



# Situation Report

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## Eastern Sudan: Challenges facing the implementation of the peace agreement in Gedaref State

### Introduction<sup>3</sup>

This paper looks at some of the challenges facing the East Sudan Peace Agreement (ESPA) concluded in Eritrea in October 2006; between the government of Sudan and the Eastern Front (EF). The agreement brought to an end ten years of hostilities in eastern Sudan and averted a widening crisis in the region. With Eritrean mediation, the agreement was concluded in a relatively short period, possibly because the problems in eastern Sudan are not as intractable as those in other parts of the country (such as South Sudan and Darfur). However, the relatively smooth way in which the agreement was reached does not imply any guarantee that such “ease” will also be reflected in the implementation process, and there is ample evidence, even before ESPA reaches its first anniversary, that the agreement is facing a number of internal and external challenges. These relate, in part, to the demographic composition of Eastern Sudan; another issue is the lack of clear mechanisms or modalities for implementation. A further challenge is the re-inclusion of Gedaref State in the context of Eastern Sudan. Although other challenges are no less significant, this paper will focus primarily on the re-inclusion of Gedaref and its implications for the future of politics in the region. Its findings are based on brief fieldwork in Gedaref State, primarily focused on interviewing government functionaries and civil society activists. The intention was to capture a general picture of the opinion of civil society leaders about the ESPA and its implications for Gedaref. First it presents general background information on Eastern Sudan with particular emphasis on Gedaref State. Second, we take a critical look at the ESPA and discuss some of its main elements and provisions. Moreover, the issue of Gedaref within Eastern Sudan and within ESPA will be addressed. Problems and challenges facing the agreement will then be discussed based on field data.

### Eastern Sudan<sup>4</sup>

Eastern Sudan<sup>5</sup> covers an area of 336,480 square kilometres, slightly larger than the area of Poland. It is a strategic region that includes Port Sudan – the country’s economic lifeline, through which most of its foreign trade passes, including Sudan oil exportation pipeline; many irrigated and semi-mechanised agricultural schemes; and a long border with Eritrea, with which Sudan has had troubled relations for most of the past twelve years. The population of the three states comprising Eastern Sudan – Red Sea, Kassala and Gedaref – is approximately four million<sup>6</sup>, composed of many indigenous ethnic groups. The principal ethnic group is the Beja, with its four major sub-groups: the Hadendowa in the Red Sea, the Amar’ar, primarily in Red Sea State, the Beni Amer, divided between Sudan and Eritrea, and the Bishariyyin, who are found in both Sudan and Egypt.

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The East is also populated by several “Arab”<sup>7</sup> tribes. The Shukriyya, farmers and pastoralists who were granted land by the King of Sinnar during the Funj kingdom (1504–1821), are the largest in present-day Gedaref. Other groups, such as the Shaiqiyya and Ja’aliyin, comprise part of the dominant economic and administrative class in the East. The Rashaida, *Bedouin* (nomads) who emigrated from Saudi Arabia after 1869 live on the outskirts of Kassala town and along the Eritrean border. Economic migrants from Western Sudan and as far as West Africa have also been drawn to the region. By one estimate descendants of West African migrants from the Hausa, Zabarma and Bargo tribes comprise between 30 to 40 per cent of the population of Gedaref (Hardallu and El Tayeb 2005 33). Darfurians, Nuba and southern Sudanese populations are also numerous in Port Sudan and the Kassala area of Eastern Sudan.

The economy is based primarily on large-scale agriculture and the activities of Port Sudan.<sup>8</sup> Both are significant sources of state revenue and make the East one of the country’s wealthier regions (World Bank 2001). Although these economic activities profit the few who own the farms and port companies and provide a steady income for employees, they represent little benefit to the nomads and small-scale farmers in the rural areas, and despite this ‘wealth’, the Red Sea State has one of the highest levels of poverty in the country, with a per capita income of just \$93 in 2004, according to one household survey (World Food Programme 2005, 48).

For the rural majority, survival is based on subsistence farming and the livestock trade, a form of livelihood that has been under threat over the past 50 years and particularly over the last two decades because of drought and famine.<sup>9</sup> During the 1983–1985 droughts, the Beja are estimated to have lost 80 percent of their animals; the Amar’ar sub-group shifted entirely from camel rearing to breeding smaller animals and working in Port Sudan (Sidahmed 1995) A World Food Programme (WFP) assessment concludes:

The rural populations in both the [Red Sea State] and Kassala are experiencing a severe erosion of their traditional livelihood systems. Ecological, political and economic factors have combined to create both a recurrent food security crisis and situation of chronic structural poverty for many of the rural households. Recurrent droughts have decimated pasture and livestock herds, significantly reducing the sustainability of pastoral livelihoods. (World Food Programme 2005, 48)

### *Gedaref State*

Gedaref state is located in the east of the Sudan between latitudes 12° 40' and 15° 40' N and longitudes 33° 30' and 36° 30' E. With Kassala and Red Sea States it constitutes what was known as the “Eastern Region”. Gedaref state covers an area of about 71,000 square kilometres with 17 persons per km. Gedaref borders Ethiopia and Eritrea in the east, Gezira State in the west, Sinnar State in the south and Khartoum. For administrative purposes, the state is divided to five localities, each with its own administrative centre considered as the capital of the locality. The capital of the State is the town of Gedaref. The State’s political arrangements resemble those of Sudan’s other States, and are based on the federal system of governance promulgated in 1994; the State is headed by a Wali, appointed by the President. The Wali, in consultation with federal authorities, appoints commissioners for the different localities. Since the Wali is not elected locally, he is not accountable to those under his authority. Theoretically, he is accountable to the Lower House (Gedaref State Legislative Assembly). In practice, however, this is not case and the Wali is accountable only to the President of the Republic; this has been the case since 1989. The question of local level legitimacy is thus omitted from the political equation in Gedaref. The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) stipulated certain changes based on power-sharing arrangements, but this has yet to alter things with regard to the powers of the Wali and his accountability.

In addition to these formal government structures there are traditional administrations known as *Nazaras*. The leader of the *Nazara* is known as a *Nazir*.

He has no official authority over his people or the residents of his *Nazara* area, but he is instrumental in mediating between his followers and the government. The *Nazir* is also involved in solving problems and disputes between people. Only problems that he cannot address are dealt with by courts of law. This way, traditional authorities and government authorities seem to be parallel, but they collaborate; often the government co-opts traditional leadership and uses it for its own purposes. The *Nazir* practices his authorities through middle-ranking leaders known as *Omdas*. Table 1 shows the *Nazaras* of the state, their areas and the tribes under their administration.

**Table 1: Nazararas of the state, their particular areas and tribes**

Nazara	Area	Tribes under Umbrella
Bakur	South of the state	Four, Masaleet, Fallta other west Sudan tribes
Shukrya	Butana	Shukrya, Bataheen, Kawahla, Lahwin
Dabaina	East of the state	Dabaina and other minor groups.
Beni Amir	Gedaref city	Beni Amir
Nahal	Nahal and Hawata	Bargo and other minor groups

Source: Strategic Planning Council – Gedaref State, 2007.

In 2005, the total population of Gedaref State was estimated at around 1.7 million people, divided among the five localities comprising the State, with an annual growth rate of 3.37 percent (Ministry of Finance and Economy 2006, 15). Some 75 percent of the population in the State live in rural areas. As in other parts of Eastern Sudan, Gedaref State is occupied by a mixture of ethnic groups, principal among which are the Dabaina, the Shukrya, Beni Amir, Lahawin, and various others from across the country. However, there is a significant presence of groups from Western Sudan, such as the Masaleet, Fur, Bargo and Fellata. Actually, the origin of some of these groups may be traced all the way back to West Africa (Assal 1997). These different groups compete for both political and economic niches, as will be explained.

Economically, Gedaref is among a handful of economically rich States in Sudan. The economy is dependent largely on a mix of pastoralism and agriculture (rain-fed, mechanised rain-fed and irrigated). Gedaref State has more than 10 million arable *feddan*<sup>10</sup>, though these huge resources are not distributed evenly among people. A few well-positioned merchants and government allies have access to huge agricultural schemes that exceed the permitted acreage. This exacerbated the problems of land shortage and blocked traditional routes that were used by pastoralists during their seasonal movements. Historically Gedaref has also provided shelter for Ethiopian and Eritrean refugees, whose camps are close to mechanised agricultural schemes. In recent years, however, a contestation over the border areas between Ethiopia and Sudan has complicated the issue. The contested land lies in the Al-Fashaga area in the south-eastern part of the State, though both Ethiopia and Sudan maintain a low profile about the continuing dispute, in the interests of preserving the favourable relationship that characterises relations between the two countries at present. Joint committees are attempting to address the Fashaga issue, though it is unclear how they intend to proceed.

Since 1994, the position of Gedaref within Eastern Sudan has been somewhat ambivalent. In addition, the State was less affected by war than other parts of the region (Red Sea and Kassala), and was included only formally in the Eastern Sudan Peace Agreement concluded in October 2006. Many groups in Gedaref resented certain provisions of the ESPA, not because they did not want to be part of Eastern Sudan, but because they saw the signing of the agreement as having given the Hadendowa, Beni Amir and Rashaïda (marginal in Gedaref in terms of numbers) a lot of power at the expense of other significant groups. We will return to this later when we examine the empirical data. The following section will critically look at ESPA.

### *Opportunities and challenges*

The negotiations brokered by the Eritrean government in Asmara between the Sudanese government and the Eastern Front reached an agreement, the ESPA, which was signed in October 2006.<sup>11</sup> This agreement contained a number of stipulations including issues relating to security questions, power- and wealth-sharing. Key government positions that the Eastern Front were to receive included Assistant to the President, Cabinet and State Minister at the federal level, and Advisor to the President, in addition to other positions at State levels. The agreement also provided for the establishment of the Eastern Sudan Reconstruction and Development Fund (ESRDF).

The agreement was hailed as one that commanded support and was likely to be successful if implemented. Article (5) of the agreement provides for the formation of an Eastern Sudan States' Coordination Council to be composed of 15 members. The latter include the three governors (walis) of Gedaref, Kassala and Red Sea States, three assembly speakers, and three members nominated by the Eastern Front. The agreement stipulated that the council shall "perform its duties without prejudice to the constitutional powers and functions of the three states." The agreement also called for the immediate inclusion of 8 seats in the National Assembly for representatives of the Eastern Front. It is interesting to note that none of the three governors were to be from the Eastern Front; instead the power-sharing arrangement gave them a deputy governorship for Kassala and Gedaref States, and one ministerial position in Red Sea State, in addition to one advisor in each of the three States. Ten seats in the legislatures of each of the three Eastern Sudan States were to be allocated to nominees of the Eastern Sudan Front.

A major provision in the agreement, Article (23), provides for the establishment of the Eastern Sudan Reconstruction and Development Fund (ESRDF), which is to be formally established by presidential decree. The ESRDF is to serve as a principal organ in the planning, monitoring and follow-up of the reconstruction and development programme. This programme does not incorporate national development projects, which are undertaken by the national government in Eastern Sudan. The parties agreed that, in addition to the share of Eastern Sudan in the Fiscal and Financial Allocation and Monitoring Commission (FFAMC) transfers, the national government shall allocate an amount equivalent to US\$ 100 million as seed money for ESRDF in 2007; and an annual amount of not less than US\$ 125 million for 2008–2011. The Fund shall be administrated in a professional, accountable and transparent method to ensure the implementation of the programmes. The ESRDF shall be run by a professional manager appointed by the President of the Republic from a list of nominees presented by the board and a management team under him/her composed of qualified and experienced people (ESPA 2006, Article 23).

The ESPA also called for the economic, social and military integration of combatants of the Eastern Front. The federal government was to be responsible for ensuring that former combatants returning to civilian life or those who do not meet the eligibility criteria for the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and other regular forces, are properly supported through social and economic reintegration programmes. Reintegration efforts were to be designed to assure long-term sustainability and include follow-up, monitoring and continuing support measures as needed. The federal government was also to provide adequate financial and logistical support to reintegrate former combatants. The government was responsible for taking the measures necessary to address the issue of those released from service or retired for reasons related to the conflict in Eastern Sudan, and would return all confiscated property according to the law. Necessary measures were also to be taken to address the issue of those whose pension payments were halted as a result the conflict in Eastern Sudan; freezing pension payments was one of the measures undertaken by the national government to punish those accused of being supporters of the Eastern Front.

These provisions are clear and can be implemented if good will prevails. Nonetheless, one quick observation about the ESPA can be made: the absence

of international or regional powers as guarantors. The agreement was brokered by Eritrea, which hosted and facilitated the negotiations. There are already some who argue that Eritrea pressured the Eastern Front to sign the agreement; others believe that in the absence of international participation in the peace process in Eastern Sudan, there is no guarantee that the government will abide by the provisions of the ESPA.

One serious challenge facing the ESPA is the issue of representation in Eastern Sudan. The Eastern Front principally represents the Hadendowa and the Rashaida; in other words, not all the ethnic groups in Eastern Sudan are part of the Eastern Front. One of the major groups (the Beni Amir) is left out, its only visible presence being the position of Amna Dirar who is the Eastern Front's vice president. At the Eastern Front convention held in Tessene (Eritrea) shortly after the ESPA was signed, the Eastern Front president (a Hadendowa) and the secretary general (a Rashaida) were nominated to the positions of Assistant to the President and Presidential Advisor, respectively. The Beni Amir, represented by Amna Dirar, were left out at the national level. A year later, however, the Beni Amir were represented at the federal level. In September 2007, a presidential decree appointed Amna Dirar as a federal state minister.

Another challenge facing the agreement, and related to the problem of representivity, is the formal inclusion of Gedaref State as part of Eastern Sudan. As mentioned earlier, historically Gedaref has been part of Eastern Sudan (it was part of Kassala Province until 1994), but after 1994 there has been a measure of ambivalence about the inclusion of Gedaref in Eastern Sudan. Gedaref was also a contentious issue during the peace negotiations in Asmara. Ethnically, the Eastern Front is very marginal in Gedaref. Furthermore, major groups in Gedaref (the Shukriya, Lahawiyeen, Halfawiyeen, and groups from Western Sudan) are not part of the Eastern Front, which creates problems of representation in Gedaref. Immediately after the signing of ESPA, the speaker of the Assembly in Gedaref (who is a member of the National Congress Party) resigned in protest over the provisions of the agreement. Additionally, the border problem between Ethiopia and the Sudan has the potential to create problems for the agreement. It can thus be argued that Gedaref, although rich in resources compared to the other two States, could prove a liability to the ESPA. At issue here are also the political and administrative constraints that determine access to resources and the control over land use. Gedaref is an area of both agriculture and pastoralism, where rights of access to land and regulation of its use are central issues. The question of territorial and administrative reconfigurations linked with the issue of ethnic political representation and inter-ethnic competition are also critical mobilising issues that might hinder or prevent the substantive application of the ESPA.

At the international level, there is little enthusiasm about the ESPA. The crisis in Darfur continues to dominate the attention of the international community. It is unclear, therefore, whether donors will pledge the financial support required for the implementation of the agreement. Reference has already been made to the failure of the donor conference organised in Port Sudan in June 2006. That neither the Sudanese nor Eritrean regimes command the sympathy of the international community might also be one of the reasons for the cold reception the agreement received from the international community.

Elsewhere in the Horn of Africa the volatile political situation in Somalia is a real threat not only to the ESPA, but also to the stability in the region as a whole. Ethiopia and Eritrea are involved in the Somali situation, and both countries are vital for political and military stability in the. The unpredictable relationship between Sudan and Eritrea also constitutes a threat to the agreement. Since 1993, Sudan-Eritrean relations have experienced periods that bordered on 'open war' at various stages.

The presence of huge numbers of Eritrean refugees and internally displaced persons is also another problem. Integrating and/or relocating internally displaced



persons requires funds, but the agreement failed to address this question clearly. Additionally, with the dwindling international support for Eritrean refugees in Eastern Sudan, these people divert many resources that could otherwise be used for dealing with local problems.

#### *Data and results:*

This section presents the results of the fieldwork done in Gedaref in April 2007. A sample of 60 persons was selected and interviewed. The sample is by no means representative of all of Eastern Sudan for several reasons: the fieldwork took place in Gedaref town only; therefore people in rural areas were not included in the study. Moreover the sample deliberately included government officials and civil society representatives. The sole purpose in choosing this group was to obtain insights into the attitudes of community leaders and activists about the ESPA.

#### *Satisfaction with ESPA:*

On the question of satisfaction with the ESPA, the overwhelming majority of the respondents said that they were satisfied with it since it brought an end to the conflict in Eastern Sudan. Those who were satisfied with the agreement argued that it was a major step towards preserving the rights of marginalised groups, particularly in relation to power- and wealth-sharing. Others were satisfied that, if implemented smoothly, the agreement would help eliminate tribalism and racism, and create space for development and the rebuilding of a united Sudan. Nonetheless, there are certain aspects of the agreement that failed to command the support of people in Gedaref State.

Those who voiced dissatisfaction believed that the agreement gave leaders of the Eastern Front more than they deserved, since their constituencies (Hadendowa, Beni Amir and Rashaida) represent only some 20 percent of the population of the State. For this dissatisfied group, the agreement disregarded the rights of other groups in Gedaref; something they argued would create a sense of tribal polarisation.

**Table 2: Satisfaction with the ESPA**

Responses	Frequency	%
Yes	43	71.7
No	17	28.3
Total	60	100.0

Source: fieldwork, April 2007

#### *The re-inclusion of Gedaref*

A similar pattern emerged in response to the question of the re-inclusion of Gedaref State in Eastern Sudan. This seems to be a result of history, and respondents argue that Gedaref is geographically and administratively part of Eastern Sudan and has been affected by the same problems that affect other parts of that region.

Those who oppose adding Gedaref to Eastern Sudan argue that Gedaref does not share the problems of Eastern Sudan, and that it is not a poor State, unlike Kassala and Red Sea. An important point raised by the opposing group was that the Beja group in Gedaref is not only small, but also marginal to the State, and its members live mostly in border areas and are considered outsiders.

**Table 3: Whether you agree to include Gedaref in Eastern Sudan or not**

Responses	Frequencies	%
Agree	41	68.3
Disagree	19	33.7
Total	60	100.0

Source: fieldwork, April 2007

### *Inclusiveness of the ESPA negotiations*

A majority of people in the sample (61.7 percent) said that the process that led to the ESPA was not inclusive, since only three groups from the region took part in the negotiations in Asmara. A few people, however, argued that since the Hadendowa, Beni Amir and Rashaida have been marginalised for so long, other groups should not complain. Some of the responses are replicated below:

Since independence in 1956, hegemonic structures of power in Sudan have been dominated by Arab-Muslim Northern power bloc structures. These structures are hierarchical where both class, ethnic, and cultural factors cut across each other in a complex matrix of power relations that are characterised by under-representation in decision-making processes and peripherality in the body politic, a situation that makes marginalised groups vulnerable to changes in national politics. Beja groups in particular are more vulnerable to changes and their vulnerability stems from the fact that they have to simultaneously confront multiple types of domination and exploitation; ethnically and economically. This time is for them.

Overall, there was a general agreement among people that the process of negotiation was not inclusive. Even those who said there was representation of the different groups argued that such representation was weak, while others said that the inclusion of other groups came at a late stage and this made their presence ineffective.

#### *Representation in power sharing:*

Some respondents said that their participation was weak and even absent; agreeing that the participation was not active and we can say that it was only theoretical even for some of those who signed the agreement, like the Hadendowa, Beni Amir and Rashaida. This relates to the fact that almost seven months after the signing of the agreement, nothing tangible has happened. This is a source of frustration to many people anxious to see the practical dividends of peace.

Others said that the representation of ethnic groups was weak and was not consistent with their numbers and that not all of the tribes and *nazaras*<sup>12</sup> had a share in power. One respondent complained that participation in power was actually defined by the political and tribal affiliation, merit or qualifications. Therefore, only those who belonged to the ruling party could truly participate.

Furthermore, one respondent said that the participation of the numerous other ethnic groups in Gedaref state was negligible.

There was also the perception that only those who opposed the government were included in power-sharing, something that could eventually persuade others who were marginalised during the negotiations and the signing of the agreement to go into opposition in order to be recognised. This could result in further military and political instability in the region and a possibly trigger for new conflict in Eastern Sudan.

Some respondents agreed that there were groups that effectively held positions of power and were included in the agreement and received positions according to their qualifications. There were also views that ethnic groups represented in the *Kayan Al-Shimal* (Northern Alliance) which includes all the ethnic groups in Eastern Sudan, had participated in power by having 14 positions of the 49 on the central committee of Eastern Front. Most people defined participation along ethnic lines, and for them participation meant that all ethnic groups had to be represented in the formula of power sharing.

#### *The impact of wealth and power sharing:*

This aspect received a mixed response, ranging from satisfaction to dissatisfaction. Others considered that it was too early to draw conclusions. One respondent said that there were as yet no clear effects or outcomes because there has been nothing tangible on which to evaluate power- or wealth-sharing.

Another respondent believed there was a sense of dissatisfaction as a result of unjust distribution and the unjust treatment of Gedaref state. The emergence of a dispute among the people of Gedaref is ascribed by some respondents to the inequities in power and wealth sharing.

Some respondents were more vocal. One of them complained of a total absence of any power and wealth sharing until now. For him, the ESPA was merely a paper agreement between the government and The Eastern Front. Another agreed that there were as yet no signs of any noticeable impact or effect. People would like to see tangible results on the ground in the form of basic service delivery, especially in health and education.

The real danger, however, is that other ethnic groups might resort to arms to demand real power sharing, in imitation of the Beja. One respondent argued that the issue of power and wealth sharing has created a conflictual relationship between the tribes of the East. Generally, the word “unjust” was mentioned frequently by respondents, and it became apparent that popular awareness about civil, political, economic and social rights is growing. Justice, equality, and participation, are some of the terms people are currently using when they talk about their rights and aspirations.

In terms of the impact of the ESPA on the ruling party, it must be emphasised that many leaders of the National Congress Party in Gedaref opposed the ESPA. For example, the Speaker of the State Assembly resigned his position twice in protest over the question of power- and wealth-sharing. The agreement created serious tensions between the legislative and administrative branches of the government in Gedaref. Some of the respondents argued that one of the important effects of the agreement was that it would lead to the weakening of the ruling party because new members would be recruited to the assembly. However, there are some respondents who argued that we should not overestimate the effects of the agreement on the ruling party, since there is little sign of any change in the NCP’s dominance in the politics in the State.

**Table 4: Are there any effects of ESPA on the relationship between the Gedaref government and the ruling party?**

Responses	Frequencies	%
Yes	23	55.0
No	21	35.0
I do not know	6	10.0
Total	60	100.0

Source: fieldwork, April 2007.

#### *Dealing with the impacts of ESPA on Gedaref*

Given the way the ESPA was concluded, and that people generally believe that the different groups in Gedaref have not been represented equitably, some of the respondents argued that the State must have a representative in central government who decides on allocations to the State. Others emphasised the importance of the immediate implementation of the agreement, of transparency in decision-making, and of equality between the different ethnic groups that reside in the State. One respondent called for a major conference including all groups to discuss the problems that concern the State: poverty, illiteracy, and marginalisation.

A radical view was expressed by some respondents who suggested re-dividing power and wealth, taking into consideration the rights of minorities. This view suggested that the government should not base its policies on regional politics and compromises at the cost of ethnic groups within the State. This view seems radical to the extent that it calls for renegotiating the ESPA since, according to these respondents, the ESPA was unjust because it excluded minorities (smaller



## Conclusion

ethnic groups in Gedaref state). From the point of view of the minorities, ethnicising politics is the appropriate way of creating a viable power-sharing dispensation. This view is not surprising because the ESPA itself was brokered on the basis of ethnic or tribal labels; the key players were the Hadendowa, Rashaida and Beni Amir.

A more balanced or benign view that does not call for ethnicising power-sharing was expressed by respondents who believed that the government should seek justice in power- and wealth-sharing, and should also make sure that positions were filled by capable and qualified people. That the government should focus on development and the provision of services in the state is one issue unanimously agreed upon by all those interviewed.

It is apparent from discussing the data, that the ESPA represents a major political development in Eastern Sudan, and provides the potential for tackling the different developmental challenges facing eastern Sudan. The peace agreement could also provide the impetus for the socio-economic and political transformation of the region. One of the agreement's principal merits is that it brought the war to an end and averted a more serious humanitarian crisis in Eastern Sudan.

Despite the potential represented by the ESPA as a framework for realizing equity in the distribution of resources and in the sharing of wealth and power, there are clear obstacles to its smooth implementation, which could lead to the resumption of the conflict. These include the absence of clear and unambiguous modalities to implement the agreement, and the question of the representation of the different ethnic groups in political office.

Another major challenge to the agreement is the question of the inclusion of Gedaref into Eastern Sudan. Gedaref differs from the other two States in many ways, and therefore what applies to Kassala and Red Sea does not necessarily apply to Gedaref. One delicate question is that of numbers. Some ethnic groups tend to inflate their numbers in a bid to obtain a larger share of power and wealth. Some reports (cf. ICG 2006: 2fn) provide figures that are erroneous or unreliable about the Beja. Such figures must be treated with caution.

Although the majority of those interviewed expressed satisfaction with the ESPA, they were wary about certain aspects of the agreement, especially those concerning power and wealth sharing. Many of these fears may be allayed only once the implementation of the agreement has begun in earnest.

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  - 3 The authors would like to thank Richard Cornwell for his editing support on this paper.
  - 4 The background information on Eastern Sudan draws heavily on the report of the International Crisis Group, 2006.
  - 5 Eastern Sudan is generally considered to cover the three States of Red Sea, Kassala and Gedaref. However, this definition is itself a point of contention between the government and the Eastern Front. The government considers the East to be just Kassala and Red Sea State: The Eastern Front includes Gedaref. Historically, the three states have been grouped as one region.
  - 6 The 1993 census registered 3, 067, 000; in 2001 the World Bank estimated 3, 746, 000. See World Bank 2001.
  - 7 In the context of Sudan, the term "Arab" is controversial and at the heart of identity politics in the country. Racially, it is extremely difficult to identify people as "Arab" or "Africa" in Northern Sudan. Claiming to be an Arab is thus a matter of self-assertion that is either legitimized or refuted by others who challenge such identification. As used here, the term "Arab" refers to those Arabic speaking groups that claim such identity.
  - 8 Agricultural schemes have a long history in eastern Sudan: the Tokar delta has been planted with cotton since the 1860's, while the British established the Gash scheme in 1924 and the Ghamdambaliya scheme in Gedaref in 1945. Based on traditional land rights, the Hadendowa claim to own 70 percent of the Gash Delta.
  - 9 There have been three significant periods of drought and famine during this time: 1983–1985, 1988–1990, and 1993–1995.
  - 10 1 Feddan = 1.038 Hectares
  - 11 For further information see Assal M, 2006.
  - 12 Traditional and administrative political system.

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