimony was internally consistent. According to one well-placed defector, sixty Iraqi military experts rotated in and out of the country every six months to work on special military projects. They were part of an agreement with the Sudan Air Force for training and technical maintenance that included twenty engineers and pilots on two-month rotations. Others of the sixty were involved in munitions development with the Military Industries Corporation in Khartoum North. Those who arrived with their families lived in the Al-Amarat district of Khartoum (a middle-class neighborhood near the airport), while bachelors lived in the Karfour military complex in Khartoum North.¹⁰⁴

A Sudanese officer who served as a forward air controller in southern Sudan in March 1994 claimed he saw Iraqi pilots flying combat missions against SPLA positions. Five Iraqi pilots were based in Juba, he said, adding that there was a shortage of qualified Sudanese pilots

¹⁰² The People’s Police Force was established by the government of Sudan in September 1992 with a mission, among other duties, to “mobilize popular energies towards maintaining security and public order, and to improve and rectify society in accordance with religious teachings and the precepts of superior morals.” (Article 4 of the 1992 Order Establishing the People’s Police Force). Female agents were to be responsible as well for enforcing women’s compliance with dress and behavior codes. For further information, see Human Rights Watch/Africa, *Behind the Red Line*, pp. 136-37.

¹⁰³ Human Rights Watch interviews with defecting Sudanese military officers, Tessenei (Eritrea), September 15, 1996.

¹⁰⁴ Human Rights Watch interview with a former Sudanese military officer, Tessenei (Eritrea), September 15, 1996.

due to continuing political purges by the NIF since 1990.¹⁰⁵ Other defectors confirmed the appearance of Iraqi technicians and pilots with the Sudan Air Force. One claimed he saw Iraqi pilots in Juba flying helicopter gunships between 1995 and 1996, when he defected.¹⁰⁶

Iraq has also provided the government of Sudan with Soviet model T-55 tanks and 130mm artillery since before the Gulf War, these sources said. Iraq may also have provided other artillery, as well as various dual-use items involving military transport. Diplomatic sources in the region claimed that in 1996 Iraq provided Sudan with kits to adapt Antonov cargo planes to carry three 500-pound bombs on each side of their fuselages, turning them into medium-range bombers.¹⁰⁷

Human Rights Watch wrote to the government of Iraq in March 1998 to solicit its comments on some of the above allegations, and as of mid-August 1998 had not yet received a reply.

The Russian Federation

Military cooperation between Russia and Sudan resumed after an agreement between the two countries was signed in 1993. A former Sudanese Army officer who claimed to have direct knowledge of the agreement asserted that the cornerstone was a deal involving Russian participation in Sudan's oil industry.¹⁰⁸ This source said that Russia supplied two squadrons (sixteen in each squadron) of Sukhoi bombers, which he personally witnessed being delivered in April and May 1996 in crates carried by Ilyushin cargo planes landing in Khartoum, where they were off-loaded by Russian-speaking experts. The defector also insisted that ten Mi-24 helicopter gunships were shipped to Khartoum at approximately the same time, arriving with Russian-speaking crews. He said he saw their passports, which, like those of all foreign military experts, were not stamped with any Sudanese markings. However, the nationality of the technicians who service such equipment is not a signal of the source of the purchase, as arms experts and technicians from many former Soviet republics, like the arms themselves, are now available on the open market to the highest bidder.

¹⁰⁵ Human Rights Watch interview with former Sudanese military officer, Tessenei (Eritrea), September 15, 1996.

¹⁰⁶ Human Rights Watch interviews (in western Ethiopia, March 29, 1997) with a former noncommissioned officer based in Juba in 1994 and Damazin in 1995-97 who claimed he saw several Iraqi technicians and fighter pilots in Juba and two Iraqi helicopter pilots in Damazin; a former military officer who claimed he saw Iraqi technicians and fighter pilots in 1994 and 1995 before he defected; and a former military officer who claimed he saw four Iraqi pilots and technicians in Juba in 1995 and 1996.

¹⁰⁷ Human Rights Watch interviews with diplomatic sources, Nairobi, September 5, 1996, and July 3-5, 1997.

¹⁰⁸ Human Rights Watch interview with former Sudanese military officer, Tessenei (Eritrea), September 15, 1996.

Russia also supplied twenty to forty T-55 tanks, according to the defecting military officer who claimed that they were delivered by the end of 1996. Russian experts have maintained and repaired other equipment, including MiG-19 and MiG-21 fighter aircraft, he said. Diplomatic sources in the region also asserted that Russia has supplied the government of Sudan with large quantities of military vehicles—trucks and jeeps.¹⁰⁹

Human Rights Watch wrote to the government of the Russian Federation in March 1998 to solicit its comments on some of the above allegations, and as of mid-August 1998 had not yet received a reply.

Former Soviet Republics and Warsaw Pact States

Several former Soviet republics and Warsaw Pact states have sold arms to Sudan, though it has proved difficult to identify the country of origin of particular weapons, such as the Soviet-model Mi-24B Hind helicopters, due to the fact that much of this trade appears to be carried out through privately-owned companies which buy and sell arms and hire personnel from many of the former Soviet republics. **Belarus** reported in 1997 that it supplied Sudan with six Russian-made Mi-24B attack helicopters and nine Russian-made T-55 battle tanks in 1996.¹¹⁰ The government of **Ukraine** reported selling Sudan six BMP-2 armored personnel carriers in 1996.¹¹¹ Moreover, some diplomatic sources identified **Ukraine** as a supplier of Mi-24s to the government of Sudan.¹¹² A former Sudanese diplomat claimed that mercenaries from **Tajikistan** were involved in training missions in Sudan, but maintained that they were not on an official assignment from their government.¹¹³ Both **Kazakhstan** and **Kyrgyzstan** were cited by former Sudanese army officers as sources of Soviet-era weapons.¹¹⁴ One Sudanese army defector claimed that **Croatian** experts worked with Sudan's Military Industries Corporation through the military's intelligence branch, rather than with the regular army, and

¹⁰⁹ Human Rights Watch interviews with diplomatic sources, Addis Ababa, March 18-19, 1997.

¹¹⁰ United Nations General Assembly, *United Nations Register of Conventional Arms: Report of the Secretary-General*, A/52/312 (August 28, 1997), p. 13. The government of Belarus had failed to respond to a March 1998 written query by Human Rights Watch as of the middle of August 1998.

¹¹¹ United Nations General Assembly, *United Nations Register of Conventional Arms: Report of the Secretary-General*, A/52/312 (August 28, 1997), p. 58.

¹¹² Human Rights Watch interviews with diplomatic sources, Nairobi, September 5, 1996. The government of Ukraine had failed to respond to a March 1998 written query by Human Rights Watch as of the middle of August 1998.

¹¹³ Human Rights Watch interview with Abdelaziz Ahmed Khattab, The Hague, November 15, 1997.

¹¹⁴ Human Rights Watch interview with a SAF commander (a former Sudanese military officer), Asmara, March 2, 1997.

that Croatian military experts came to Sudan in July 1996.¹¹⁵ **Romania** was cited by some western diplomats as a source of Soviet-made arms for Sudan.¹¹⁶ And **Poland** reportedly blocked a shipment of fifty T-55 tanks after protests by U.S. intelligence officers.¹¹⁷

One frequently mentioned former Eastern Bloc country said to be providing military expertise to Sudan was **Bulgaria**,¹¹⁸ which Human Rights Watch has found in other areas of Africa to have been both an active supplier and an important transshipment country of weapons.¹¹⁹ In response to a written query from Human Rights Watch, an official at the Bulgarian embassy in Washington, D.C. told us in April 1998 that “the Bulgarian government doesn’t have any role in arming the parties” in the Sudanese civil war, and stressed that a new government had taken office in April 1997 that did not wish to “return to the policies of the previous government,” while acknowledging that “it could be that some Bulgarian traders, without the government’s knowledge, buy and sell arms.”¹²⁰

France

Among western countries, France has been closest to the government of Sudan. In exchange for the 1994 extradition of “Carlos the Jackal,” a Venezuelan national accused of carrying out armed attacks on French territory, France provided Sudan with satellite intelligence on SPLA positions, according to various sources and confirmed by a former high-ranking Sudanese military intelligence officer and western diplomatic sources. The Sudanese officer claimed he had worked as a liaison officer with a dissident SPLA group led by the late Cmdr. William Nyuon which had fought the dominant SPLA led by John Garang before Nyuon was killed. The officer said he was forced out of the Sudanese military in late 1995 under suspicion that he had switched loyalties to Nyuon, but he claimed that before that time he saw French intelligence information that was passed on to Sudanese government forces in southern Sudan.¹²¹

¹¹⁵ Human Rights Watch interview with a former Sudanese military officer, Tessenei (Eritrea), September 15, 1996. The government of Croatia had failed to respond to a March 1998 written query by Human Rights Watch as of the middle of August 1998.

¹¹⁶ The government of Romania had failed to respond to a March 1998 written query by Human Rights Watch as of the middle of August 1998.

¹¹⁷ “Iran top ‘pariah state’ in arms buys,” *Washington Times*, January 12, 1998.

¹¹⁸ Human Rights Watch interview with Gen. Fathi Ahmed Ali and other former Sudanese military officers, Asmara, September 10, 1996.

¹¹⁹ See, for example, Human Rights Watch Arms Project, *Stoking the Fires*, p. 55.

¹²⁰ Telephone conversation with Petio Petev, political counselor and acting deputy chief of mission, Embassy of Bulgaria, Washington, D.C., April 13, 1998.

¹²¹ Human Rights Watch interview with former Sudan military intelligence officer, Tessenei (Eritrea), September 15, 1996.

France has also provided other forms of military assistance, according to defectors and diplomatic sources in the region. These sources said that France brokered arrangements between Sudan and the former Zaire, prior to Mobutu Sese Seko's overthrow by Rwandan-backed rebels under Laurent-Désiré Kabila, and between Sudan and the Central African Republic to allow Sudanese forces to use their territories to launch surprise attacks against the SPLA. France continued to aid Sudan with training and technical assistance, but not arms, in an effort to gain influence in Khartoum, these sources said.¹²²

South Africa

The South African government and South African nationals appear to have sold or serviced arms to Sudan since the change in government in Pretoria in May 1994, despite denials by South African Deputy Defense Minister Ronny Kasrils.¹²³ One high-level Sudanese army defector claimed personally to have seen twelve South African technicians, there to service South African and other military helicopters, who remained in Khartoum for eight months after the African National Congress-led government of national unity came to power in Pretoria, pledging to halt arms traffic with Sudan. He also claimed that a representative of Atlas Aviation, a division of the South African parastatal Denel, visited Khartoum every three months through at least August 1996 (when the source defected), arriving each time on a Kenya Airways flight from Nairobi, continuing a pattern set—and acknowledged—by the previous South African government.¹²⁴ Until early 1996, this man was met at the airport by El-Fatih Erwa before the latter's appointment as Sudan's permanent representative to the United Nations.¹²⁵

According to the same defector, a high-ranking South African air force official visited Khartoum as recently as December 1994 and renewed an agreement to service Puma helicopters, originally supplied to Sudan in the 1980s under a previous South African government. Sudan sent four more Puma 330s (made under license from Eurocopter SA in Romania) to South Africa for repairs. The South African military experts mentioned above were in Sudan through January 1995 to work on this project, he said.

¹²² Human Rights Watch interview with Gen. Fathi Ahmed Ali, Asmara, September 10, 1996, supported by interviews with diplomatic sources in Asmara and Addis Ababa, September 1996 and March 1997.

¹²³ See Pax Christi Netherlands, "Report on South African Military Involvement in Sudan's Civil War to the Cameron Commission of Inquiry" (Utrecht, December 1994), p. 3

¹²⁴ Pax Christi Netherlands reported in 1994 that Atlas Aviation had been granted a permit by ARMSCOR, the state-owned arms industry, in consultation with both the South African Defence Forces and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the previous South African government, to carry out maintenance on Sudanese air force helicopters, including Soviet-model M-8 "Hip" military transports. Pax Christi Netherlands, "Report on South African Military Involvement," p. 3.

¹²⁵ Human Rights Watch interviews with a former Sudanese military officer, Tessenei (Eritrea), September 15, 1996 and March 10, 1997.

Former South African military personnel were involved in training and arms transfers to Sudan up to 1997, according to Sudanese opposition figures. The late NDA leader Gen. Fathi Ahmed Ali claimed that South Africa supplied Sudan with antiaircraft guns and medium-range artillery and mortars in the early 1990s, under the apartheid government.¹²⁶ South Africans—possibly acting in a private capacity—also delivered two shipments of arms to Sudan in 1995, and a third shipment in 1997, using Yemen as a transit point to disguise the origin, according to an Eritrean military official. These shipments included light artillery, heavy machine guns, and spare parts for the Sudanese Navy.¹²⁷

In May 1998, a Human Rights Watch researcher photographed a 40mm Armscor MGL six-shot grenade launcher and corresponding ammunition during a visit to the Nuba mountains, which the SPLA claimed were captured from Sudanese government forces in Delami in the Nuba mountains on August 8, 1997. One of the 40mm grenades for the grenade launcher was marked RD 40mm SMK BST, RED PHOS M8931A1, 005 C 94. The marks indicate that the red phosphorus smoke round was produced in South Africa by Swartklip Products (a division of Denel Ltd.) in 1994, and logically therefore would have been exported after the end of apartheid under the current ANC-led government.¹²⁸

Media reports in South Africa in September 1997 charged that South African arms were finding their way to both sides in Sudan's civil war, and specifically that SPLA units had captured South African arms from Sudanese government forces earlier in 1997. The National Intelligence Coordinating Committee, overseen by the Ministry of Defence, undertook an investigation into these charges later in the year, but had not yet announced its findings by the middle of August 1998.¹²⁹ The chairman of South Africa's National Conventional Arms Control Committee (NCACC), Kader Asmal, said at that time, though, that the government had placed a moratorium on all arms sales to Sudan in 1995, and that the moratorium remained in force. He also said that no military- or security-related activities by South African nationals in Sudan, on any side, had been authorized by the South African government.¹³⁰ In a letter to Human Rights Watch in December 1997, Kader Asmal stated that "our checks have

¹²⁶ Human Rights Watch interview with Gen. Fathi Ahmed Ali, Asmara, September 10, 1996.

¹²⁷ Human Rights Watch interview with a high-ranking Eritrean military official, Asmara, March 6, 1997.

¹²⁸ A photograph of the grenade launcher is on file with Human Rights Watch.

¹²⁹ Marion Edmunds, "SA Arms in the Sudan Conflict," *Mail & Guardian* (Johannesburg), September 4, 1997; and "Sudan Envoy Clears SA Government of Links to Arms Deals," SAPA-AFP, July 31, 1998.

¹³⁰ "Arms Supplies to Sudan Illegal: Asmal," SAPA, July 28, 1998.

shown that *no current* shipments of arms from South Africa are reaching the Sudan.”¹³¹ In March 1998, Human Rights Watch wrote to the South African government with a number of questions regarding information presented in this report, and including a question about *previous* shipments from South Africa that might have reached the Sudan. By the middle of August 1998, no reply had been received from the South African government aside from an acknowledgment of receipt of our correspondence.

Asian States

Jane's Foreign Report mentioned **India** as an arms supplier in 1996; negotiations between the two governments reportedly involved spare parts from the former Soviet Union that were either made or held in stock in India.¹³² Other sources said they include ammunition for the G-3 rifles that are standard issue in the Sudanese Army, shipped by a private company and not the government.¹³³ Diplomatic sources charged that **Pakistan** had supplied Sudan with parts for old U.S. M-48 tanks—which Sudan is still trying to use—in what appeared to be solely an economic transaction.¹³⁴

Arab States Other Than Iraq

Libya provided Sudan with heavy artillery in 1995, according to high-level Eritrean officials.¹³⁵ A former Sudanese army officer charged that **Qatar**, whose government attempted unsuccessfully to broker negotiations between the government of Sudan and the NDA, provided equipment for the Sudanese Army Signal Corps and for the Air Force.¹³⁶ This source also claimed that several representatives from the **United Arab Emirates (UAE)** traveled to Khartoum in 1996, meeting with Minister of Defense Hassan AbdelRahman to discuss arms transactions.¹³⁷ Eritrean officials have charged that the UAE, which has a large airport (Sharjah) that has served as a cargo hub for Africa and the Middle East, has been a base for

¹³¹ Letter from Kader Asmal to Human Rights Watch, December 3, 1997. (Emphasis added by Human Rights Watch).

¹³² “Sudan has odd friends,” *Jane's Foreign Report* (London), December 14, 1995. India has long used Soviet-type weapons, and it is therefore quite possible that it produces its own spare parts for these weapons, although it is equally possible that the 1996 negotiations referred to here involved spare parts originally purchased from the Soviet Union.

¹³³ Human Rights Watch interviews with diplomats, Nairobi, September 5, 1996.

¹³⁴ Human Rights Watch interviews with diplomats, Nairobi, September 5, 1996.

¹³⁵ Human Rights Watch interview with a senior Eritrean official, Asmara, September 10, 1996

¹³⁶ Human Rights Watch interview with a former Sudanese military officer, Tessenai (Eritrea), September 15, 1996 and March 10, 1997.

¹³⁷ The government of the United Arab Emirates had failed to respond to a March 1998 written query by Human Rights Watch as of the middle of August 1998.

airlifting arms to Khartoum, arranged by independent Islamist financiers rather than specific governments, and using cargo aircraft leased from Russia.¹³⁸

One diplomatic source in the region claimed that **Jordan** and **Yemen** sent small arms shipments to the government of Sudan in January and February 1997 in solidarity with the government after opposition attacks from bases in neighboring Eritrea, Ethiopia and Uganda.¹³⁹ A SAF field commander claimed that six C-130s landed in Khartoum in the third week of January 1997 to bring arms and ammunition from **Yemen, Iran, and Qatar** to replenish supplies for artillery and armor that were exhausted during the fighting that month.¹⁴⁰ The late NDA military leader Gen. Fathi Ahmed Ali, former head of the Sudan armed forces under the Sadiq al-Mahdi government, claimed that a shipment of Iraqi arms arranged by the Yemen Reform Party was off-loaded in Port Sudan on February 20, 1997. The shipment, he said, included 600 antitank weapons of various types taken from a depot in Yemen, and the ship, sailing from the Yemeni port of Al-Mukalla, was the El Obeid, captained by Naji Asam Maki.¹⁴¹

During a July 1997 visit to SPLA-held areas in southern Sudan, Human Rights Watch found numerous **Belgian** PRB M3 plastic antitank mines in crates that were marked: “Ministry of Defence and Aviation, Dammam - Saudi Arabia, Exp. 5202, Package No. 12030.”¹⁴² In 1996, the government of **Saudi Arabia** declared, in response to a U.N. resolution seeking the views of member states on illicit arms transfers, that “there is no illicit transfer of arms through Saudi Arabia.”¹⁴³ Taking this statement at face value, and given the Ministry of Defense marking on the crates, the implication is that this particular shipment was an official one, authorized by the government. In 1995 a U.S. company owned by an unnamed Saudi was said to have shipped to Sudan \$120 million in arms, including howitzers, mortars and tank ammunition, according to published reports.¹⁴⁴

¹³⁸ Human Rights Watch interviews with Eritrean government officials, Asmara, September 1996 and March 1997.

¹³⁹ Human Rights Watch interview with a western diplomat based in the region in the fall of 1997.

¹⁴⁰ Human Rights Watch interview with SAF field commander Esam Mirghani, Asmara, June 28, 1997.

¹⁴¹ Human Rights Watch interview with Gen. Fathi Ahmed Ali, Asmara, March 7, 1997. See also, “Sudan Rebels Say Khartoum Receiving Iraqi Arms,” Reuters, February 28, 1997.

¹⁴² Dammam is a Saudi port on the Persian Gulf across from Bahrain. The side of the crate was marked: “SAP STOCK NUMBER 5205-19- 60261 NON-DETECTABLE ATK MINES.” ATK mines are antitank mines. The mines were marked: “LOT SAP,” followed by a serial number, such as “-1-10.” Human Rights Watch has photographs of the boxes as well as the mines

¹⁴³ United Nations General Assembly, *General and Complete Disarmament: Measures to Curb the Illicit Transfer and Use of Conventional Arms—Report of the Secretary-General*, A/51/181, June 27, 1996.

¹⁴⁴ *Africa Confidential*, May 12, 1995.

Chile

Human Rights Watch also photographed cluster antipersonnel bomblets in October 1997 in Yei, Sudan, after a government bombing attack, that appeared to be Chilean-made. The bomblets were PM-1 antiarmor, antipersonnel bomblets dropped either in CB-130 (fifty bomblets), CB-250-K (240 bomblets), or CB-500 (240 bomblets) cluster bombs. These bombs appeared to match the configurations of cluster bombs that are produced by Industrias Cardoen Ltda., Chile, but if they are indeed the same, it is not clear how they came to the government of Sudan. Known sales to the region include a large quantity to Iraq during the Iran-Iraq War and a shipment of 1,658 to Ethiopia in 1991, shortly before the Mengistu government was overthrown in Addis Ababa.¹⁴⁵

In response to a query by Human Rights Watch, the Chilean government responded by stating that “the allegations made in your letter are erred [sic], for in the registers of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the War Undersecretariat and of the National Mobilization General Directorate, there are no indications whatsoever of Chilean manufactured weapons, including cluster bombs, ever having been exported to Sudan.”¹⁴⁶ The letter also indicated that Sudan was on Chile’s list of states “over which there is a total and comprehensive prohibition of exporting any type of war materiel”; that the case of Ethiopia is “identical to Sudan’s, and Chile has not engaged in the sale of any war materiel to that State”; and that “[l]ikewise, and ever since the embargo imposed by the U.N.’s Security Council...as a consequence of Iraq’s war of aggression towards neighboring Kuwait, Chile has not sold any war materiel to Iraq.” Regrettably, the letter remained silent on the possible sale of weapons, including cluster bombs, to Ethiopia or Iraq during the government of President Augusto Pinochet in the 1980s.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁵ On June 8, 1984, Radio Cooperativa in Santiago reported that Industrias Cardoen Ltda. had sold 5,000 cluster bombs to Iraq, and that the company’s director, Carlos Cardoen, had told the station that, in the station’s words, “since this time the transaction was made public through the news agency report, he did not deny the transaction and that on the contrary, he confirmed the sale of the 5,000 cluster bombs.” The station then quoted a “high-ranking Chilean Foreign Ministry source” as saying that this was a normal transaction for which no authorization was needed. Reported in Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), June 11, 1984. In November 1990, the publication *Adulis* in London stated in a report that Chile had shipped a consignment of cluster bombs to Ethiopia, and that the Chilean Ministry of Defence “acknowledged that General Pinochet’s government had authorized the sale of 1,658 cluster bombs to Ethiopia through an arms firm, the Industrias Cardoen.” Reported in FBIS-AFR-91-002, February 1, 1991. Moreover, Industrias Cardoen (Chile) is known to have sold a production license for cluster munitions to Iraq in the late 1980s. It is unclear whether Iraq developed the capability to produce these munitions independently.

¹⁴⁶ Letter from John Biehl, Ambassador of Chile in the United States, to Human Rights Watch, April 7, 1998.

¹⁴⁷ Human Rights Watch sent a letter to the Chilean government for further clarification on this matter on June 16, 1998, and received a reply from the embassy in Washington, D.C. on June 26 that our query had been conveyed to the “appropriate authorities” in Chile.

Ethiopia

Ethiopia provided the government of Sudan with a fleet of T-54 and T-55 Soviet-model tanks and other equipment in 1992, according to *Jane's*, after rebels there deposed the government of Lt. Col. Mengistu Haile Mariam. The arms were said to have been bartered to Khartoum for food.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁸ *Jane's Defence Weekly* (February 13, 1993), p. 27.

V. Sudanese Government Military Support for Armed Opposition Forces

The NIF-dominated government of Sudan has armed ethnically-based militias and other armed groups in conflict areas within Sudan, according to a wide range of sources that include former Sudanese officers who claimed to have been directly involved in these operations and escaped child soldiers of a Sudanese government-backed rebel group interviewed by Human Rights Watch. The government of Sudan has also armed rebel groups based in the country and operating in neighboring states, and it has facilitated their supply and training through collaboration with independent actors, such as the Saudi financier Usama bin Laden, according to defecting military officers. As evidence of direct Sudanese government involvement with these groups, Human Rights Watch saw and photographed antipersonnel mines and antitank mines of the same type and nearly identical lot numbers that were buried in heavily-traveled roads in Eritrea, taken from anti-government forces in Uganda, and stored in large quantities in Sudanese government arms depots in southern Sudan.

The Sudanese government's practice of arming ethnically-based militias and other irregular forces to serve as auxiliaries in its battle with the SPLA traces back at least to the previous government of deposed Prime Minister Sadiq al-Mahdi.¹⁴⁹ One former army officer, who said he served as a liaison officer in the early 1990s with a breakaway SPLA splinter group led by Commander William Nyuon before he was killed, claimed that all armed groups allied with the government of Sudan against the SPLA were assigned a Military Intelligence liaison officer.¹⁵⁰ These officers carried radios to maintain regular contact with Sudanese army outposts, and arranged for air drops of arms, ammunition, and other supplies. Weapons the government of Sudan furnished to these armed groups included G-3s, Kalashnikovs, mortars, light machine guns, and landmines. The liaison officers also provided military training, intelligence information and, at times, disinformation to the groups in an effort to stir up conflict among opponents of the government of Sudan in the region.

Among the ethnically-based groups which received direct Sudanese government support, including the assignment of a liaison officer, were a group consisting of Lotohus in Equatoria (though many Lotohus remained in areas under SPLA control), anti-SPLA Toposas near the

¹⁴⁹ See Human Rights Watch/Africa, *Denying the Honor of the Living: Sudan, A Human Rights Disaster* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1990), pp. 81-102.

¹⁵⁰ Human Rights Watch interview with a defecting Sudanese military officer, Tessenei (Eritrea), September 15, 1996.

Kenyan border, and Mandaris from the Terakeka area north of Juba. The SSIM/A forces under Riek Machar also received direct support.¹⁵¹

Evidence that the government of Sudan also supported rebel forces operating in neighboring states came from a variety of sources. In the case of Uganda, this support traces back at least to the late 1980s, under the Sadiq al-Mahdi government, when Sudan assisted a now-defunct movement drawn from the mostly Muslim Aringas region of northern Uganda. In the mid-1990s, Sudanese Military Intelligence routinely maintained radio contact with Sudanese operatives traveling with anti-government rebels operating in northern Uganda who radioed back intelligence information, one former Sudanese military officer told Human Rights Watch.¹⁵² This information was then relayed to leaders of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), active in northeastern Uganda, or the West Nile Bank Front (WNBF), active in northwestern Uganda. These were the two largest armed opposition groups operating in Uganda prior to March 1997, when Sudanese government forces were routed from the border area and the WNBF was decimated. The secret Sudanese intelligence unit that provided the main link with both the LRA and the WNBF was headquartered in Torit, according to the former military officer.

Throughout this period, the government of Sudan provided training and arms to the LRA, which operated along Sudan's southeastern border with Uganda, according to the former military officer and child soldiers who had escaped the LRA interviewed by Human Rights Watch in Gulu, Uganda.¹⁵³ For their part, Sudanese government officials denied any connection with the LRA, whose members were drawn from the Acholi people who straddle the Sudan-Uganda border, claiming that any LRA movement into or out of Sudanese territory was done without Sudanese government knowledge or support, especially after the spring 1997 SPLA military offensive.¹⁵⁴ However, a former officer in the Sudanese military told Human Rights Watch that from 1995 to 1996 he was assigned to work with the LRA in southern Sudan in an area near Nimule, reporting routinely by radio to a liaison officer in Torit.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵¹ Eyewitnesses claimed that a government-backed Nuer militia, supported by units of the SSIM, massacred 106 civilians and triggered an exodus of over 35,000 at Akot, a Dinka town in Bahr El Ghazal, on October 22, 1994. See Human Rights Watch/Africa, *Behind the Red Line: Political Repression in Sudan*, pp. 323-24.

¹⁵² Human Rights Watch interview with a defecting Sudanese military officer, Tessenei (Eritrea), September 15, 1996.

¹⁵³ Human Rights Watch interviews with former LRA abductees, ages ten and sixteen, Gulu (Uganda), July 15, 1997.

¹⁵⁴ Human Rights Watch interview with Maj. Gen. Muhammad Sanousi Ahmed, deputy chief of staff for military intelligence, Sudan People's Armed Forces, Khartoum, November 20, 1997.

¹⁵⁵ Human Rights Watch interview with the former military officer, Tessenei (Eritrea), September 15, 1997.

The LRA provides a case study in Sudanese government involvement in cross-border conflicts. The group derived from a Christian cult originally launched by Alice Lakwena to mount an armed challenge to the Ugandan government of Yoweri Museveni, shortly after his forces seized power in Kampala in 1986. After a crushing defeat, Lakwena fled to a refugee camp in Kenya, but one of her followers, Joseph Kony, took charge of the remnants and built the LRA, which launched raids across northeastern Uganda and press-ganged children into their armed force, often forcing them to participate in torture and execution-style murders of would-be escapees to complete their initiation and to instill fear of running away.¹⁵⁶ LRA leaders were in the midst of negotiations with the Kampala government in 1993 when, according to former LRA abductees, the government of Sudan stepped in and offered substantial training and resources.¹⁵⁷ By 1996, the LRA, numbering as many as 6,000 fighters, succeeded in thoroughly destabilizing northern Uganda. In response, the Ugandan government herded civilians into protected hamlets, as agricultural production in the region plummeted and travel on the main roads became extremely hazardous without a military escort. While in Gulu, Human Rights Watch visited a camp for children who had escaped the LRA and were then under the care of the international charity World Vision. Two former LRA child fighters interviewed separately and without escort insisted they were trained and armed inside Sudan by uniformed Sudanese government troops, echoing the published testimony of other LRA escapees.¹⁵⁸ A Sudanese government official interviewed in Khartoum in 1997 denied that the government had supported the LRA in the past. However, he said, “I would do it now in retaliation for what Uganda has done, but my hands are tied by policy.”¹⁵⁹

Human Rights Watch interviews conducted with former LRA abductees in northern Uganda in April 1998 show that Sudan has continued to provide active support to the LRA. The interviews clearly establish the names and locations of several LRA camps inside NIF-controlled territory, including Jebelin, Kit II and Musito. The former LRA abductees told Human Rights Watch that Sudanese government soldiers were stationed in or near the LRA camps, and constantly interacted with the LRA leadership. The interviewees described witnessing Sudanese Arab soldiers delivering weapons to the LRA via airplanes or lorries.

¹⁵⁶ For a detailed account of the LRA’s treatment of children, see Human Rights Watch/Africa and Human Rights Watch/Children’s Rights Project, *The Scars of Death: Children Abducted by the Lord’s Resistance Army in Uganda* (New York: Human Rights Watch, September 1997).

¹⁵⁷ Human Rights Watch interviews with former LRA child abductees, Gulu (Uganda), July 15, 1997.

¹⁵⁸ Human Rights Watch interviews, Gulu (Uganda), July 15, 1997. For detailed accounts of escapees from the LRA, see also UNICEF/World Vision, *Shattered Innocence: Testimonies of children abducted in Northern Uganda* (New York: 1997). Most of the fifteen children interviewed for this report recount forced marches to camps in Sudan where they claim they were given training and arms, including landmines, by uniformed troops of the Sudanese armed forces.

¹⁵⁹ Human Rights Watch interview with Dr. Mutrif Siddiq Ali, deputy director-general of the External Intelligence Agency, Khartoum, November 19, 1997.

The weapons included AKM assault rifles, landmines, rocket-propelled grenade launchers, and guns with silencers. Several of the former child soldiers claimed that one of the primary activities of the LRA in Sudan was to fight against the SPLA.

The WNBF has operated primarily in northwestern Uganda, using bases in southern Sudan and in eastern Zaire. Its political roots trace back to breakaway forces of the defeated Ugandan army of former President Milton Obote under the command of Col. Juma Oris. The WNBF carried out ambushes and planted landmines within four kilometers of the town of Arua in northern Uganda as late as 1996. During the fighting in southern Sudan in March 1997, the rebels were dislodged as their base at Morobo was destroyed.¹⁶⁰ Interviews with former LRA abductees conducted by Human Rights Watch in northern Uganda in April 1998 suggest that the remnants of the WNBF joined the LRA at the latter's Aru camp shortly after the March fighting, which was in turn attacked by a combined UPDF/SPLA force on April 9-10, 1997.

Meanwhile, a wide variety of armed groups, many Islamist in orientation, have maintained safe houses and training facilities in and around Khartoum with the support of the NIF-controlled government, according to Sudanese opposition sources and a Sudanese defector who functioned as a NIF liaison with these groups in the mid-1990s.¹⁶¹ Many of these groups also received support from Iran and from wealthy individuals and nongovernmental organizations, the same sources said. In addition to those already mentioned, these groups included: the Islamic Group (Egypt), the Islamic Salvation Front (Algeria), the Oromo Liberation Front (Ethiopia), the Islamic Oromo Front (Ethiopia), the militia of the late Mohammed Farah Aideed (southern Somalia), Al-Ittihad al-Islamiya (operating throughout the former Somalia), the Ethiopian Islamic Opposition (operating out of southern Somalia and the target of a 1997 cross-border raid by Ethiopian armed forces), the Tunisian Islamic Front, and other Islamist groups from countries ranging from Kenya to Niger, Gambia, and Senegal. Opposition leaders and defecting Sudanese army officers claimed that Iran helped finance many of these groups and that an Iranian general named Zayid was in charge of experts who trained them. Sudan has issued members of these groups Sudanese passports for external travel, one defector said.¹⁶²

¹⁶⁰ Human Rights Watch interview with the Arua District security officer, Arua (Uganda), July 13, 1997.

¹⁶¹ Human Rights Watch interview with opposition leaders, Asmara, September 1996 and March 1997, and with a defecting Sudanese military officer, Tessenei (Eritrea), September 15, 1996.

¹⁶² Human Rights Watch interview with a defecting Sudanese military officer, Tessenei (Eritrea), September 15, 1996.

Ethiopia claims to have captured evidence of Sudanese support for such groups in Somalia.¹⁶³ Ethiopian officials blamed Sudanese-backed Islamist rebels operating out of Somalia for carrying out a series of bombings in major tourist hotels in Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa in early 1996. On August 8-9, 1996 and again in December 1996 for a more prolonged period, Ethiopian forces crossed into Somalia and raided the headquarters of Al-Ittihad al-Islamiya (Islamic Union), the main armed Islamist opposition group operating there. Ethiopian officials claimed to have captured documents detailing Al-Ittihad's external contacts, including sources of funding and training, which they said implicated Sudan, though Human Rights Watch was unable to confirm this or gain access to copies of the materials. The documents were said by Ethiopian officials to have been provided to U.S. officials in Washington, D.C., for investigation. Ethiopian officials also claimed that radio intercepts of Sudanese transmissions from Mogadishu and Nairobi further incriminated Sudan in providing aid and training to violent Islamist groups throughout the region.¹⁶⁴

Similarly, Eritrea has accused Sudan of supporting Eritrean Islamic Jihad (EIJ), a rebel group active in Eritrea's western lowlands near Sudan. EIJ combatants have been captured with G-3s, Kalashnikov assault rifles, hand grenades, RPG-7 grenade launchers, and landmines. EIJ members have planted landmines in western Eritrea that match those provided to Sudanese troops and to Sudan-supported rebels in southern Sudan and Uganda. Human Rights Watch saw two antitank mines, which had already been disarmed and unburied, that were displayed by Eritrean officials who claimed they had been discovered on well-traveled rural roads in 1996, where they could not have been long in place without detonating.¹⁶⁵ Human Rights Watch saw a third landmine of this exact type which had been left on a road that they had just traversed between Tessenei and Barentu in northwestern Eritrea and that was discovered by civilians living in the area when they noticed that the packed dirt road had been disturbed during the night. All three were new Belgian-made plastic landmines of the same design (PRB M-3), with the words "pressure plate" printed on their pressure plates in French, German, and Italian. Each had nearly identical lot numbers, suggesting that they were from the same shipment.¹⁶⁶ They also corresponded in type, appearance, lot numbers, and stenciled Arabic instructions with landmines observed in former Sudanese government

¹⁶³ Human Rights Watch interview with Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, Addis Ababa, October 1, 1996.

¹⁶⁴ Human Rights Watch interview with a high-level Ethiopian government official, Addis Ababa, October 1, 1996.

¹⁶⁵ Human Rights Watch interview with Eritrea Defence Forces commander, Tessenei (Eritrea), September 16, 1996. An Eritrean noncommissioned officer interviewed at the same time, who identified himself as Assistant Corporal Ogbagabriel, told Human Rights Watch that he had discovered one of the antitank mines on a dirt road two to three kilometers southeast of Tessenei twenty-six days earlier, after civilian residents in the area called his attention to it.

¹⁶⁶ The part of the lot number that the three mines had in common was: "LOT SAP." The serial numbers that followed this code differed slightly.

stores in southern Sudan and in stores of captured LRA ordnance in northern Uganda. In addition to this, Human Rights Watch saw antipersonnel mines of the same type in Eritrea, southern Sudan, and northern Uganda, all carrying similar Arabic markings and all held by Sudanese government forces or supplied to Sudan-backed rebel groups.

At the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) garrison in Gulu in northern Uganda, Human Rights Watch saw and photographed large quantities of antipersonnel and antitank mines taken from the LRA. They were sorted by type and labeled by date and place of capture. Both the antipersonnel and antitank mines matched the types of many of those seen in southern Sudan at Yei and Kaya, and those seen in Eritrea. Among the antitank mines were dozens of Belgian PRB M-3s, of a type seen in crates at the SPLA-held border post of Kaya, Sudan, that bore a shipping label to the Ministry of Defence and Aviation, Dammam, Saudi Arabia. (See chapter 4.) These mines may have arrived in Sudan directly from Saudi Arabia, or in a round-about way from Saudi Arabia via Afghanistan, where they were in use by the so-called "Afghan Arabs," irregulars fighting the Soviet-backed government there in the 1980s with the financial support of Saudi millionaire Usama bin Laden and with arms supplied by the Saudi government, among others.

Bin Laden, the son of a wealthy Saudi construction magnate, was able to establish a powerful military and political presence in Sudan in the early 1990s, using a variety of business ventures to finance his activities. A Sudanese defecting military officer who worked closely with Bin Laden's operations in Sudan described a highly organized network of armed Islamist groups, tracing their roots to the war in Afghanistan in the 1980s and linked through an advisory committee which Bin Laden controlled. Among the more than 500 veterans of the Afghan war were Tunisians, Algerians, Sudanese, Saudis, Syrians, Iraqis, Moroccans, Somalis, Ethiopians, Eritreans, Chechnyans, Bosnians and six African-Americans, this source said. These fighters were organized into groups and dispersed to camps throughout Sudan, not only near Khartoum and Port Sudan, as previous reports have alleged, but in the Damazin area of eastern Sudan and at a base in the southern Equatoria province, near the border with Uganda. (One base, near Hamesh Koreb along the Eritrea border, was over-run in March 1997 by forces of the Sudanese opposition, who claim they captured large stores of Iranian military equipment there.)¹⁶⁷ The main military camp of the Afghan Arabs, however, was near Soba, ten kilometers south of Khartoum, along the Blue Nile, the same officer said. The Soba camp, which he claimed he visited frequently between 1994 and 1995, covered twenty acres and was a highly restricted area. Iranians previously based in Lebanon's Beka'a Valley were among those involved in training the *mujahedin* guerrillas at this camp, he said.

¹⁶⁷ Human Rights Watch interview with SAF field commander Esam Mirghani, Asmara, June 28, 1997.

According to the same source, the advisory council included representatives from such far-flung armed groups as the Egyptian Islamic Group, the Oromo Islamic Front in Ethiopia, the Eritrean Islamic Jihad (which, as shown above, has laid landmines on civilian roads in western Eritrea), the Islamic forces of Sheikh Abdullah in Uganda, Algeria's Islamic Salvation Front, and the Moro Liberation Front from Mindanao, Philippines. At the camps, guerrillas were schooled in the use of explosives, forgery, coding, and other such skills, he said. Weapons for the guerrillas were imported mainly from Iran and China through Port Sudan, and then trucked to Khartoum where the Ministry of Defence turned them over to Bin Laden's representatives, the defector said. Some arms were also routinely relocated to a warehouse in Yemen for forwarding to other operational areas on a ship owned by Bin Laden, he said. Officers who carried out successful operations were rewarded with money and arms, he said.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁸ Human Rights Watch interview with a defecting Sudanese noncommissioned officer, Tessenei (Eritrea), March 10, 1997.

VI. Military Support for Sudanese Opposition Forces

In their war with the central government in Khartoum, the principal Sudanese rebel groups have relied for political, military and logistical support on what are known as the frontline states—Eritrea, Ethiopia and Uganda—which in turn have received support from the United States. The rebels appear to obtain the majority of their weapons either on the open arms market (shipped via the frontline states), or from the government of Sudan in battle.

The Opposition Forces

The main armed opposition to the Sudan government is the SPLA, operating in the south of the country since 1983, in the Nuba Mountains since 1986, and in the east since 1996. From the outset, the SPLA had the support of the government of Ethiopia under Lt. Col. Mengistu Haile Mariam.¹⁶⁹ This included the provision of uniforms, logistical support, arms, ammunition, military training, and even political direction. SPLA units based in the Gambela region in western Ethiopia participated in joint military operations with Ethiopian forces against Oromo rebels,¹⁷⁰ and Ethiopian forces supported the SPLA in border clashes with Sudanese government troops. When Mengistu's government collapsed in 1991, the SPLA, viewed as an enemy by the new Ethiopian government, was suddenly stripped not only of this rearguard support but also of access from Ethiopia to the territory it controlled within Sudan. The SPLA, and several hundred thousand Sudanese refugees, promptly fled from Ethiopia back into Sudan. After splits within the SPLA later that year led to fighting between rival factions, encouraged by the government of Sudan, the government recaptured several garrison towns in 1992 and appeared to be gaining the upper hand in the fighting. However, continuing Ugandan support for the SPLA, coupled with moves in 1995 by Eritrea to shore up a broad opposition alliance, gave the SPLA a second chance, while a reconciliation between Ethiopia's new government and the SPLA that year gave the latter renewed access through Ethiopia to contested areas of southeastern Sudan. Starting in 1996, the SPLA also based a military force in western Eritrea, known as the New Sudan Brigade.

A second armed opposition movement that has carried out active military operations in Sudan is the SAF, whose main forces have operated out of bases in western Eritrea and western Ethiopia since 1995 and which since early 1997 has controlled territory within

¹⁶⁹ For details on the relationship between Ethiopia and the SPLA in the 1980s, see Human Rights Watch/Africa, *Evil Days: 30 Years of War and Famine in Ethiopia* (New York: September 1991), pp. 325-46.

¹⁷⁰ See Human Rights Watch/Africa, *Civilian Devastation: Abuses by All Parties in the War in Southern Sudan*.

eastern and northeastern Sudan. The Beja Congress, which has functioned as a social movement for the Beja people since the 1950s and whose members are drawn from Beja clans native to the Sudan-Eritrea border region, is a third armed force with bases in western Eritrea that has been militarily active there. Forces of the Umma Party of former Prime Minister Sadiq al-Mahdi have also been engaged in combat. Other armed Sudanese groups with military units in western Eritrea which were not directly involved in combat by the end of 1997 included the Sudan National Party from the Nuba mountains and the Sudan Federal Democratic Alliance, which drew its membership from Sudan's western Darfur region.

The Frontline States

Human Rights Watch found growing involvement in the war in Sudan by Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Uganda through arms flows, the hosting of armed opposition forces, and some direct intervention. **Eritrea** has made a public show of its support for the opposition, breaking diplomatic relations with Khartoum in December 1994, giving the former Sudanese embassy to the opposition NDA in June 1995, and offering training bases in western Eritrea starting in 1995 which have been visited and reported on by independent journalists.¹⁷¹ During a visit to the frontier within Eritrea, Human Rights Watch observed SAF forces west of Tessenei armed with Kalashnikov rifles and light machine guns. Human Rights Watch also observed that Eritrea allows the SAF to use its territory for training, and supports its activities. Eritrean army units were deployed a few kilometers behind SAF units based on the Eritrean side of the Eritrea-Sudan border west of Tessenei. One Sudanese official claimed that the Eritrean government has set up training camps for a number of these opposition forces at Sawa, Haikota, and Agordat.¹⁷² Sawa is the main training camp for Eritrea's armed forces, while Agordat is a large market center. During a Human Rights Watch visit to these two locations, no Sudanese opposition forces were either visible or said to be present. Human Rights Watch did not visit Haikota, a small town that is known to have a SAF camp nearby. All three towns are in the country's western lowlands, near the Sudan border.

Sudanese government officials have also charged that Eritrean military forces first fired on Sudanese government positions at Awad in February 1996, near the border between the two countries. Moreover, the government of Sudan has accused Eritrea, or forces operating from its territory, of placing landmines on roads within Sudan, citing instances in July, August,

¹⁷¹ See, for example, Peter Biles, *Guardian* (London), May 11, 1996.

¹⁷² Human Rights Watch interview with Dr. Mutrif Siddiq Ali, deputy director-general of the External Intelligence Agency, Khartoum, November 19, 1997.

September, and October 1996 in northeastern Sudan.¹⁷³ In early 1997, the government of Sudan charged that attacks were launched in northeastern Sudan by “terrorist elements accompanied by Eritrean soldiers.”¹⁷⁴ These charges came at a time when SAF forces began to claim responsibility for armed actions inside Sudan. Later, a high-ranking Sudanese official claimed that the anti-government campaign launched in the northeast in March 1997 was carried out by Eritrean forces which invaded Sudan and then handed captured materiel over to opposition groups after securing control of territory stretching from the border town of Karora north to Aqiq and Tokar and west toward Kassala.¹⁷⁵ An SPLA spokesperson admitted in May 1998 that Eritrean tank crews and trainers and close reconnaissance units had accompanied SPLA troops in the March 1997 campaign in southern Sudan.¹⁷⁶

Ethiopia has been more discreet in its involvement with Sudanese opposition forces since 1991, when the present government seized power in Addis Ababa, but it has also opened its territory to NDA forces for access to combat areas and for training.¹⁷⁷ Moreover, the government of Sudan accused Ethiopia of invading Sudan with an army division that drove one hundred kilometers inside the country, capturing four towns, in March 1997.¹⁷⁸ A few months later, according to Sudan’s then-state minister for external relations, Dr. Mustafa Osman Ismail, relations with Ethiopia, unlike with Eritrea or Uganda, had improved considerably. He said he had been in Addis Ababa in October 1997, and that the two sides were in negotiations and had “agreed to keep the water within the banks.”¹⁷⁹

For its part, **Uganda** has strongly supported the SPLA, providing it with access to arms and permission to train its forces within its territory, and, at times, sending its own armed forces across the Sudan border in military campaigns involving actual combat. The government of Sudan has accused Uganda of direct involvement in combat dating back to an attack on Sudanese government positions in southern Sudan in October 1995, which it said was led by

¹⁷³ Letter from Sudan’s permanent representative to the U.N., Elfatih Erwa, to the United Nations Security Council, S/1996/1007 (December 5, 1996).

¹⁷⁴ Letter from Sudan’s permanent representative to the U.N., Elfatih Erwa, to the United Nations Security Council, S/1997/11 (January 6, 1997).

¹⁷⁵ Human Rights Watch interview with Dr. Mutrif Siddiq Ali, deputy director-general of the External Intelligence Agency, Khartoum, November 19, 1997.

¹⁷⁶ Human Rights Watch interview, Sudan, May 17, 1998.

¹⁷⁷ Human Rights Watch traveled through Ethiopia to reach SAF-controlled areas of eastern Sudan in March 1997.

¹⁷⁸ Human Rights Watch interview with Maj. Gen. Muhammad Sanousi Ahmed, deputy chief of staff for military intelligence, Sudan People’s Armed Forces, Khartoum, November 20, 1997.

¹⁷⁹ Human Rights Watch interview, Khartoum, November 20, 1997. Dr. Ismail became Sudan’s minister of external relations in early 1998.

Ugandan forces.¹⁸⁰ According to former LRA child abductees who were at the LRA's Biroka camp in southern Sudan in 1995, the UPDF and SPLA conducted a joint attack on the LRA at Biroka camp in October of that year.¹⁸¹

Several sources stated that Ugandan forces were directly involved in combat within Sudan in March 1997. Human Rights Watch interviewed seven Sudanese "POWs" in Yei, all commissioned officers. None of the prisoners provided concrete information on the sources of arms to the government of Sudan, but the ranking officer stated that the initial shelling in the attack on the government forces in Kaya came from the Ugandan side of the border. He said that this included howitzers, tanks, and mortars.¹⁸² The following day, at the Ugandan border post of Oraba, Human Rights Watch was unexpectedly accosted by a sergeant in the Uganda People's Defence Forces, who volunteered (without being asked) that it had only taken his UPDF unit two days to fight its way to Yei during the March offensive.¹⁸³ Former LRA child soldiers told Human Rights Watch that UPDF forces had joined with the SPLA to attack the LRA's Aru camp, located approximately forty-seven miles from Juba inside Sudan, on April 9-10, 1997.¹⁸⁴ Maj.-Gen. (retired) Salim Saleh, Uganda's overseer of the Ministry of Defense and President Museveni's half-brother, expressed frustration with Sudan's support for the LRA to Human Rights Watch, and suggested that the UPDF was continuing to consider attacking LRA bases inside Sudan: "We had to attack these problems from the source, go after Sudan directly. We are looking at different options. To let Kony sit there because of international law [of sovereignty], we won't accept this anymore."¹⁸⁵

In Gulu in northern Uganda, a former relief worker in the Gulu area told Human Rights Watch that he had personally witnessed Ethiopian military aircraft landing at the Gulu airport with supplies and equipment on an almost nightly basis in February 1997, prior to the March offensive. He also claimed to have seen Eritreans in or around the UPDF barracks, and he said that UPDF officers told him that Eritreans were involved in training SPLA forces there. A Sudanese government official also charged that Eritrean and Ethiopian mercenaries have driven SPLA tanks and fought in SPLA uniforms and that Eritrean troops, tank drivers, and

¹⁸⁰ Human Rights Watch interview with Maj. Gen. Muhammad Sanousi Ahmed, deputy chief of staff for military intelligence, Sudan People's Armed Forces, Khartoum, November 20, 1997.

¹⁸¹ The abductees later managed to escape to Uganda, where they were interviewed by Human Rights Watch in April 1998.

¹⁸² Human Rights Watch interview, Yei (Sudan), July 11, 1997.

¹⁸³ Human Rights Watch interview, Oraba (Uganda), July 12, 1997.

¹⁸⁴ Human Rights Watch interviews, northern Uganda, April 1998.

¹⁸⁵ Human Rights Watch interview, Gulu, April 25, 1998.

operators of heavy artillery were involved in the March 1997 fighting at Yei and Kaya.¹⁸⁶ The government of Sudan has also accused Uganda of sheltering SPLA leaders, providing them with travel documents, helping them to set up training camps, allowing them to recruit members from refugee camps, using Uganda for transshipment of arms from Kenya and Tanzania, and manufacturing landmines and hand grenades at two locations within Uganda (Nakangosola and Luero).¹⁸⁷

The Rebels' Arms Acquisitions

The Sudanese rebels, by their own account, obtain the majority of their weapons either through purchases on the international arms market or in combat with forces of the government of Sudan. SPLA claims that it had captured large quantities of Sudanese government arms in southern Sudan in early 1997, including tanks and artillery, have been confirmed by the eyewitness accounts of independent journalists who toured SPLA-controlled areas shortly after the March 1997 fighting¹⁸⁸ and by a Human Rights Watch visit to the same areas three months later. SAF leaders also claimed to have captured substantial quantities of light and medium arms and some Soviet-model T-54 tanks in battles with government forces in the east and northeastern fronts in April 1997.

In addition, light arms have reached Sudanese opposition forces through an informal smuggling network within Africa that stretches as far south as Mozambique and Angola, according to sources in Nairobi.¹⁸⁹ Landlocked as they are, Sudanese opposition forces are heavily dependent on the cooperation of one or another of the frontline states for the transshipment of such arms. Human Rights Watch confirmed the use of Uganda as a transshipment route for arms intended for the SPLA on several occasions, observing in July 1997 more than one hundred wooden crates of ammunition in Morobo, Sudan (between Kaya and Yei) with shipping instructions clearly marked "To Uganda, via Tanzania" that SPLA officials identified as SPLA equipment that was not to be photographed. Similarly labeled stores of ammunition were observed at other sites, which Human Rights Watch was not permitted to photograph or to approach closely. During that same visit, Human Rights Watch saw crates, at least one of which contained rocket-propelled grenades, that were marked:

¹⁸⁶ Human Rights Watch interview with Dr. Mutrif Siddiq Ali, deputy director-general of the External Intelligence Agency, Khartoum, November 19, 1997.

¹⁸⁷ Human Rights Watch interview with Dr. Mutrif Siddiq Ali, deputy director-general of the External Intelligence Agency, Khartoum, November 19, 1997.

¹⁸⁸ Human Rights Watch interview with James Hooper, London, May 24, 1997

¹⁸⁹ Human Rights Watch interviews with organizers of a conference on the small arms trade in Africa, Nairobi, September 5, 1996.

“MOD Uganda J4951208WMH,” and underneath: “DAR ES SALAAM ITEM(B) NOS.250,” indicating the crates had arrived via Tanzania and Uganda.

In September 1997, South African press reports stated that SPLA troops had been seen with South African-made armored vehicles, ammunition and anti-aircraft missiles, supplied to the rebels by or through Uganda.¹⁹⁰ A Sudanese government official subsequently charged that the SPLA has South African-made Mamba armored vehicles that were sold to Uganda and then passed on to the rebels. This official also claimed that South African ex-soldiers have worked as mercenaries with the SPLA: “They are not engaging in combat but are training SPLA guerrillas and handle some of their missiles. We have seen them in the back of the battlefield,” he told Human Rights Watch.¹⁹¹ The same official also claimed that government forces had recovered an Indian-made Milan wire-guided antitank weapon during fighting in the south with the SPLA and that Indian officials, when confronted with this, said that a foreigner who worked with a gold-mining company in southern Sudan had obtained the antitank weapons independently.¹⁹²

In March 1998, Human Rights Watch wrote letters to the governments of Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Uganda to solicit their comments on reports of their aiding Sudanese rebel forces, and as of the middle of August 1998 had received a reply only from the government of Ethiopia. A senior Foreign Ministry official wrote to state that “all the points raised by Human Rights Watch...have no relevance to the present political reality of Ethiopia,” because, he said, “Ethiopia...in no way indulges in an activity that undermines the peace and stability of a neighbourly sisterly country,” and “in addition as a country which has experienced a protracted civil war, which has claimed the life of million [sic] of its citizens and caused an incalculable loss of property will have neither the political nor the moral ground to involve in an activity which exacerbates the conflict in the Sudan.”¹⁹³ The Ugandan High Commissioner in South Africa was quoted as having given assurances to South Africa in 1997 that no

¹⁹⁰ Marion Edmunds, “SA Arms in the Sudan Conflict,” *Mail & Guardian* (Johannesburg), September 4, 1997.

¹⁹¹ Human Rights Watch interview with Dr. Mutrif Siddiq Ali, deputy director-general of the External Intelligence Agency, Khartoum, November 19, 1997. At the end of July 1998, the Sudanese ambassador to South Africa, Nasr Eddin Ahmed Idris, stated in response to a South African television report on July 28 that “there is no evidence” that the government of South Africa had supplied weapons to Sudanese rebels, but reiterated earlier allegations that South African nationals had been involved in aiding the rebels. “Sudan Envoy Clears SA Government of Links to Arms Deals,” SAPA-AFP, July 31, 1998.

¹⁹² Human Rights Watch interview, Khartoum, November 19, 1997. Dr. Ali also said that he accepted the explanation offered by the Indian officials.

¹⁹³ Letter from Berhanu Kebede, director general for International Organizations and Economic Cooperation at the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to Human Rights Watch on May 21, 1998.

equipment provided by South Africa to Uganda had been passed on to the SPLA (or Rwanda).¹⁹⁴

The U.S. Role

Uganda, Eritrea, and Ethiopia have each received military and political support from the United States since 1995. U.S. military experts have run special programs in Ethiopia and Uganda after those countries volunteered to participate in the U.S.-backed African Rapid Deployment Force project in 1996, and U.S. military units have assisted the Eritreans with demining operations, as well as providing advice on “professionalizing” the new country’s armed forces after independence from Ethiopia. At the end of 1996, the U.S. also announced plans to provide the three frontline states with \$20 million in what it termed “nonlethal military aid”—uniforms, boots, tents, trucks, and other military equipment—to enhance their defensive capacities. A Sudanese government official has since charged that the U.S. provided Eritrea and Ethiopia with sophisticated radio-interception and jamming equipment.¹⁹⁵ Diplomats in the region have also cited U.S. pressure on representatives of allied states not to expose arms networks catering to Rwandan and Burundian Hutu rebels in Kenya, as these same networks serve the SPLA.¹⁹⁶

In fiscal years (FY) 1997 and 1998, all three states received funding under the U.S. International Military Education and Training (IMET) program. Eritrea received \$413,000 in FY1997 and \$425,000 in FY 1998; Ethiopia received \$313,000 in FY1997 and \$475,000 in FY1998; and Uganda received \$342,000 in FY1997 and \$400,000 in FY1998.¹⁹⁷ The only official U.S. Africa Crisis Response Initiative training of frontline states took place in Uganda in May 1997, involving about 750 Ugandan troops. There are no segregable figures for the cost of the ammunition and equipment used solely for ACRI training, whose equipment (as opposed to training) budget was \$4.5 million in FY1997 and \$10 million in FY1998 for the entire program (including Uganda and Ethiopia).¹⁹⁸ Moreover, the U.S. sold \$1,934,000 in

¹⁹⁴ “Weapons for Uganda,” *Jane’s Defence Weekly*, September 3, 1997.

¹⁹⁵ Human Rights Watch interview with Dr. Mutrif Siddiq Ali, deputy director-general of the External Intelligence Agency, Khartoum, November 19, 1997.

¹⁹⁶ Human Rights Watch interviews with U.S. and U.N. officials involved in the investigation of these networks, Nairobi, August 12 and 18, 1996, respectively. See *Stoking the Fires*, pp. 32-33.

¹⁹⁷ Secretary of State, “Congressional Presentation for Foreign Operations Fiscal Year 1999” (Washington, DC: 1998), pp. 83 (Eritrea), 85 (Ethiopia), and 134 (Uganda).

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 140.

defense articles and services to Eritrea under the Foreign Military Sales program in FY1997. Similar sales to Ethiopia amounted to \$1,120,000, and to Uganda to \$3,872,000.¹⁹⁹

In November 1997, the U.S. unilaterally tightened sanctions on the government of Sudan—sanctions that were initially imposed in 1989 and strengthened several times since then—by blocking all Sudanese assets in the U.S. and barring U.S. individuals and companies from most transactions with Sudan. In issuing the November 3, 1997 Executive Order, U.S. President Bill Clinton accused the government of Sudan of “continued support for international terrorism; ongoing efforts to destabilize neighboring governments; and the prevalence of human rights violations, including slavery and the denial of religious freedom.” On December 11, U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright repeated these charges during a visit to northern Uganda, signaling continued U.S. hostility to the government of Sudan and support for the frontline states which are backing the armed Sudanese opposition and are facing rebels supported by the Sudanese government. Secretary Albright’s meeting with SPLA leader John Garang and three other NDA leaders in Uganda triggered accusations by Sudanese government officials that the United States had “hostile intentions against Sudan.”²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁹ “U.S. Military Sales to Africa and the Middle East for 1997,” *Defense Affairs of Africa and the Middle East* (Darlington, Maryland), vol. 1, no. 1 (May 1998), p. 5. Eritrea also purchased \$544,000, and Ethiopia \$388,000, in “construction” sales under FMS. In addition, licenses had been issued for the commercial sale of U.S. defense articles and services to Eritrea in the amount of \$900,000 and to Uganda in the amount of \$4,000 at the end of FY1997.

²⁰⁰ “Sudan vows to expose US ‘hostility.’” *Agence France Presse*, December 14, 1997.

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