

# The Role of Civil Society Organizations in Conflict Resolution: The Case of Darfur Region, Sudan

<sup>1</sup>Mohammed A.N.A.Imam (Ph.D), <sup>2</sup>Idriss Yousif Abdelrahman

<sup>1</sup>Associate Professor of Sociology Peace studies and community development Center, University of Nyala, Sudan

<sup>2</sup>Civil Society Activist, South Darfur, Sudan

**Abstract:** *This study examines the role of civil society organizations (CSOs) in contemporary conflict resolution in Sudan, focusing on Darfur conflict as case study. The study used both historical and descriptive methods to obtain empirical data, thus different tools such as in-depth interviews (IDI), focus group discussions (FGD) and structured questionnaires were used for gathering primary data. Other secondary sources were used to enrich the paper, especially in the literature review section. The conflict in Darfur rooted historically several years back, but it became more violent in February 2002. Though it has not yet been completely resolved; the conflict affects all aspects of people's lives in the region. Several actors at national, regional and international levels have been involved to achieve sustainable peace in Darfur with signature of several partial peace agreements between Sudan Government and some opposition groups. Considering the crucial roles played by the CSOs, the paper concluded that involvement of CSOs in conflict resolution is important for comprehensive and sustainable peace agreement in the region, but the government and opposition groups should also be willing to achieve the peace through attending dialogues and negotiations.*

**Keywords:** *Civil Society Organizations, Conflict, Conflict Resolution, Darfur.*

## Background

The history of Darfur conflict is very old as it began for more than half a century. Darfur region has witnessed different types and forms of conflicts. Yet the current conflict which began in February 2003 has been preceded by peaceful movements by organizations demonstrating on the scarce resource allocation of the Sudan central government to Darfur region. These organizations were the Red Flame Movement (Al-Laheep Al-Ahmer) in 1957, Darfur Redemption Front (JabhatNahdat Darfur) in 1965, and Soni Organization 1964, the main demand of these peaceful movements was claiming unbalance development and social services provision or improvement in Darfur (Hassan and Ray, 2009). The current conflict is more or less continuation of these peaceful demands with various reasons, including the combination of

developmental challenges, economic and political factors(De Waal,2007).

The pursuance of these demands turned out to become more violent as actors began to be using heavy arms, high political stakes and the consequences of which became beyond the local conflict resolution mechanism (Judea or Reconciliation conferences) and that is due to the high damage that exceeding local resources response adding that, response of the state to armed insurgency with more brutal counter insurgency the result of which induced international interference and media (Mohamadani, 2009).

The armed conflict that erupted in Darfur has been labeled as one of the most human catastrophes by the United Nations due to the massive population movement to the IDPs and refugees camps(United

Nations Report, 2013).The humanitarian response was highly international and national where the CSOs participated to find solution of this crisis and advocating for peaceful solution for the conflict, as well as providing humanitarian assistant to the victims elsewhere. As stated by some scholars, on-going conflict has three layers or even levels; first grass root conflict over natural resources (land, pasture and water etc), this involve farmers and nomads and normally settled through local traditional mechanism in which the neutral and impartial native administration leaders play leading role using customary laws and rules. Second, conflict over power at Darfur region level, this conflict is mainly local elites driven using ethnic and tribal background for political status power claims. Third, Marginalization of Sudan peripheries by central power and wealth at Khartoum that predated to colonial era (Al Zain, 2009).

The violent conflict in Darfur is characterized by massive population movement and unfolding humanitarian crisis. Since it is eruption in 2003, hundreds of thousands people were displaced and tens of thousands were killed. Internal Displaced persons (IDPs) figure are ranging from 1.6 to 1.8 Million. In addition, there were about 200,000 refugees in Chad and about 180,000 to 300,000allegedly killed. International response was late to the crisis in Darfur due to the several factors prevailing when conflict started in Darfur, in late 2002 international community and regional organization of intergovernmental authority for development (IGAD)was involved in settling 20 years old conflict between government of the Sudan and Sudanese revolution army /movement (SLA/M) of the south Sudan and efforts are exerted to settle south Sudan conflict as well there was ongoing war in Iraq and Afghanistan where UN and world powerful countries were busy in those areas ,the general international context have delayed response to Darfur crisis however advocacy group continue to raise issues of growing Darfur crisis through the media and UN briefings.

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) have played positive roles in various respects at the local, national and regional as well as global levels. Efforts of the CSOs during the cold war through advocacy, lobbying, demonstrations and boycott of certain commodities and they have been succeeded among other efforts to reduce racing of nuclear weapons, land mines, explosive ordinance and lethal arms (World Bank, 2013). The role of CSOs is increasing in peace building process, post conflict state building and development, in addition to their positives contribution to the conflict resolution in their nation states through advocacy for human rights, good governance principles and participation.

In view of this background, the present study is set out to assess the role of CSOs in conflict resolution in Darfur region, Sudan. To successfully understand the underlying factors for the emergence of the conflict and provide a lasting solution to the conflict, the study goes beyond the role of the CSOs but also examines the historical antecedents and the impact of Darfur conflict as well as the possible solutions to the conflict for the safety of the Darfurian population (who the most affected) and Sudanese in general. Thus, considering the fatal consequences of the Darfur conflict and the impact of CSOs in containing the conflict, the study will examine the role of the CSOs in conflict resolution in Sudan with the view to finding more lasting and sustainable peace in the affected region and the country at large.

### **Literature Review**

There is large body large body of literature on the Darfur conflict and the relevance CSOs' intervention in conflict resolution (De Waal, 2007; Fischer et al. 2007; Mohamadani, 2009; Evans et al. 2013).Alex De Waal (2007), in his book titled: *The war in Darfur and the search for peace*; he brought together, essays by noted Sudanese scholars and international experts on Darfur, containing mush new historical and contemporary research by examining the causes of the war and how the Sudanese state functions, disputes over land rights

and local government helped spark conflicts, and he turns to international efforts to achieve peace in Darfur.

In their report about former Yugoslavia civil war in Bosnia, Fischer et al. (2007) have also examined the Dayton Peace Agreement in 1992, where considerable efforts made by CSOs in terms of civic education and human rights protection were successful. Fisher and his colleagues commented also on the role of CSOs which was important and he suggested that it would have been more effective if they were involved from the very beginning of the peace process to the final agreement. Mohamadani (2009), in his book: *Savior and Survivors, Darfur Politics and the war on terror*, he brings out a unique perspective on the crisis in Darfur, analyzing the situation from the context of the history of Sudan and then examined the world response to the crisis. The book builds upon the historical background, the war in the neighboring countries of Libya and Chad, the civil war in Chad and its spillover to Sudan and the most affected region of Darfur. The historical perspective of the Mahamadani's (2009) book also traced the colonial era in Sudan and its administration in Darfur on tribal base (native administration), tribal war in Darfur in 1987-1989 and how it has been developed to the armed opposition in 2003 and the brutal counter-insurgency that resulted in humanitarian crisis.

Leila (2007), in his book titled "Arabs Civil Society and the Issues of Citizenship", discussed the ideal characteristic of Civil Society, its principles, promotion of social justice, participation and respect to human rights and networking at national and international level. The author cast light on the Arab nation and Civil Society, its hopes and challenges. Also, the work has reflected on the role of Civil Society in nation state, elections and promotion of human rights. Fischer (2006), in his book Titled "Civil Society in Conflict transformation: Ambivalence potential and challenges" The author is focusing on the potential contribution of the CSOs actors for peace building

and conflict, by addressing some central questions such as: What type of activities do international and transitional NGOs undertake in order to influence international politics in a way that contribute to stable peace and coping with global challenges? What potential do actors from CSOs for war to peace transitions? What problem and dilemma facing development of CSOs in war-torn societies? What are the limitations of CSOs contributions and how does it relates to state building? (Young, 2004).

The study is looking to the Darfur conflict from livelihood prospective and examined livelihood as an integral part of Darfur conflict and to the war economy that needs comprehensive response locally, nationally and international through the peace agreement that embedding land restitution, compensations, reconciliation among the local community, opening of livestock and trading route and boosting of development project and emphasizing humanitarian assistance continuity as interim solution for immediate live saving of IDPs and refugees. Toure (2002), the role of civil society in reconciliation and peace building in Liberia, this research reflected on the history of civil war, causes and consequences in Liberia and how the Afro-America rulers for the state stigmatized and marginalized the native community of Liberia to play an active role in the ruling of their own country and economic marginalization. The report reflects the positive role played by Liberian civil society in the peace process and post conflict government to date.

### **Conceptualization: Civil Society Organizations, Conflict, Conflict Resolution**

**Civil Society Organizations:** There are several definitions of the term Civil Society Organizations. However, for the purpose of this paper, the most prominent definition by the World Bank would be used. According to World Bank (2006), Civil Society is a wide array of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and not-for profit organizations that have presence in public life, expressing the interests and values of their members or others, based on ethical, cultural, political,

scientific, religious, or philanthropic considerations. Based on the World Bank (2006) terminology, therefore, the term covers a wide range of organizations, including community groups, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), labor unions, indigenous groups, charitable organizations, faith-based organizations, professional associations, and foundations.

**Conflict** is a form of confrontation due to clash of interest. It is a kind of relationship between two or more parties,(individuals or groups) who have, or think they have incompatible goals(Fischer, 2007).Conflict and violence are two different things. While conflict involves mutual hostility, violence is more of a predatory harm or attack against a victim. Violence consist of actions, words, attitudes, behavior, structures or systems that cause physical, psychological, social or environmental damage and /or prevent people from reaching their full human potential.

**Conflict resolution:** Conflict resolution is any effort exerted to reduce the effect of conflict from violence to peaceful settlement addresses root-causes of conflict through negotiation, mediation, arbitration or adjudication (Fischer, 2007). Conflict resolution is simply the process of achieving peaceful coexistence between two or contending parties. It is usually facilitated by a third party, known as a mediator, negotiator, intermediary, or an arbiter. In this context, CSOs are considered as any of the mediator, negotiator, arbitrator, or the intermediary between the Sudan authority and the rebels in the Darfur region.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Beginning with the standpoint of Aristotle (as cited in Leila, 2007), he perceives CSOs as public ethical community of free and equal rights under a legally defined system of rule. For Hegel (as cited in Liela, 2007), the concept of CSOs in the Middle Ages was pragmatic and emphasized the role of CSOs as a backbone of the modern state, however, in his theory of hegemony, the state is high above the society. This view contradicts the ideas of neoliberals and democrats who tend to perceive

CSOs as independent entity driven by association, legal framework, voluntary and solidarity supported by open ended communication.

Marxist and post-Marxist theorists, on the other hand, perceive the CSOs as the result of class struggle and, therefore, disillusioned groups and formation of associational life are mechanism to counterbalance the exploitation of the working class by capitalism. The concept and role of the CSOs is complementary to the state and not replacing the state. Some scholars argued that strong Civil Society versus poor state political institutions may lead to the riot. Therefore, the leading role of the state should be always there for the strategic national interest. However, the CSOs are always investing on the social capital to fill the gaps and respond to the needs of the marginalized groups and reintegrating them into society. To fill this gap, CSOs have certain characteristics that have been perceived by all actors including states, international organizations, and business corporations (Bilal, 2005).

Given the foregoing divergent postulations on the role of Civil Society, there are also different theoretical perspectives on the concept of conflict and conflict resolution from several backgrounds. In the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, Marxists referred to conflict as an issue of social imbalance between social classes as a result of the exploitative system of capitalism whereby the bourgeoisies are alienating the working class. Marx (1971, as cited in Bilal, 2005) argued that bourgeoisies are extracting their profit due to the imbalance relationship between owner of the capital, production means and the labors; he argue that, profit were out off from labors cost and through the time working class will develop consciousness of this imbalance relationship then it will lead to conflict while the capitalist to increase profits will expand business space overseas And multinational companies will emerge, creating more injustice all over the globe.

The concept of conflict resolution, on the other hand, is based on the on the peaceful conflict resolution and transformation. To resolve and

transform conflict it is important to analyze it by knowing the types and stages of conflict (Neufeld, 2006). The concept of conflict resolution assumes that conflict is a natural part of human existence and efforts should be exerted to transform destructive violent into constructive mean for the future relation and welfare for all the parties involved.

### **Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in Darfur**

The formation of CSOs in Darfur region has established long time ago, however Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Community Based Organizations (CBOs) increased considerably in 1980s due to the drought that hit northern part of and Darfur region was the most severely affected and the amount of NGOs increased more in 1990s due to the adjustment humanitarian agencies program from relief assistant to rehabilitation and development program; this transformation influenced by the concept of sustainable development using participatory community development approach that prevailed in 1990s and advocated by United Nations Development Program(UNDP) to promote implementation of its Millennium development program this has result in formation of community based organizations with its large amount in the north Darfur. Darfur conflict in 2003 increased the emergence CSOs tremendously according to the study conducted by UN agencies in Darfur, the CSOs increased by 65% there were 241 registered CSOs in Darfur region in 2009, reported by UNDP mapping and capacity assessment of civil society organizations in Darfur, 2009.

The effect of the Darfur conflict has influenced the CSOs and they are divided along geographical, ethnic and political lines and almost over 57% of the CSOs are led by women and these surfaces the role of women in the social change in countries affected by civil war (Mohamadani, 2009).Majority of CSOs are working in humanitarian field and this is mainly due to the partnership with international humanitarian agencies whose priority is humanitarian assistant, this trend was changed gradually due to the peace agreements signed in

2006 and 2011 between Sudan Government and Darfur opposition groups to recovery and peace building activities.

### **Conflict Resolution Process in Darfur Region**

There are three main systems of conflict resolution in Sudan as general and Darfur in particular, the traditional driven by the community (Ajaweed), reconciliation process and internal state driven; the later has been practiced in Adis Ababa agreement between the government of Sudan and Ananya two armed movement from South Sudan in 1972, as well as the external state driven result in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement ( CPA) in 2005 between the government of Sudan with South Sudan , Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) in Abuja 2006 and Darfur Doha Peace Document in 2009 (Mahamadain, 2009).

Contemporary or external conflicts resolution process in Sudan civil wars is employing the external state/s driven process and international mediation due to the development of the conflict and involvement of international dimension. The involvement of CSOs in ongoing Darfur conflict settlement was evolving gradually from informal participation to the CPA in 2005, DPA in 2006 to well formal structured support to Doha Document for Peace in Darfur DDPD in 2011, the later experienced unprecedented CSOs participation in the region. Again the involvement of local community in conflict resolution is a legacy of Darfurian experience and wisdom embedded in the customs and traditions since long ago, however it has been reintroduced to take in to consideration inclusiveness and capacity building of the CSOs, IDPs, Refugees, Traditional and Religious leaders, women groups, Civil activist, Human rights advocacy groups and Nomads to participate in the peace process and to create ownership for any peace agreement with an intension to address root causes of the conflict in Darfur region.

Conflict resolution mechanism in Darfur is rested over traditional (Judeya) system which is highly comfortable and effective to settled limited tribal disputes using customary laws to achieve justice

through restorative and reparation process. Also the Judeya system mainly practiced by native administration leaders, elites led reconciliation and conflict resolution conferences has offered opportunity for Darfur community to gain experience and compile set of customary laws and rules disputes settlement, this experience evolved in the later through formation of CSOs and have been upgraded through capacity building and consultation meetings and workshops offered by international community and national institutions. But according to complexity of ongoing conflict in terms of parties' involved, mass violation and higher number IDPs and refugees is no longer the traditional Judeya system applicable to settled kind of these deadly conflicts.

After Dap was signed in June 2006 between Government of Sudan(GOS) and Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) one of the main opposition groups in the region led by Mini Minawi, this peace agreement faced many problems and challenges such as lacking support and eventual implementation constraint. Under this situation the civil society and international community started looking means and ways to reach inclusive and comprehensive peace agreement for the region.

The communication started with CSOs and grass root community to facilitate the peace process in Darfur, UN mission in Sudan (UNMISS) later developed in to the United Nations and African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) started communication with Darfurian community, peace centers in Khartoum and Universities to organize consultations to gauge views of people on lasting peace for Darfur. The same approach have been taken by regional and international organizations and consultation meetings and workshops have been convened in Dar el Salam( Tanzania), Heidelberg 1 and 11 in Germany, in this consultations CSOs started developing views over some thematic areas for Darfur comprehensive peace process. Later more efforts were made jointly by UN and AU to engage CSOs in Darfur Peace process and as well the Government of Sudan and non- signatory

opposition movements to the DPA were intensively consulted. In this regard the CSOs call for peaceful conflict settlement in Darfur within the united Sudan, the CSOs in their call and declaration emphasized the essence of including all darfurian views in any upcoming peace process and comprehensive peace agreement. The CSOs through its effective participation emphasized that, the root cause of Darfur conflict is political and it is resulted from marginalization of Darfur by the Center in power and wealth sharing for several past years.

Darfur peace process finally and not finally concluded to Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD) signed between the government of the Sudan and justice and Liberation Movement (LJM) in Doha (Qatar) in July, 2011, and still other opposition groups were refused to sign which clearly means the comprehensive peace agreement in Darfur not yet achieved. Although, the role of CSOs in Darfur peace process is still remaining vital to convince non signatories to join DDPD or to help parties to reach comprehensive peace agreement in Darfur.

### **Methodology**

The study used a combination of methodologies, including survey, historical and descriptive methods. The survey was used in order to gather the opinion of the public on the factors underlying the emergence of the Darfur conflict and solutions to the problem. The historical methodology was used in order to trace the historical background of the conflict and background on the involvement of CSOs in resolving the conflict. The descriptive method was used to describe how political reasons, struggle for scarce resources and ethnicity have influenced the conflict, as well as the nature of the involvement of the CSOs and their role in containing the conflict. The study used both primary and secondary data. Regarding the primary data collection process, sixty (60) structured questionnaires were distributed as sample size to represent a target population of one hundred and seventy (170) civil society organizations in Darfur states and Khartoum. Forty two (42) questionnaires

were returned successfully. The questionnaire relies on ranking process by providing three major areas (questions) which covered the research problem. Each question had given four options (answers) to the respondents' ranking according to their priorities. The questionnaires were transformed in to a descriptive statistics and tables with simple percentages by assigning each question a value (coding process). The empirical data collection was analyzed in this manner. The secondary data include all the secondary data sources: newspaper, journal articles, conference proceedings, internet materials, etc.

**Results and Discussions**

The conflict in Darfur is rooted in socio-economic, political, and historical factors. It has developed steadily since 1965, though initially it was a peaceful political engagement by Darfurian parliamentarian, civil servants and military staff who peacefully demonstrated Darfur poor development services and participation in central government. Based on these observations, this section entails the results and discussions of the major findings about the root causes of Darfur conflict, the roles of the CSOs in comprehensives peace process for Darfur region, and the possible solutions for sustainable peace process in the region.

**Table 1: Ranking Root Causes of Conflict in Darfur**

Causes	First	Second	Third	Fourth
Political conflict	59.5%	26.2%	14.3%	0
Natural resources	14.3	23.8%	54.8%	7.1%
Poor Development Projects	26.2	50%	9.5%	14.3
Ethnic diversity	0	0	21.4%	0

Source: Field work, 2014

The result of the analysis on ranking the root causes of conflict in Darfur shows that about 59.5 percent of the respondents reported that the conflict is a political between the dissidents and the government authority; 54.8 percent believe that the root cause is struggle over natural resources; 50 percent of the sample agreed that it is on the basis of poor development projects; while few of the respondents (21.4%) reported that it was crisis on the basis of ethnic diversity. The findings revealed that the conflict is underlies by political objective and going by the submission of the Marxist political economy approach, unequal power relation between parties involved is a reason to escalate violent experience of the Darfur region. This can be possible by changing the peaceful demands to a violent agitation and then war-like confrontation.

The finding is also supported by Mustapha's (2013) work who reported on the security matters of seven countries, most of which are West African (Mali, Niger, Sierra-Leone, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Liberia,

and Nigeria) and the study and highlighted the situations specific to each country. For Mustapha (2013), the security sector in most African countries is shaped by the continent's landlocked nature, its' sharing of borders with many countries, the border crises with neighbors which twice led to wars, and the authoritarian nature of its political system. But the study established that ethnicity plays little role in inciting the Darfur conflict, thus, in discord with the assertion of Williams (2013) who contends that security concern is crucial part of pre-colonial African history of governance with all the inter-ethnic and religious conflicts from within and without. In short, according to table I above, the results apparently revealed that, the essential root causes for Darfur are political factor, conflict over natural resources, poor development project and ethnic and tribal diversity of the region respectively.

The following table deals with the roles played by the CSOs in the conflict resolution in the Darfur region during the conflict. Such roles include the

assisting the parties in the peace and reconciliation process, reflection on the views of the region's communities, advocacy and dissemination of peace culture.

**Table 2: Ranking Roles of CSOs in Darfur Conflict Resolution for Sustainable Peace**

Role of CSOs	First	Second	Third	Fourth
Assist Parties to Peace and Reconciliation Agreements	14.3%	21.4%	31%	13%
Reflect Views of the Community to the Parties	45.2%	21.4%	16.7%	19%
Advocacy for Peaceful conflict resolution	14.3%	33.3%	38.0%	14.3%
Dissemination of Peace Culture	26.2%	23.8%	16.7%	35.7%

Source: Field work, 2014

Table 2 presents data on ranking the role of CSOs in resolving conflict in Darfur in order to achieve sustainable peace. Those respondents that consider the role of CSOs in conflict resolution through assisting conflicting parties in peace and reconciliation agreements constitute 31 percent. Majority of the respondents (45.2%) reported the role of the CSOs in solving Darfur conflict by reflecting the views of the community to the contending parties; 38.0 percent of the respondents recognized advocacy for peaceful conflict resolution by the CSOs as the role played by these societies in the conflict resolution, and 35.7 percent of the total sample reported that dissemination of peace culture was the role of the CSOs in the conflict.

From the foregoing, it is obvious that the CSOs are instrumental to the bringing an end to the Darfur conflict's dead toll. The role is even beyond what

other formal agencies might play. For example, international institutions, like International Criminal Court might not be able to stop, but only litigate in the aftermath of the war, while the damage is already done. The militating factors against the idea of international criminal responsibility, there is on the other side a more severe danger of armed conflicts which has caused more than 86 million civilians to have died, been disabled, or been stripped off their rights, property and dignity since the end of the world war II (Abubakar, 2013). According to Abubakar (2013), the international community has done very little to these victims or their families. Most victims have been forgotten and few perpetrators have been brought to justice, thus making a culture of impunity to prevail in the world. But in the case of crises like that of the Darfur, the CSOs can facilitate truce and then call the parties to the negotiating table and subsequently bring an end to the hostility between the parties.

**Table 3: Ranking Recommended Solutions for Sustainable Peace in Darfur**

Solutions	First	Second	Third	Fourth
Inclusive political solutions to include armed movements and opposition parties in peace process	78.6%	11.9%	2.4%	7.1%
Demarcation of localities boundaries and tribal lands (hakoras), opening of livestock routes and activate innovate land use policies	4.8%	19%	23.8%	50%
Implementation of development and infrastructure projects (Power stations and roads)	16.7%	54.8%	21.4%	11.9%
Reactivation of customary laws and creation of rules to regulate farming and livestock production	0	14.3%	52.4%	31%

Source: Field work, 2014



Table 3 presents data on ranking the possible solution to Darfur conflict, where 78.6 percent of the respondents suggested inclusive political solutions to include armed movements and opposition parties in peace process as the solution; 50 percent of the total sample reported demarcation of localities boundaries and tribal lands (hakoras), opening of livestock routes and introduce land use policies as the solution; 54.8 percent of the respondents suggested that implementation of development and infrastructure projects, such as power stations and roads can be possible solution to the Darfur conflict; and 52.4 percent of them said the best solution is reactivation of customary laws and creation of rules to regulate farming and livestock production. However, the final solution seems narrow, it is important to note that conflict typically leaves countries with severe macroeconomic problems. A shrunken economic base, moderate to high inflation, chronic fiscal deficits, high levels of external and domestic government debt and low domestic government revenues are among the more prominent features of these economies (Ohirohenuan, 2011).

### **Conclusion**

The main thrust of the paper is to investigate the role of CSOs in conflict resolution in the Darfur region of Sudan. The study did not narrow its scope to the role of the CSOs, because searching for a lasting solution to a problem requires tracing the origin of the problem. Thus, the study covers areas like the root causes of Civil War in Darfur, the role of the roles and then tried to provide some possible solutions to the conflict. Although, the role of CSOs in conflict resolution in Sudan have started slowly through limited involvement during the peace process where the government involved native administration and some intellectuals and dignitaries in peace process but it evolved to full participation in the recent years and the involvement of the CSOs in the conflict has significant impact in containing the intensity of conflict. This has to be acknowledged because the

involvement of the CSOs had facilitated dialogues and negotiations, which ushered in a relative peace.

The above conclusion is confirmed by the empirical data generated which revealed relevance of the involvement of CSOs in the Darfur conflict. The CSOs have operated in various constructive peace processes and their role have helped parties to resolve conflict in the Darfur. Obviously, the various CSOs have developed some systematic framework for peace between the parties involved. To some extent, the Darfur conflict is said to be instigated by political objectives over power and wealth sharing. It is also a conflict over natural resources, poor development services and ethnic diversity in the absent or weak conflict resolution institutions and rule of law. This makes the intervention of the CSOs relevant if not necessary for the affected region in particular and Sudan in general to attain sustainable peace. It is at this juncture that the paper comes up with the view that achieving sustainable peace in the region and the Sudan as a whole shall be complemented with inclusive peace process, address poor development issues and other infra-structures, proper natural resource management, improved security, land tenure and land use and clear demarcation of localities boundary.

Based on the findings of the present study, it is correct to argue that CSOs are filling the gap between the state and the community in the moment of conflict. Yet, it should be suggested that their (CSOs) role has to remain independent, neutral and impartial to reflect views of constituencies to the government and opposition groups in just neutral manner, advocate for peaceful conflict resolution and civic education, assist parties to the agreements to implement the agreement on the ground and have to participate on peace agreement dissemination programs.

As final remarks for this study of the CSOs to play effective role in conflict resolution in Darfur region, firstly Sudan government, armed movements, civil society and international stakeholders have to continue advocating for inclusive peace process

through negotiations to achieve sustainable peace in Darfur through political settlement. Secondly, Conflict in Darfur is more periphery centre oriented with claims of unjust, power and wealth sharing at central level that has recognized the rights of other under developed parts of the country therefore any peace process should include other non-armed opposition groups to achieved just peace and for all the people of the Sudan. Thirdly, CSOs should be part and parcel of any sustainable solution for the conflict in Darfur and other parts of the Sudan.

## References

1. Abubakar, A. (2015). "A Review of the Challenges of the International Criminal Court in the Prosecution of Sitting Heads of State under the Rome Statute". Being a paper presented at international conference of Social Sciences and Law (ICSSL), Africa organized by Nigerian Turkish Nile University, 7-8 May 2015.
2. Azeen, Adam. (2009).Darfur from Security Chaos to Social Peace. University of Khartoum.
3. De Coning, C. & Henderson, I. (2008).Conflict Management for Peace Keepers and Peace Builders. ACCORD.
4. De Waal, A. (2007). War in Darfur and Search for Peace, justice Africa.
5. Evans, I., Lane, J., Pealer, J. & Turner, M. (2013).A Conceptual Model of Peacebuilding and Democracy Building: Integrating the Fields. The Conflict Resolution and Change Management in Transitioning Democracies Practicum Group, School of International Service, American University
6. Fisher, S.et al. (2007).Impression 7, Working with Conflicts, Skills and Strategies for Action, London: Zed Books.
7. Hassan, S. &Eray, C. (2009).Darfur and the Crisis of Governance in Sudan.Carnell University Press, Netherlands.
8. Leila, A. (2007). Arabs Civil Society on the Issues of Citizenship. Cairo.
9. Mohamadani, M.(2009). Savior and Survivors - Darfur Politics and war on Terror.
10. Mustapha, A. R. (2013). "Waging Peace in West Africa: A Good Practices Guide to Security Interventions in Conflict Situations".In A. R. Mustapha (ed.) Conflicts and Security Governance in West Africa. Abuja: Altus Global Alliance.
11. Ohiorhenuan, J. F. (2011). Post-conflict Recovery: Approaches, Policies and Partnerships.Centre for Research on Peace and Development, Working Paper No. 4.
12. United Nations Report (2013). United Nations Report, December, 2013.
13. William, O. (2013). "Forward". In A.R. Mustapha (ed.) Conflicts and Security Governancein West Africa.Abuja: Altus Global Alliance.
14. World Bank (2013). "Definition of civil society". Updated on 22 July, 2013. [www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org)
15. Young, H. (2004). Darfur livelihood Under Siege.