ROOM TO MANOEUVRE:
GOOD GOVERNANCE AND INTERNATIONAL NON GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS IN SUDAN

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ABSTRACT

Based in New York, the International Rescue Committee (IRC) has been working in the Sudan since the 1980's. During this time, this Non Governmental Organisation (NGO) has shown itself to be a leader in its field. Funded by numerous agencies and aiding hundreds of thousands of beneficiaries, IRC's role in Sudan is constantly growing. Poised between the people whom it serves and the Government of Sudan, in whose territory it operates, the NGO roles as advocates and social service providers places them in a challenging position.

Since the first international NGOs entered Sudan during the great famine and war in the 1980's, the government has become increasingly suspicious of their actions. More recently, however, NGOs have become more commonplace in Sudan, funding and managing many of the social programmes in the country, including education, health care, water and sanitation and even infrastructure projects. This presence in the country has lent international political clout to NGOs, but has created resentment by the Sudanese government.

This situation is not unique. Around the globe many countries are being pressured by NGOs to alter policy direction. The concept of good governance has become prevalent in Western funding departments and donor organisations, calling for its use to encourage governments to become more democratic. In order to access funding, NGOs must therefore shift their focus to a greater emphasis on 'good governance' as well. This is indeed the case of the IRC whose broad mission includes strengthening civil society and enabling good governance in Sudan.

The strong presence of NGOs combined with the sheer number of people they serve, the types of services that they provide, and their influence both nationally and internationally has lent credibility to the belief that these organisations are important entities in Sudan. However, the ability to carry out their mandates in times of emergencies and crisis is challenging as they must work within the constructs of the communities in which they serve and with the government of Sudan, which controls several of their activities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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LIST OF ABREVIATIONS

AWOON: Women's Awareness Raising Group
DART: (Canadian) Disaster Assistance Response Team
CARE: an International NGO based in the United Kingdom and the United States
CBO: Community Based Organisation
CIDA: Canadian International Development Agency
CPA: Comprehensive Peace Agreement
DFID: Department for International Development (UK)
ECHO: European Union Humanitarian Office
GoS: Government of Sudan
HAC: Humanitarian Aid Commission
HAP: Humanitarian Accountability Partnership
ICRC: International Committee of the Red Cross/Crescent.
IDP: Internally Displaced Person
IMF: International Monetary Fund
INGO: International Non Governmental Organisation
IRA: International Relief Association
IRC: International Rescue Committee
ICBL: International Campaign to Ban Landmines
LGNO: Local Non Governmental Organisation
MSF: Doctors Without Borders
NGO: Non Governmental Organisation
OCHA: Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OFDA: Office of Foreign Development Assistance (United States)
Sphere Project: Human Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response
SAP: Structural Adjustment Programme
SPLA/M: Sudan's People Liberation Army/ Movement
SRRA: Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Association
UN: United Nations
UNHCR: United Nations High Commission on Refugees
UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund
UNIS: United Nations Information Service
USAID: United States Agency for International Development
WB: World Bank

"You come from Nairobi and London and you just eat and sleep. You've never done any work as you don't cultivate"
-----Dinka Song, sung to Oxfam's project evaluation team

"IRC does not chase headlines. It goes to and stays in places no one wants to be. The scope of the organisation's work is immense, but the mission remains simple: to help alleviate the suffering of refugees by whatever means necessary."[1]
------General Colin Powell, 1997

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[1] "History of IRC," (New York: International Rescue Committee, 2005), 19, <www.theirg.org/about/history.html> (Retrieved January 20, 2007).

CHAPTER ONE: Non Governmental Organisations in Sudan

Sudan, named after the Arabic phrase for 'land of the blacks', is a country of immense racial, ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity. At the meeting place of the Blue and White Nile rivers, African and Arab cultures intertwine to create a unique blend of beliefs and ways of life. Sudan is also a land of near constant crisis and instability, where the spring rains or the distribution of aid determines who will prosper and who will perish. In the past thirty years, International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) have become part of the scenery of the Sudan. White Land Rovers rule the road and NGO emblems mark many schools, hospitals and water wells, branding much of the region's infrastructure.

In Sudan alone, there are over 60 INGOs (International NGOs), plus an incalculable number of National NGOs (NNGOs), Government Operated NGOs (GONGOs) and environmental NGOs (ENGOs), plus a whole host of others.[2] The importance of NGOs has been steadily mounting in the past thirty years. In 2005, U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan declared, "Without the vital role of NGOs, the world could not respond to the myriad of crises."[3] In fact, NGOs have even won the Nobel Peace Prize, as in the case of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) and Doctors without Borders. As the sheer number of NGOs that have entered the international development scene has multiplied, so too have the focus, directives, goals, types of funding, and importance underlying their operations.

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[2] United Nations Resident Humanitarian Coordinator, United Nations and Partners Workplan for Sudan 2007 (Khartoum: United Nations Press, 2006), 10-12.
[3]"Calls on NGOs to Assess Summit's Outcome Document," (United Nations Information Service SG/SM/10085 NGO/582 PI/1674 12, September 2005). <www.unis.unvienna.org/unis/pressrels/2005/sgsm10085.html> (Retrieved January 19, 2007).

NGOs are often defined in broad characterizations, for instance: "officially established, run by employed staff (usually urban professionals or expatriates), well supported (by domestic, or most often international funding), and that are often well resourced and funded."[4] Alternatively, they are "independent, non-profit, non-violent, voluntary, organizations operating at the local, national, and/or transnational levels that are neither government nor business."[5] Both of these descriptions are broad and all encompassing, and are unique in each of their perceptions. However, generalizations of NGOs can also be dangerous, as not all NGOs are voluntary, independent, or well resourced. Even within NGO's, country programmes are often not managed with the same methodology or goals. What can be agreed upon is that NGOs are entities that fall outside of the government sphere, however how far outside is often debated.[6] For this thesis, NGOs are defined as international non-governmental entities that operate in another country (the host country) for the purposes of post-conflict development or poverty alleviation.

One of the main contributions of NGOs is that of ethically transferring and dispersing goods, services, and expertise. NGOs have the responsibility to exhibit the highest ethical behaviour in their own activities including: transparency, fiscal accountability, fairness, honesty, responsiveness, participation, as well as the empowerment of beneficiaries – essentially the elements of good governance. It is important to recognize the emergence of the concept of 'good governance' and that the creation of a strong 'civil society' was due in part to aid practitioners and academics

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[4] Clair Mercer, "NGOs, Civil Society, and Democratization in the Developing World: A critical review of the literature," Progress in Development Studies, 2(1), 2002, 6.
[5] Jonathan Cohen, "Governance by and of NGOs," (London: AccountAbility, 2004), 96.
[6] Grace Chikoto, "Government Funding and the NGOs Autonomy: A Tool Choice Approach," (Atlanta: Georgia State University, 2007), 3.

itemizing and focusing on the conditions needed to build a liberal democratic state, as these democracies were perceived to be more efficient in dealing with social dissent and conflict. Good governance as a mechanism for development was brought into focus by a wide variety of international actors including the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the United Nations and its agencies, multinational corporations and donor countries through such institutions as USAID (United States Agency for International Development) and CIDA (Canadian International Development Agency).

Good governance has been conceptualized as the act of maximizing the link between the state and society. The United Nations defines 'good governance' as having "8 major characteristics. It is participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive and follows the rule of law".[7] Further, good governance is defined as ensuring "that corruption is minimized, the views of minorities are taken into account, and the voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard in decision-making. It is also responsive to the present and future needs of society."[8] Goran Hyden, on the other hand, defines good governance as "aspects of politics that aims to formulate and manage the rules of the political arena in which state and civil society actors operate and interact to make authoritative decisions."[9]

For the most part good governance is a Western construct, as there are some key differences between African and Western models of democracy and governance. Despite these differences, good governance has been promoted to Africa through bilateral aid

[7] "What is Good Governance?" United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, <http://www.unescap.org/pdd/prs/ProjectActivies/Ongoing/gg/governance.asp> (Retrieved September 16, 2007).
[8] Ibid.
[9] Goren Hyden, "Governance and the Reconstitution of Political Order," in State, Conflict, and Democracy in Africa ed. Richard Joseph (Boulder:Lynne Rienner, 1999), 185.

transfers from donor governments to NGOs. Many international funders such as USAID, DFID (Department of Foreign International Development), and CIDA created new portfolios during the 1990's dedicated to promoting democracy.[10] USAID, for instance, encouraged democracy through funding 'effective civil society and human rights'.[11] To this end, USAID budgeted $637 million in 1999 alone.[12] Yash Tandon observes that the West has been attempting to promote good governance in Africa through democracy since post-independence, with little progress.[13] The lack of success in this area is attributed to the entrenchment of cultural norms on the continent. In Africa, foreign and domestic forces often use their power to influence political outcomes, which are often driven by informal and formal community relations.[14] Many people in Sudan live in small-scale societies where political and economic transactions are often conducted in person. In fact, for the majority of Africans, a choice to vote will involve selecting the best person who will protect and promote the interests of their particular community.[15]

Questions arise, however, in areas that are in crisis or conflict or which have a lack of government control and legitimacy, as to whether 'good governance' is relevant. In these situations, many of the core functions of government shift (willingly or unwillingly) from the State to NGOs and other civil society groups. In fact, across the developing world, NGOs have become significant actors at the very base of society, often

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[10] Sharon Carapico, "Foreign Aid for Promoting Democracy in the Arab world," <u>Middle East Journal</u> 56(3), 381.
[11] Alison Ayers, "Demystifying Democratization: the global constitution of (neo)liberal polities in Africa," <u>Third World Quarterly</u> (27)2, 2006, 325.
[12] Stephen Brown, "Foreign Aid and Democracy Promotion: Lessons from Africa," <u>The European Journal of Development Research</u> (17)2, 2005, 182.
[13] Yash Tandon, "Reclaiming Africa's Agenda: Good Governance and the Role of the NGO in the African Context," <u>Australian Journal of International Affairs</u> 50(3), 1996, 297.
[14] Hyden, 185.
[15] Ibid, 188.

reflecting the core parameters of 'good governance' in a manner far beyond the ability or proclivity of the State.

It is here that the central focus of this thesis is situated. From my own work and research, my attention has been drawn to the tension that exists between the government of Sudan and NGOs in relation to the management of infrastructure, development activities, and humanitarian and disaster relief efforts. The expansion of NGO activity into the realm of good governance leads one to question whether NGOs have exceeded their purview, and to what degree this mandate can be accomplished. This thesis will seek to understand the objectives of the International Rescue Committee in Sudan, and the challenge of working with and against the Government of Sudan. It will identify how the lack of policies and mandates of NGOs affect the relationship with beneficiaries, the State and donors, and will illustrate the inherent tension that exists within the context of an uncooperative State, specifically a State that seeks to limit and define narrowly the autonomy of the NGO. An examination of NGOs that promote good governance in general, with attention on the International Rescue Committee (IRC) will demonstrate that while NGOs do assume a great amount of responsibility, these entities are constantly attempting to carve out room to manoeuvre, limiting their success. Finally, the lessons learned from the Sudanese experience will be highlighted.

Since the 1950's, there has been an expansion of academic literature into the realm of NGOs that focused on six key areas: service and aid delivery, policy, advocacy, civil society building, and good governance and democracy promotion. Clair Mercer, professor at the University of Leicester, chronicled the literature of NGOs and

democratization and noted a considerable change in debates since the 1990's.[16] She found

that academics were initially more concerned about efficacy and aid delivery, and then

shifted into the area of good governance and democracy promotion.[17] Mercer noted that

the relationship between NGOs, civil society and government is often entrenched in a

liberal democratic assumption, rather then examined more broadly.[18] Presently there is a

dearth of information within the literature in regards to the autonomy or the 'space'

needed for an NGO to accomplish its mandate. One also finds that the study of NGO

management and political studies has not examined the policies needed to operate within

an authoritarian, coercive, political environment.[19]

In the past, there has been only relatively positive literature promoting the need

for NGOs, arguing their necessity in providing effective service and aid delivery for

humanitarian reasons. However, NGOs also have their opponents who criticize NGO

involvement in government and community affairs. In the last two decades, a growing

academic debate has emerged on the role of NGOs in governance, mostly drawing on the

African experience. Catherine Agg, for instance, believes that NGOs only represent one

element of global civil society, but as they are "rooted in Western culture, do not work

for the benefit of their own society, and are funded by single northern European country

that NGOs are prone to having multiple loyalties."[20] Further criticisms include those of

authors and journalists such as Michael Onyanyo and Rotimi Sankore who denounce

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[16] Mercer, 5
[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid
[19] David Lewis, The Management of Non Governmental Development Organizations (London, Routledge, 2001), 6.
[20] Catherine Agg, "Trends in Government Support for Non Governmental Organisations: Is the "golden age" of NGOs behind us?" (United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, United Nations Civil Society and Social Movements Paper 23, June 2006), 3.

international NGOs as being non-representative institutions.[21] Some critics go so far as to accuse NGOs of being a form of colonialism or societal engineering.[22] "In the days of old-fashioned colonialism, the metropolitan powers sent their officials to live in Africa and directly run the colonies. Today they do so indirectly through NGOs."[23] Another recent critic is Rory Stewart, a Farsi-speaking British diplomat, who has written a scathing account of NGOs, United Nations officials, and policy makers in Afghanistan. "Most of the policy-makers knew next to nothing about the villages where 90 per cent of the Afghan population lived… They came from postmodern, secular, globalized states with liberal traditions in law and government."[24] Stewart believes there are few distinctions between colonialist administrators and post-conflict experts. He argues "[t]heir implicit denial of the differences between cultures is the new brand of international intervention. Their policies fail and no one notices. There are no credible monitoring bodies and there is no one to take responsibility."[25]

Another growing hypothesis regarding NGOs supposes that in order to be effective, NGOs must have enough room to operate and function, especially in Africa.[26]. Governments can manipulate NGOs to such a high degree that they negatively affect the outcomes, as NGOs can lose their freedom to operate and become bogged down in red tape. Critics note that African governments are not above hijacking NGO resources for

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[21] Rotimi Sankore, "What are the NGOs Doing?" New African August/September 2005, 13. and Michael Onyanyo. "NGOs Pseudo Governments or Surrogates of Western Powers," New African (August/September) 2005, 20-21.
[22] Julie Hearn, " NGO-isation of Kenyan Society: USAID & the Restructuring of Health Care," Review of African Public Policy (75) 1998, 90.
[23] Sankore, 13.
[24] Rory Wente, "The Trouble with Nation-Building," Globe and Mail Saturday June 23, 2007, A21. Article based on book: Rory Stewart, Places in Between (London: Picador, 2006).
[25] Ibid.
[26] Zenebe Nega Bashaw, "NGO-Government Relations: Conflict and Co-operation in Development Management for Rehabilitations of Demobilized Soldiers: the Case of Eastern Tigray, Ethiopia," Africa Development (26)1, 2, 2001, 252.

their own use.[27] Governments will monopolize NGO resources, so as to give the perception that the government administrates the NGOs projects and programmes; called an "official capture."[28] NGOs advocacy roles can also shape government policy decisions and likewise, States can have a role in the managing of NGOs.[29] Emmanuel Gyimah-Boadi observed that as NGOs have attained prominence in the economic and political realm, governments have become determined to control them.[30] There is the perception that because NGOs are lent a great amount of importance, they hinder the ability of governments to provide social services.[31] This is an antagonistic relationship, whereby States attempt to quell the autonomy of NGOs, and NGOs endeavour to create room to manoeuvre. This opposition of efforts is certainly the case in Sudan where the government restricts the movement, creation, and management of the NGOs.

There is a widening rift between rhetoric and practice, objective monitoring and evaluation of projects, effectiveness, legitimacy, performance, and accountability within NGOs.[32] NGOs are diverse and controversial, however, they are never truly neutral.[33] These criticisms will be explored in greater depth in Chapter Three. However, it is sufficient to say that NGOs require a number of reforms in order to remedy the issues of

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[27] Emmanuel Gyimah-Boadi, "Civil Society in Africa," Journal of Democracy (7) 2, 1996, 125.
[28] Hugo Slim, "What happens to Governments when NGOs are around?" Reuters News April 12, 2007. <http://www.alertnet.org/> (Retrieved May 11, 2007).
[29] John D. Clark, "NGOs and the State," in The Companion to Development Studies 2ed. (London: Hodder Education, 2002), 532.
[29] Michael Edwards and David Hulme, "Performance and Accountability: Introduction and Overview," in Non Governmental Organisations – Performance and Accountability: Beyond the Magic Bullet ed. Michael Edwards and David Hulme, (London: Earthscan, 1995), 9.
[30] Gyimah-Boadi, 125.
[31] Agg, 2.
[32] Vandana Desai, "The Role of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)," in The Companion to Development Studies 2nd ed., ed. Vandana Desai and Robert Potter, (London: Hodder Education, 2002), 529.
[33] Peter Willets, "What is a Non Governmental Organization," (London: UNESCO, 2002), 11.

over-concentration, lack of coordination and evaluation, and adaptation to global and local agendas in order to accomplish their mandates.[34]

Critiques aside, NGOs have seen their presence and activities delve more and more into the governmental sphere due to project funding that focuses on `good governance'. NGOs have taken on advocacy roles to ensure that governments are held accountable and that their beneficiaries' voices are heard. Research findings confirm this in the case of the International Rescue Committee, a New York and London-based NGO whose IRC-Sudan programme is its largest venture.

The International Rescue Committee has an estimated local staff in Sudan of approximately 1,000 and around 75 international staff on the ground. The organisation was a part of the initial group of NGOs to provide much needed aid and services to the people of Sudan and has shown itself to be a leader in the field of relief and development. The IRC is also one of the largest NGOs in Sudan and has active projects in every corner of the country. The organisation's long-term goal is "to improve Sudanese people's ability to manage their own livelihoods, while enabling individuals and communities to work towards accountable governance, stability, and security through an active civil society."[35] This central promotion of 'good governance' and a strong civil society by the International Rescue Committee is the focus of this thesis. The author will examine specifically what 'good governance' means to the IRC as well as which policies and programmes promote this mandate and the core constraints on its fulfillment.

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[34] Robert Glasser, "Why we need to look hard at the NGOs' flaws," Europe's World, Spring 2008. <http://www.europesworld.org/EWSettings/Article/tabid/78/Default.aspx?Id=0b29bd24-abdf-4e43-97a7-c63bd28b6285> (Retrieved August 24, 2008).
[35] "Program Summary 2004-2005," (Khartoum: International Rescue Committee – Sudan, Internal document for staff, March 2005), 1.

The Sudanese government narrowly defines the autonomy of the International Rescue Committee in all of their functions. The ability to manoeuvre is carefully guarded by the NGO, as the government can easily manipulate its opaque laws and policies in order to smother the IRC's activities internally. It is within this context that the IRC must operate, while remaining accountable to its members. At the same time, they must obtain independence from donors and governments, and be accountable to its beneficiaries.[36] This dependent relationship between the government of Sudan and NGOs indicates the continuing power of the State as well as the decline in its capacity to control the growth and function of NGOs. One is compelled to ask how much autonomy is needed for the International Rescue Committee to effectively carry out its mandate?

The research for this thesis was undertaken in two stages. The first stage was conducted on the ground in the Sudan from October 2005 to May 2006 when the author was engaged as a Grants Manager with the International Rescue Committee. Due to lack of staff, which is common among NGOs, the author became Acting Grants Coordinator in charge of the management of all project proposals, reports, and summaries that covered the entire Sudan. My appointment gave me access to all areas of the IRC operations including a central view of the administration, logistical operations, the budgeting process, financial accountability and human resource issues. The second stage of the research effort included the review of primary documents, anonymous interviews with IRC employees and former employees as well as examining secondary sources drawing on journal articles, books and newspapers.

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[36] Julie Fisher, "Local and Global: International Governance and Civil Society," <u>Journal of International Affairs</u> 57 (Fall: 2003), 27.

Beyond the Introduction, the thesis is divided into three chapters. Chapter Two introduces the Sudan and provides an initial overview of the IRC's involvement as an autonomous NGO in the country. In Chapter Three, the author will examine the work of the IRC from a critical perspective on the issue of 'good governance'. Attention is also devoted to the fragile relationship that exists between a wary and recalcitrant government and an assertive and effective IRC. In the concluding chapter, the author provides an assessment of the IRC and NGOs in developing country settings and an overview of the lessons gained from the IRC experience.

CHAPTER TWO: Overview of IRC and Sudan

This chapter will examine the origins of Sudan, namely its history, current government, conflicts, economy, and environment. It is essential to review these elements in order to give context to the current predicaments of the Government of Sudan in regards to its relationship with NGOs. Next, the chapter will examine the developments that led to the mounting number of NGOs in Sudan, and specifically to the current roles of the IRC. It is essential to understand some of the history of the IRC, in the Sudan to gain perspective on the magnitude of the programmes and their effects on the lives of the people they work with. Finally, the chapter will concentrate on the conflict between the Sudanese Government and International NGOs, which greatly shapes the roles and realms of influence of the IRC.

The diverse history of Sudan dates back to the Egyptian pharaohs, however, the greatest influence on today's geopolitical landscape was certainly the colonial period.[37] Europe's scramble for Sudan began in 1821 with the Ottoman Empire. The British followed in 1885, claiming most of modern day Sudan. The Belgians declared part of Southern Sudan in 1892 as part of the Belgian Congo and, not to be left out, the French also staked a claim, taking over the present day Bhar el Ghazal and Western Upper Nile States. The Belgians and the French both seceded their territory to the British between 1910 and 1920 and by January 1, 1956, the British, who governed from Egypt, had renounced their rule, and arranged for independence, complete with self-government and a new constitution for the colonially-formed country of Sudan. Sudan's post-

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[37] Helen Chapin Metz, Sudan: A Country Study (Washington, DC: Federal Research Division of the Library of Congress, 1991), 7.

independence period was similar to most newly created African nations, as the years to

follow were marked by a series of coup d'etats in 1969, 1971, 1976, 1985, and 1989.
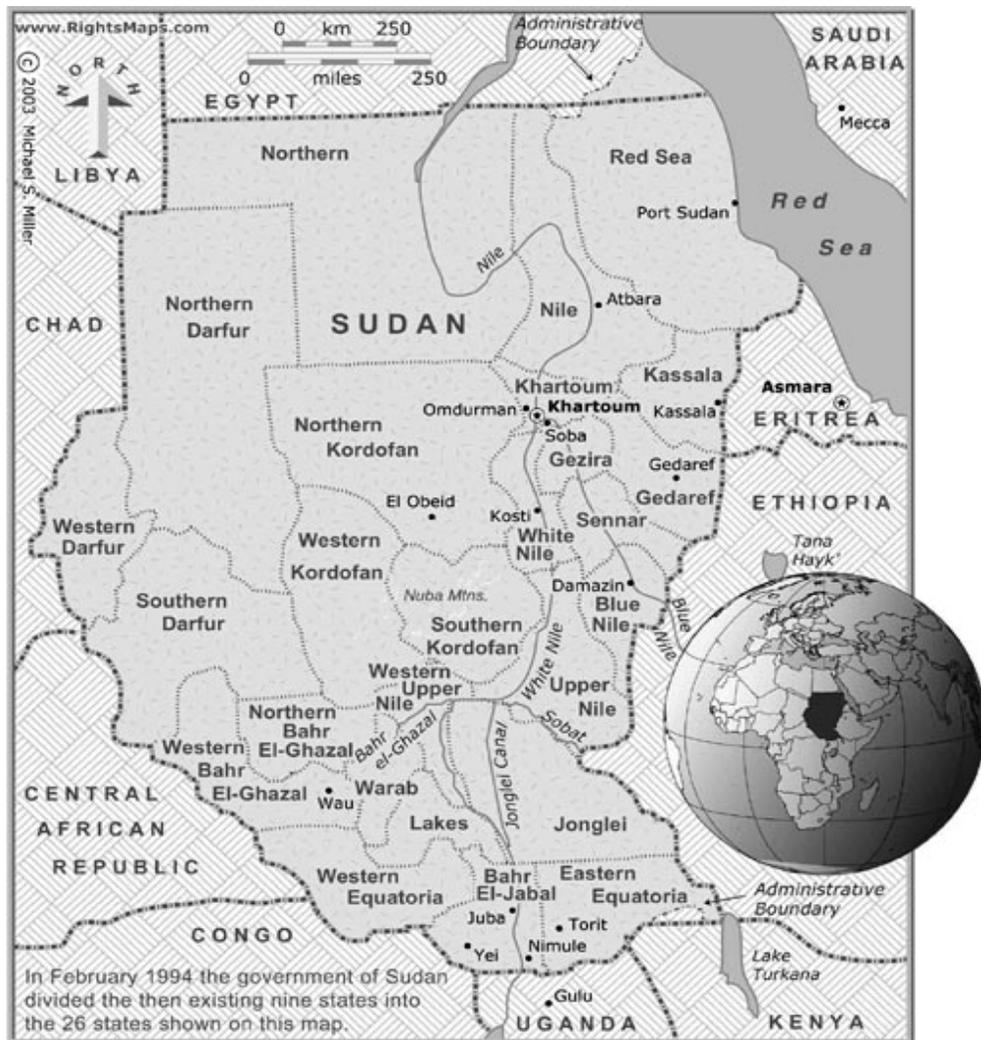
1.a Political Map of Sudan[38]

Needless to say, the years after independence were challenging. Today we find

the country remains divided by historic colonial ties, government administration,

religious beliefs, economics, language, and the environment. Certainly, the country has

been in a near constant state of flux since independence. Presently, Sudan is governed by

President Umar Ahmed al-Bashir, who has ruled Sudan both as the leader of a military

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[38] Human Rights Watch. "Political Map of Sudan", Retrieved from Human Rights Watch home page
<www.hrw.org> (Retrieved July 14, 2007).

coup in 1989, and more recently as a democratically elected leader. Al-Bashir heads a government comprised mainly of members of the National Congress Party. This party, formerly called the National Islamic Front, was formed by the Muslim Brotherhood in 1986, who were largely responsible for instituting Muslim Shari'a law throughout the country. The Muslim Brotherhood popularity began in the late 1940's with the objective of promoting Islamic beliefs with a 'top down' approach, obtaining its political base through strong student recruitment from universities.

The National Islamic Front came into power in a military coup in 1989, after a poor showing of less than 10% of the national vote in the 1986 elections.[39] The effect of this was the breaking down of democracy and the derailment of a promising peace process.[40] In his initial days in power, al-Bashir managed to alienate most of the democrats and merchants, seizing business warehouse holdings, and imposing strict curfews. He relied heavily on Islamist activists to institute change and development that proved to be a double-edged sword as the country quickly became isolationist and spiralled into economic disarray.

The National Islamic Front was democratically elected into government in 1996, giving executive and legislative powers to al-Bashir, who restructured the administration of the country with the creation of 26 States. Within these States, the Executives, Cabinets (1.a Map), and senior level state officials are appointed by the President and all power is ultimately centralized in Khartoum.[41]

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[39] Alexander De Waal, Creating Devastation and Calling it Islam: The War for the Nuba, Sudan (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), (21)2, Summer-Fall, 117-132.
[40] Eric Reeves, "Regime Change in Sudan," Washington Post, Monday, August 23, 2004, A15.
[41] Please see Map 2.a above.

The current government of Sudan is a strong and effective entity.[42] From the central point in Khartoum, the presidential system of government is further divided into numerous sub-areas. At the executive level of government, a small number of people undertake the planning and general policies. These executives manage the sub-division of 26 States, which are then further divided into localities, which are the municipal level of government.[43] The strength of this government structure is due to the large number of leaders in the system that makes up the sub areas. The quintessential saying "divide and conquer" is the central pillar of the al-Bashir government. In Sudan, a government station or post comes with great prestige and wealth, forming a cadre of sycophants in the process. The cumulative effect decentralizes power through its budgeting mechanisms, which encourages the direct taxation and reimbursement by the populace for services rendered. This encourages bribery and nepotistic behaviour, which ultimately, only serves the select few who hold the positions to the detriment of the constituents.

Al-Bashir's new government was criticized internationally by the West, which accused the government of harbouring international terrorist groups including al-Qaeda. Bill Clinton's administration bombed a pharmaceutical company in the capital of Khartoum, after the Central Intelligence Agency reported that it might be creating weapons for Osama Bin Laden. More recently, the al-Bashir administration has come under fire by the international community due to its failure to protect its population in Darfur, as well as the government's inability to hold up to its Comprehensive Peace Agreements for ending the civil war with South Sudan. President al-Bashir has been

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[42] Axel Klein, "The Horn of Turbulence," Fragile Peace. Eds.Tobias Debeil and Axal Klein, (London: Zed Books, 2002), 160.
[43] "Government Structure," Official Government of Sudan Website <www.sudan.gov.sd> (Retrieved July 14, 2007).

indicted by the UN international criminal court for crimes against humanity for his role in the Darfur Conflict. However, the greatest issue has been due to the civil war between the North and South Sudan.

The civil war between Northern and Southern Sudan has deep historical roots. Divided into two civil war periods, the conflict has displaced over 4 million people and killed some 1.9 million.[44] Initial hostilities (1955-1972) began with the withdrawal of the British as the seat of government moved from Cairo to Khartoum. The elite English speaking Southerners resented speaking Arabic in order to engage with the government and sought more individual and cultural representation. The Addis Ababa Accords ended the first conflict, which gave more internal autonomy to Southern Sudan.

In 1983, the Northern government declared a state of emergency to ensure that Shari'a law was enacted throughout the whole country, providing the spark that ignited the second civil war. Southerners are mainly Christian or an Animist tradition, and resented being ruled by Muslim law, and armed themselves to convince the Northern government to preserve their way of life. John Garang de Mabior led the SPLA (Sudan's People Liberation Army) into battle to secure Southern Sudan's autonomy, that lead to the SPLA controlling most of Southern Sudan (Equatorial, Upper Nile, Juba, and Wau). The militia-style war continued through the 1980s and 1990s, through the famines and economic strife. Despite the commitment to overthrow the northern government, the South still suffered from fractionalization of its militias, which were finally united in 1993. After a series of six agreements on security, wealth and power sharing, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was signed on January 9, 2005 between the Government of Sudan (GoS) and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army

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[44] Ibid.

(SPLM/A). This, in theory, ended the conflict and lent some freedom to Southern Sudan through the creation of the Government of National Unity.

After almost 60 years of fighting, the CPA has set the stage for a transitional period of peace between the SPLM/A and the Government of Sudan. The basic tenets of the Agreement stipulate the absorption of troops into a unified army, a referendum to determine the future of South Sudan in 2011, and the fair division of oil revenue and reserves.[45] The agreement is currently being contested as the northern Sudanese government has missed key deadlines for withdrawing its troops from the South. As of July 2007, there were still approximately 9,000 northern troops, mainly located in oil-producing areas that had yet to be redeployed.[46]

The Comprehensive Peace Agreement of January 2005 has also failed to usher in the promised aid and rehabilitation to Southern Sudan. With a population of over 8 million people, and as few as 30 doctors serving them, a 24% literacy rate, and a life expectancy of only 42 years, the amelioration of living standards may be the only factor considered by the voters of Southern Sudan in the fast-approaching sovereignty referendum scheduled in 2011.[47]

The Southern Sudanese government has one of the greatest governance challenges facing any nation in Africa. The social concerns and cultural links have tested the government from its infancy. As Sudan was essentially created through colonial ties, Southern Sudan's cultural, environmental, historical, and ethnic links more closely

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[45] "The Implementation and Modalities of the Power sharing," Comprehensive Peace Agreement, (Khartoum Sudan: December 31, 2004) 55.
[46] Amber Henshaw, "Sudan Misses Withdrawal Deadline," BBC News, July 9, 2007, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/6284894.stm>.
[47] Stephanie Nolen, "They Want to Give Peace a Chance," Globe and Mail, October 22, 2005 <www.globeandmail.com> (Retrieved October 22, 2005)

resemble Uganda and Kenya, making the Southern State seem like a completely different country than Northern Sudan. A unique visa is even needed to enter and exit the lush and tropical Southern Sudan, which holds the majority of oil-producing areas of Sudan. Southern Sudan is governed by a distinct set of laws compared to the North, which uses Shari'a law to maintain law and order, while the South fought for independence from these laws and now follows the British model of law. Since a tragic helicopter crash ended the life of John Garang, former leader of the SPLA and charismatic vice president of Sudan, rumours have persisted since his death, implicating the Northern government. As a result, these issues have created speculation that another civil war may be brewing, especially over the disputed central oil-producing regions.

War and conflict have ravaged Sudan for decades, and seem determined to continue for many years to come.[48] Sadly, another conflict rages in Darfur, disrupting the possibility for peace in the country. Former United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan labelled the Darfurian conflict as the "worst humanitarian crisis in the world"[49] and Human Rights Watch maintains that the government is carrying out a campaign of "ethnic cleansing," promoted with the use of armed militias in the Darfur area.[50] With over 15,000 aid workers (1,000 from abroad), Darfur is also currently the world's largest humanitarian effort.[51] However, the recent intensification of fighting between warring factions and the deaths of over a dozen aid workers has prompted aid agencies to

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[48] A recently discovered prehistoric burial site reveals the first indication of warfare in Sudan began 12,000 years BC. Ellen Sterner. "Six Million Ancient Nile Valley artifacts collected by SMU Anthropology Professor going to the British Museum," September 6th, 2001, <www.smu.edu/newsinfo/releases/01033.html> (Retrieved September 12, 2007).
[49] "Annan presses Sudan on UN force," BBC News, May 6, 2006 <www.news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/4979510.stm> (Retrieved November 14, 2006).
[50] Human Rights Watch, Retrieved November 14, 2006.
[51] Alfred DeMontesquiou, "Sudan Pushes Aid Groups to the Breaking Point," (New York: Associated Press, January 30, 2007).

withdraw from some areas and in some cases from the entire theatre. The Sudanese government has historically shown great opposition to a U.N. peacekeeping mission for Darfur, warning that it would consider any country's pledge to supply police or troops to a U.N. force "a hostile act" and a "prelude to an invasion".[52] The government has bowed to international pressure with some concessions, committing to the deployment of 26,000 soldiers to Darfur. This makes it the largest UN peacekeeping mission in the world.[53] The mission was criticized by observers from the beginning, who described it as 'toothless' in that the UN force does not have the power to confiscate weapons, nor shoot when under fire - all this in an area the size of France. As part of the concession with the government of Sudan, all troops must be African, which to date, has guaranteed that the forces are small, ill-equipped, and inadequate to complete the mission.

Plagued by extreme weather producing droughts and flooding, an underlying source of conflict exists in the area due to its physical environment. Bordered by some of the world's most unstable countries, Sudan is in conflict with each of them in some manner or another. These countries include Ethiopia, Eritrea, Egypt, Libya, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Chad, Uganda, and Kenya. Southern Sudan's climate is tropical and lush, it holds most of the 6.78% of arable land in Sudan and obtains over 900mm of rain annually.[54,55] Whereas 30% of northern Sudan is covered by desert, and obtains an average of only 50mm of rain annually, it has the advantage of

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[52] Colum Lynch, Washington Post, Friday, October 6, 2006, A17.
[53] "Peacekeeping Without Power: Many Obstacles Face UN force as it begins mission in Darfur," Editorial Calgary Herald, <www.calgaryherald.ca> (Retrieved August 7, 2008)
[54] "Sudan," CIA Fact Book, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/su.html> (Retrieved August 8, 2007).
[55] Asim el Morghraby, "State of the Environment in Sudan," Case Studies from Developing Countries UNEP EIA Training Resource Manual, (Khartoum: UNEP, 2005), 27-35.

access to 750 kms of Red Sea coastline.[56] The great link between the North and the South is the Nile River that courses the length of Sudan.

Shockingly, despite a paucity of arable land, over 80% of the population depends on agriculture for employment; they grow cotton, oil seeds, gum arabic, sugar, and raise livestock, which are the main exports. Sudan maintains one of the fastest growing GDPs in Africa, which increased by 10% at the end of 2007.[57] The economic Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) imposed by the International Monetary Fund stemmed economic progress in much of the rest of Africa, but were only briefly implemented in Sudan during the period of 1978-1985. Even so, these stabilization and structural adjustment programmes have had an enduring influence on the economy. The relatively short implementation period promoted the devaluation of Sudanese currency, liberalization of foreign trade, the raising of taxes, and the liquidation of all state-owned manufacturing.[58] By 1986, the relationship between the International Monetary Fund and Sudan became strained as the government failed to repay its debts, which eventually led to Sudan losing its voting rights in the institution. Despite the withdrawal of the IMF, the policy recommendations affect the country's economic performance to this day. Barring oil revenues, there has been a decline in the annual rate of exports, an accumulation of foreign debt, as well as an increase in the proportion of people considered to live below the nutrition-based poverty line.[59]

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[56] Ibid.
[57] "Sudan," CIA Fact Book.
[58] Abdul Hameed Elias Suliman, "Health Care Financing under Structural Adjustment: Some Reflections on the Health Care Insurance Experience of Khartoum State, Sudan," Social Science Research Report Series No. 27 (Addis Ababa: OSSREA, 2002), Section 2.2-2.3. <http://www.ossrea.net/ssrr/no27/toc27.htm> (Retrieved: April 2, 2007).
[59] Ibid.

Without doubt, the current economy and most of the country's conflicts have been powered by oil. With so little arable land, Sudan's economy depends mostly on oil exports. In fact, the Southern Sudan government relies entirely on oil revenue transfers in order to sustain its reconstruction efforts. The country is presently awash in oil dollars, enjoying investments from the Middle East, China, and Malaysia. During the civil war, the oil fields were a constant source of tension, as oil companies armed their own militias to protect their assets and allowed governmental military operations to use company airfields. Numerous international oil companies have entered Sudan to exploit the almost 85 billion cu/m of natural gas reserves.[60] Most analysts agree that it is the distribution of oil profits that will determine the results of the 2011 sovereignty referendum.[61]

Despite these resources, Sudan's conflicts and famines have always been front-page news internationally. Gaining popularity from celebrities such as Michael Jackson, the Ethiopian Famine of the 1980's was the catalyst for increased funding for aid to NGOs willing to help in the region and join the now famous Operation Life Line. NGOs moved quickly to Sudan mainly in the Southern states and Khartoum, where hundreds of thousands of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) migrated to escape the devastating famine and war. This instability continued throughout the 1980s and into the present, and now, a chronic lack of basic services has created a dependency on NGOs for daily subsistence, including food aid, employment, and provision of water and health services.

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[60]"Sudan" CIA Fact Book.
[61] Southern Leader Salva Kiir has been warning Southerners to "be ready for anything" as rumours of bribery flowed through Juba, that claimed Northerners were beginning to bribe them ahead of the referendum. Skye Wheeler, "Southern Sudan says Concerned over Referendum," Reuters, <http://www.reuters.com/article/homepageCrisis/idUSL2621595._CH_.2400> (Retrieved January 8, 2008).

The International Rescue Committee

The IRC has been quick to respond to emergencies in Sudan, and they often prove more effective in reacting to crises than the government, with results based management programmes and realistic projects. Initially founded in 1933, the International Rescue Committee is an international NGO that works in twenty-five countries worldwide. The predecessor to the IRC, the International Relief Association (IRA) was created through the encouragement of Albert Einstein to combat the rise of communism by smuggling out of communist countries as many Jewish leaders as possible through financial and travel assistance.[62,63] Since these modest beginnings the International Rescue Committee has been providing relief and aid to millions of refugees around the world. The organisation grew exponentially to a total annual world budget of over $203,573,298 in 2005, - up from $78,000,000 in 1997 and $26,913,425 in 1980.[64] IRC's services touch every corner of the globe, including Indonesia, Chad, and Lebanon. As the IRC is without any ethnic, religious or democratic credo; it has been able to work in areas that governments could not, and to work with both governments and intergovernmental programmes.[65] Money Magazine consistently notes IRC as being one of the most efficient relief and development charities and Smart Money describes the IRC as being the leader of agencies in international relief.[66] Pete Rose of Harvard University, foremost scholar on refugee affairs stated, "The IRC is the model refugee agency and a remarkable symbol of

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[62] Aaron Levenstein, Escape to Freedom: the Story of the International Rescue Committee, (New York: Greenwood press, 1983), 2.
[63] Ibid, 7.
[64] "Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax 2006," Form 990, page 11, line 12 (New York: International Rescue Committee, 2006).
[65] Levenstein, 295.
[66] IRC website. October 11, 2007. <www.theirc.org>

single-minded dedication to aiding those opposed by dictatorship on the right or the left."[67]

IRC's expansion into Africa came in 1962, when 200,000 refugees fled from Angola to Zaire.[68] However, it was not until 1981 that the IRC began its Sudan mission, providing humanitarian relief and rehabilitation during the great Sahel famine. In 1984, the organisation stepped in to help refugees flooding in from the Eritrean and Ethiopian conflict and by 1985, the IRC had grown to over 100 expatriate staff and a 2,000 national staff refugee-managed programme that included a broad spectrum of aid: medical, public health, immigration, childcare, emergency feeding, and intensive refugee training.[69]

IRC Sudan's current long-term goal is "to improve Sudanese people's ability to exercise their fundamental rights, access to basic services, and manage their own livelihoods, while enabling individuals and communities to work towards *accountable governance*, stability, and security through an active civil society."[70] The country programme, administrated from New York and London, is project-supported by a wide variety of donors including CIDA (Canadian International Development Agency), UNICEF, United States Office for Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), Japanese Embassy Khartoum, plus a myriad of private foundations (e.g., Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, American Express Foundation).[71] Over 2.2 million people depend on the International Rescue Committee's services, including 880,000 Darfurians.[72] IRC's operations in Sudan are divided into three regions of Sudan, the North East (Red Sea and

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[67] Levenstein, 4.
[68] Ibid., 9.
[69] Ibid., 10.
[70] "Program Summary 2004-2005," 1.
[71] Ibid.
[72] "Tax refund for Fiscal year 2005," form 990, Statement of Program Service Accomplishments, (New York: The International Rescue Committee, 2006), 3.

Kassala State), West Sudan (Darfur - North, South, West States), and Southern Sudan (Juba, Nuba Mountains).[73] Currently, the programme consists of large-scale emergency responses in Darfur, and longer-term reconstruction efforts elsewhere, especially for the expected tens of thousands of returnees. IRC's development assistance is classified into six sub categories: multi-sector relief and development; civil society development; human rights, peace building and protection; reproductive and primary health; economic development; and agricultural development.[74]

The United Nations estimates that there are over four million Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) in Sudan, with hundreds of thousands more living abroad.[75] These troubling figures have led to an increase of international pressure, as the international community has been eager to end the Southern civil wars' effects, as well as the Darfurian instability. The strain caused by this scrutiny to ensure safe passage for the returnees has given the Sudanese government reason to believe that the NGOs are the eyes and ears of the developed world. As a result, the relationship between Sudan and the international community is unstable at best, and antagonistic at worst.

Clashes Between NGOs and the Government

The growing pressure to maintain both short-term humanitarian relief and long-term community development has created a strain on the Sudan country programme. The unique management styles that are needed to effectively manage dual-programmes located in every corner of the country are certainly not without their problems. The government of Sudan attempts to aid in this management through a specialized

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[73] Ibid., 2.
[74] Ibid.
[75] United Nations, "Humanitarian Situation Worsens in Greater Darfur Region of Western Sudan," AFR 721, IHA/805.
<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2003/afr721.doc.htm> (Retrieved December 17, 2007).

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government ministry and by creating numerous laws and policies that oversee the actions of NGOs. The process of moving NGOs under the umbrella of the government has produced a dual-role for NGOs in the process: using NGOs as an entity of the State while attempting to keep their role as advocates for the beneficiaries they represent separate.

Since the Romans, the study of politics and international development has tended to view governance in a hierarchical manner, with the government administration at the top of the pyramid, moving to government offices, businesses, civil society, and then the general public (voters) at the base.[76] However, that description is not representative of the governance hierarchy of Sudan, where there are many strata of government and unique variations of control. The government is involved through over-regulation in all areas, including civil society and especially international NGOs. The Sudanese government is certainly at the top of the pyramid, however, there is a strong level of intermediate control of all levels of governance. Most, if not all government offices have a high degree of secrecy and suspicion. Regulating NGOs is done through a specifically mandated branch - the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs (HAC).

Access by the NGO community to any form of labour (both international and local) is severely restricted and marred by unnecessary or arbitrary bureaucratic red tape. There are even reports and office whispers of government spies within the NGOs. This red tape and suspicion has led to high 'administration costs' levied on NGOs for nearly everything, from visas to enter, exit, and travel within the country, to human resources

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[76] This, of course, is an over simplified version of political hierarchy, and will certainly vary based on most perspectives and theories. For our purpose here, it fits our needs. For more information on political hierarchies, see Paul C Light, Thickening Government: Federal Hierarchy and the diffusion of accountability. (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2005) or Steurer Reinhard. "From government strategies to strategic public management: an exploratory outlook on the pursuit of cross-sectoral policy integration" European Environment, 17:3, 2007, 201.

matters such as hiring and firing decisions. The Humanitarian Aid Commission is a Ministry of the Sudanese government that supervises and monitors the work of all development agencies. The HAC has been known to withhold travel visas for both international and national aid workers, allegedly spy on employees, arbitrarily apply import and export rules and regulations for relief materials, and create new bureaucratic procedures in its effort to subdue the power and authority of international development agencies. [77] Essentially, the government controls who is hired and fired in all NGOs, dictates what freedom the organisations have to act, and can even 'suggest' which area of the country is to receive aid. The implications of this can be both profound and conflicting. On the one hand, it is important for the government to know the operational plans of NGOs in order to arrange for services for the country and to hold them accountable. Conversely, in emergency and conflict situations, the government may not be the best conduit for determining aid provision. This is especially true of the Sudanese government, which has been known to use aid for corrupt political gain such as distribution to strategic voting areas, military supporters, or outright confiscation.

The exact administration costs for NGOs such as the IRC by the Humanitarian Aid Commission can be quite high. The bureaucratic process is lengthy, involving numerous and unnecessary steps, requiring at least one staff member to wait and process documents as well as another to liaise with the ministry. This, combined with the costs of processing the documents by HAC, can mean a substantial loss to NGOs in terms of money and time. Unfortunately, budgets for individual programmes are not available to the public. However, interviewees estimated that between \$40,000USD and

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[77] "Sleepless in Sudan, " Anonymous blogger, Entry July 25, 2005.
<http://sleeplessinsudan.blogspot.com/2005/07/another-thing-that-struck-me-about.html> (Retrieved September 3, 2006).

$100,000USD is spent per year by IRC Sudan in administrative costs, 'greasing wheels', costs of delay and processing basic documents at HAC.[78] These expenses do not include the salaries of at least two local administration staff whose only job is to process visas for expatriates, and manage national staff hiring, and navigate the opaque labour laws with the Humanitarian Aid Commission. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Sudan released a report in April 2006 estimating that international NGOs spent over $380,000 USD on visas for the Darfur region alone.[79] The report detailed numerous concerns found with HAC, such as unclear and arbitrary procedures, delays in obtaining visas, as well as black-out periods, as when no visas were processed for the entire month of March (2007).[80]

The Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Association (SRRA) is the Southern counterpart to the Humanitarian Aid Commission. Based in Nairobi Kenya, the SRRA is the main driver of all NGO activities in the South, whose funding historically came from the SPLM, and now works with the Southern government. The organisation coordinates all aid in the South, ensuring equitable division of the services and goods. The SRRA gave land to those NGOs willing to set up offices in Juba. Unfortunately the land was riddled with land mines, which needed to be cleared before building commenced. In many respects, the SRRA functions similarly to the HAC; however, the obstructionist bureaucratic nature is neither prevalent nor widespread as the SRRC is still a small system. However, as the country moves to amalgamation, HAC and SRRC have been setting up blended offices in the transitional areas.

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[78] Confidential interviewee, "IRC questionnaire," emailed to Author, September 10, 2007.
[79] "Access Eastern Sudan and Darfur" Sudan Humanitarian Overview Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Efforts (Khartoum: Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, April 1, 2006 – May 1, 2006), 8.
[80] Ibid.

The government of Sudan is not known for its accountability mechanisms or transparency, and at times has the tendency to understate issues in order to save face on the international scene. Through HAC, the government attempts to quell any information that it finds unsavoury. For years the al-Bashir government has been claiming that Darfur is not a humanitarian disaster. The president instead asserts that Darfur is "secure and enjoying real peace" and that "people are living normal lives."[81] In August 2006, the IRC released a report attempting to dispel this propaganda, stating that over 200 women had been raped in the previous five weeks in Kalma Camp, Darfur - some as young as thirteen years old.[82] This was in direct contradiction to the government of Sudan's stance, which claimed sexual abuse in the Darfur region to be a rare occurrence.[83] The Humanitarian Aid Commission quickly put a halt to all visas in, out, and within the country to IRC aid workers, while the government demanded the case files of all abused women so that they could be 'questioned.'[84] The visas resumed to IRC staff after a few weeks, but interviewees claim that the relationship between the IRC and the government of Sudan continues to be strained.

IRC is not the only organisation that has faced these sanctions from the Humanitarian Aid Commission. In April 2006, HAC demanded that the Norwegian Refugee Council remove itself from Nyela, South Darfur. No reason was given, and their

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[81] "Stopping Murder in Darfur," Economist, July 25th 2007,. <www.economist.com>.
[82] "Aid Agency Warns on Darfur Rapes," BBC News Report. August 24, 2006. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/5280286.stm>.
[83] "No one to help them," Amnesty International, December 2006. <http://www.amnesty.org/resources/pdf/sudan_crisis_2006/svaw_casesheet-eng.pdf (Retrieved January 2, 2007).
[84] The IRC had no intention of giving the files, as this was the second time a report had surfaced. The first was by Medicin sans Frontiere in early 2005, which also carried with it the same 'punishment.'

removal left 94,000 people in Kalma Camp without a camp manager.[85] Additionally, the Women's Awareness Raising Group (AWOON), a national NGO, had all their assets frozen after receiving money from the European Economic Union. Between 2004 and 2005 at least 20 international NGO staff members were arrested for various charges of dubious merit.[86]

Presented initially in February 2006, the *Organisation of Humanitarian and Voluntary Work Act* gained attention due to the restrictive policies, freedom of association and increased centralization of NGO activities by the HAC. The Act is vague, giving ambiguity to the commission, especially with policy statements for NGOs to "comply with any other conditions to be laid down by the Minister."[87] Moreover, under this act all national and international NGOs are required to gain permission from HAC to obtain money from international sources.[88] As an example, a national NGO, Women's Awareness Raising Group (AWOON), which specialized in women's human rights issues, ran afoul of HAC, as their funding from the EU was not registered at the Ministry, despite the fact that the proposal was submitted to the EU far before the Act was even in place. The government of Sudan seized all their assets, and has denied AWOON access to all NGO meetings, including appointments with the United Nations Development Fund.[89] In yet another incident, the Humanitarian Aid Commission Office publicly posted a report in Darfur in which NGOs were ranked arbitrarily as "perfect," "middle," "weak"

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[85] "Sudan: Continuing Blockage of Humanitarian Aid," Amnesty International April 4, 2007 <http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGAFR540102006> (Retrieved July 7, 2007).
[86] "Sudanese Government Obstruction of Humanitarian Access," Human Rights Watch, May 2006 <http://hrw.org/backgrounder/africa/sudan0506/5.htm> (Retrieved June 7, 2007).
[87] "Human Rights and Humanitarian at Risk in Sudan," (International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), March 7, 2006).
[88] "Sudan: Continuing Blockage of Humanitarian Aid"
[89] "Sudanese Rights Groups Facing Persecution," Statement by Human Rights First, <http://www.defendingwomen-defendingrights.org/sudan_facing_persecution.php>(Retrieved August 8, 2007).

or "dismissed."[90] In total, 58 NGOs were "dismissed" and an additional 48 NGOs were singled out for further evaluation or restructuring.[91]

For NGOs working in Sudan, the *Organisation of Humanitarian and Voluntary Work Act of 2006* has become a strong presence in their everyday operations. In particular Section 5 (f) requires "non-interference by foreign and national organizations in the internal affairs of the Sudan, to the extent that these infringe upon the sovereignty of the country".[92] International interference is a regular government excuse for restricting NGOs that work in sensitive regions from speaking out about human rights violations they witness on the ground.[93] This is especially true for NGOs in Darfur.

A Medecins Sans Frontieres aid worker commented, "Even though insecurity is a factor limiting our access, bureaucratic obstacles imposed by the government of Sudan are also a critical factor in limiting the access we have."[94] This bureaucratic red tape has impeded NGOs operations, despite pressure from the US government and other international agencies. To work around the staff deficiencies, the IRC was working without key management players and in limited project areas.

Conversely, any NGO that forges too tight a partnership with the Humanitarian Aid Commission risks weakening their legitimacy and accountability with the community they serve as well as to the donors. Increasing the bureaucratic steps needed to secure funding means that international NGOs like IRC cannot sustain their current operations,

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[90] "Darfur NGO Operations Threatened," Overseas Security Advisory Council, April 5 2007 <https://www.osac.gov> (Retrieved August 1, 2007).
[91] Ibid.
[92] "Sudan: Continuing Blockade of Aid," Sudan Tribune. April 5, 2006. <http://www.sudantribune.com> (Retrieved May 2, 2008).
[93] Ibid.
[94] "Humanitarian situation in Darfur, Sudan: MSF statement to the United Nations Security Council," Medicin San Frontiere, <http://www.msf.org/msfinternational/invoke.cfm?objectid=DB8843B3-F57D-4054-82D6530AA6D15E6C&component=toolkit.report&method=full_html> (Retrieved January 20, 2008).

as support is often time restricted. A barely democratic government can manipulate and prescribe project areas and beneficiaries. Ultimately NGOs focus on filling gaps that the government cannot or will not fill. They operate within the sphere of the government hierarchy, becoming essentially an arm of the State with greater or lesser operational independence. Depending on one's point of view, they can be seen as either puppets or autonomous entities – the reality is that they are somewhere on the spectrum between these two poles, trying to find room to manoeuvre.

CHAPTER THREE: IRC Policies and Critique

Despite growing resentment by the Sudanese government, the International Rescue Committee has thrived in its project areas, focusing as it does on security, camp management, health care, and water and sanitation. This chapter will examine the mandate of the IRC to promote good governance in the country and the policies in place to further these goals. As we will see, IRC's lack of accountable policies in their operations has undermined their mandate for the promotion of good governance. We will also discuss the two distinct avenues by which good governance affects the IRC, the State and beneficiaries, and how NGOs in general fill many of the roles left open by failed states or governments in crisis.

The attempted cooptation of the IRC within the State apparatus, presents a difficult challenge for the concepts of good governance and accountability. Two factors have illuminated the concept of good governance of NGOs and government in the public eye. Firstly, beginning in the late 1980s, Western governments moved several publicly funded services into the not-for-profit sphere through grant-making. This is particularly true in the international development field, as governments moved bilateral transfer funding to NGOs to promote foreign aid, expanding the number and role of NGOs in the process. Secondly and concurrently, good governance became the conceptual measure that donor agencies would use to determine if the client governments and not-for-profits were able to obtain funding. This yardstick is steadily lengthening, as expectations of quantifiable results grow over time. The application of these governance standards is usually catalyzed by scandals or irregularities, with donors and the populace insisting on a more effective and useful government and NGOs. The cumulative effect of this drive

for governance has meant that NGOs now take on a growing role in society as an advocate and as a service provider.

Good governance, as discussed in Chapter One, has become a catch phrase in the new millennium for ensuring that NGOs and governments are more transparent and accountable. Accountability is crucial for NGOs, as they depend mostly on their reputation on which to base their actions.[95] NGOs are accountable in a hierarchy upwards to their trustees, donors, and boards of directors, and downwards to their partners, beneficiaries, staff, and supporters.[96] In the past, NGOs accountability has been shown through a number of different means including financial reports released to the public, annual reports highlighting results and lessons learned, as well as the mechanisms for funding. However, as the public becomes more disenchanted with the effectiveness of NGO aid in emergencies, these organisations have begun to promote a standardization of good governance policies as a way to subdue public apathy and disengagement. These standards are somewhat opaque as there is very little consensus as to how this should be done and how much accountability is needed to appease public perception and still be effective.

Many NGOs have recognized the perception of a lack of transparency in their operations, and have attempted to combat it through a number of different measures. For instance, the Ugandan Quality Assurance Program of 2005, was designed to promote and create generally acceptable ethical standards and operational norms for NGOs.[97] The Humanitarian Accountability Partnership of Geneva (HAP) has also created a base set of

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[95] Desai, 528.
[96] Edwards and Hulme, 9.
[97] Helen Collinson, "Where to Now? Implications of Changing Relations Between DFID, Recipient governments, and NGOs," (CARE and ACTIONAID International, 2005), 5.

standards of responsibility for NGOs to ensure efficacy through good governance. These involve a strong board of directors, mission and strategic planning, a sound organisational structure, a focus on transparency, and independent monitoring and evaluation. Nevertheless, it will be some time before the majority of NGOs and the public recognize a base set of standards to further good governance.

The unique juxtaposition between an NGO's and a government's role in promoting good governance is found in their *raisons d'etres*. On the one hand, the State is responsible for mandated obligations to its society, whereas NGOs do not have a specific objective defined by others - they are essentially free agents with vague operational statements such as "Canadians Challenging Global Poverty"[98] or "Non-profit organisation helping impoverished and malnourished children around the world."[99] There is very little distinction between the two organisational statements: both hope to challenge poverty, and help those in need. If one was to look more closely at the two organisations, the extent to which these goals are accomplished is vastly different. This can also be said for the management of a populace in the case of government, as there are varying ways to undertake administration. There is one key difference between democratic governments and NGOs: NGOs are not elected. NGOs are not representative, nor necessarily accountable to their clients. Their resource pool is voluntary and limited. The State, conversely, has a territorial link to its people. The State may not be representative or even elected; nevertheless there is a fundamental link to land and its resources that bonds them to voters/beneficiaries. This moral obligation of governments separates them from civil society and society at large.

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[98] "CAUSE Canada," Official Main Page <www.cause.ca> (Retrieved August 1, 2007).
[99] "World Vision Canada," Official Main Page <www.worldvision.ca> (Retrieved August 1, 2007).

In a collapsed, ineffective, or uncooperative government setting, the State abrogates some of its responsibilities to its populace, which can have detrimental effects on the population. Where this occurs, NGOs and civil society shift into the roles normally taken by the State, such as supplying water and sanitation, providing health care, or even holding democratic elections to establish community leadership. The specific roles and function of the State are certainly debatable, and will not be discussed in detail here. It is sufficient for our purpose to note that the State, in theory, encompasses all functions of governance as defined by the UN, including rule of law, providing security, and basic human rights such as the rights to life, procreation, education, and health.

The IRC does provide all of those services in some manner or another. However, the question remains, can the IRC succeed within an uncooperative State? In short, the response is a simple yes, however, NGOs will not function as effectively. In collapsed States or emergency situations, governments have the tendency to withdraw from some areas of service, either strategically or due to a breakdown in mechanisms or monetary or environmental constraints. For instance, in Southern Sudan, the Northern government used aid as a strategic weapon of war, denying food aid to the Southern rebel-friendly areas. After the Asian Tsunami of 2004, strong governments were unable to cope logistically and economically with such a great calamity, such that other agencies and governments were called upon to help. NGOs in those situations step in to fill as many roles of the State as possible, but in the case of Sudan, are bogged down in red tape from the Humanitarian Aid Commission.

It is impossible for the IRC to work independently from the Sudanese government and its Ministries, however in an emergency, the NGO can join together, pulling

resources from unique sources to form a unique social net for the people of Sudan. The monetary constraints of the Sudanese government caused by decades of war, Structural Adjustment Programmes in the 1980's, and natural disasters left much of the development of infrastructure, especially in Darfur and Southern Sudan, to the NGOs and private corporations. In fact, in several different project areas, the IRC has been more successful in providing education and health care than the government.[100]

As international institutions and large funders like USAID move towards funding projects that encourage 'good governance', NGOs have followed in an attempt to capture grants. Good governance has become a matter of critical importance for the IRC-Sudan programme, and IRC in general. Its new IRC-New York programme framework is a reflection of those trends, being defined as one of three core programme areas. IRC has also recently created the "Governance and Rights Unit," which is tasked with providing technical aid to all country programmes that focus on rule of law, civil society development, and community driven reconstruction.[101] IRC-Sudan's current long-term mandate focuses on this trend to "work towards accountable governance, stability, and security through an active civil society."[102] Hence, the organisation is committed to leaving behind a viable community. Their correspondence for the overall world programme includes the statement "The International Rescue Committee is a global leader in relief, rehabilitation, post-conflict development, advocacy and resettlement services for refugees and others uprooted or affected by violent conflict and

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[100] Alton Kastner, <u>A Brief History of the International Rescue Committee</u>, (New York: International Rescue Committee, 2005), 4.
[101] "Governance and Rights Unit", International Rescue Committee Website. <<u>http://www.theirc.org/media/www/governance-and-rights-unit.html</u>>, (Retrieved July 7, 2007).
[102] "Program Summary 2004-2005," 1.

oppression."[103] However, its policies do not seem to back up the claim of "global leadership", as the IRC field manual is almost completely devoid of any information concerning the roles of NGO workers and governance, or responsibilities of NGO workers on this front. One is challenged to find in any of the IRCs policy literature mention of how the IRC relates to the federal or local governments, or even to other NGOs. In spite of this lack of policy, IRC-Sudan must still enact many civil society empowerment and rule-of-law projects, frequently interrelating with the government and other organisations in the execution of their work.

Oddly, for an organisation whose mandate specifically includes the promotion of good governance and civil society, employees were not briefed to this effect. The interviewees questioned noted that building of civil society and governance was not high on the agenda and questioned the ability of IRC to promote this, as the "organisation does not have an accountable organisational network".[104] The IRC-Sudan programme has been called a 'pup tent' relief organisation, which is a field metaphor for an NGO that quickly arrives in a crisis, begins providing lifesaving services, but can depart just as quickly when the crisis and funding starts to wane. To date, the IRC has been active in the Sudan for 28 years. As we will see in the examination of their projects, the organisation genuinely strives to bring some stability to the area, but lacks long-term planning.

IRC's projects are as diverse as the country itself. In the South, the projects focus on women's empowerment, water and sanitation, while in Eastern Sudan the projects involve building emergency shelters and drilling wells. The Darfur programme is currently the most complex and protracted, with a full spectrum of services offered:

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[103] IRC online. International Rescue Committee. <www.theirc.org>, (Retrieved July 7th, 2007).
[104] Confidential interviewee, "IRC questionnaire," emailed to Author. September 10, 2007.

education, health, water and sanitation and camp management. Most interviewees noted that IRC Sudan is very strong in providing quick and immediate humanitarian assistance in emergency situations, but sometimes lacks follow-through with long-term relief such as micro-credit, capacity building, and empowerment projects. We will examine three project areas that specifically touch upon the building of civil society and development of good governance: camp management, rule of law, and health and infrastructure. These projects will underline the chief importance of IRC Sudan in the area of good governance in Sudan.

IRC has been working in Darfur as a large mission for just over a decade, aiding over 880,000 Darfurians in 2004-2005 alone.[105] The programme currently runs nutrition, sanitation, and health projects for 250,000 people in Abu Shouk and Kassab Camps in North Darfur as well as in Kalma and Kass Camps in South Darfur.[106] In that time the organisation has become the camp organiser (official title Camp Managers) in many of their project areas, in charge of coordination of all aid that is destined to their areas of operation. In 2005-2006 USAID sent $35 million dollars (US) to Darfur, of which IRC received $8,800,000.[107] This money is used for coordination of camps, health promotion, protection, water and sanitation, and hygiene promotion in South and West Darfur. An excited IRC employee noted on my arrival, "I have never seen something happen in the field so quickly - within two weeks we had a functioning hospital! It was really quite beautiful to see."[108] The conditions in these camps are relatively good, 39% of the

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[105] "Program Summary 2004-2005," 1.
[106] "IRC Responds to Crisis in Darfur," The IRC at Work, (New York: International Rescue Committee, Fall 2004), 4.
[107] "Country Report," United States Agency for International Development, March 30, 2007<http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/disaster_assistance/countries/sudan/fy2007/sudan_ce_sr13_03-30-2007.pdf> (Retrieved April 15, 2007).
[108] Confidential Interviewee. "IRC Questionnaire" Email to Author. January 21, 2007.

children still suffer from malnutrition, and there have been many outbreaks of refugee camp health issues such as hepatitis and measles.[109] Without the actions of the IRC and other NGOs, this relief would not have come to Darfur, which has been historically neglected by the Khartoum government.

In the remote northeastern province of Kassala, in former SPLM held areas, the IRC provided 97% of all health care for the region in 2004.[110] Predominantly Eritrean refugees who fled the war between Eritrea and Ethiopia in 1998 have depended on the kindness of NGOs for their survival. There is certainly no question that the organisation has been instrumental in the creation of effective health infrastructure in Kassala and throughout most of Sudan. Community mid-wife programmes have produced a drop in infant mortality in Kassala, as girls and boys are able to see an IRC trained health worker for a reasonable price in their village, and women have access to hygiene promoting non-food items such as buckets and soap.

Another important aspect of IRC's work involves human rights, peace building and protection of beneficiaries. This significant component of IRC's work began in 2005 when it embarked on a tri-phase project targeting youth in the entire country, which was sponsored by CIDA. The project worked with individual youths and youth groups, providing successful conflict mediation and peace-building activities at the local and governmental level. IRC received a grant of $471,000 (Cdn.) from the much-coveted Canadian government Peace-Building Fund to continue the project, whose main focus is the engagement of Sudanese youth.[111] As many youth have been affected by exploitation,

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[109]. "IRC Responds to Crisis in Darfur". 4.
[110] Tax form 990, fiscal year 2005. Part III – Statement of Program Service Accomplishments, 3.
[111] "Additional support for Sudan: aid, protection and Peacebuilding," Government of Canada, http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca> (Retrieved April 14, 2007).

displacement and the disruption or absence of education, this initiative aims to improve the capacity of Sudanese youth to become engaged in their communities through youth centres that provide education and even micro loans to develop skills or businesses.[112] It is an important project that has been further augmented with the training of community human rights advisors, as well as human rights training of political and military officials. Government officials who took the training claimed that prior to the training they lacked adequate background on Sudanese and international laws, and felt they benefited greatly from their improved awareness. Whether the information gained by the government officials is used in its administration to make its processes more equitable is still yet unknown. The fact remains that an individual base knowledge of human rights is the first step in promoting organisational good governance.

With this dedication to human rights and rule of law, IRC has paved the way for many Darfurians learning about and gaining these rights for the first time. One of the more unconventional roles of IRC that has emerged in the last few years has been its central role of management of refugee/IDP camps. IRC is expected by donors to use a community participation model to involve communities in the implementation of programmes. This links NGOs with community councils or village leaders to ensure active participation in projects. In times of strife and population migration, NGOs will hold democratic elections to 'elect' a community council or set of leaders. It is important to note that these elections are usually held in refugee/IDP camps where people from different villages, tribes, languages and regions amalgamate. Sometimes, this may be the first time people are voting to select their leaders, as many people in Sudan have never been involved in the State's own weak democratic process. Women in particular have

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[112] Ibid.

been marginalized from this process, and NGOs encourage them to be part of the leadership, however, in a male dominated society, despite NGO advocacy, women's voices are often lost.

The IRC is currently in charge of the management of the Zalingei refugee camp, South Darfur, where an estimated 95,000 displaced people currently reside.[113] This management entails the monitoring of conditions and "coordination of humanitarian activities inside the camp to address needs…and ensure site maintenance and planning."[114] In el Fasher, North Sudan, the IRC organises all relief activities that are concentrated in three IDP camps in the El Fasher locality (As Salaam, Abu Shouk and Zam Zam) and serves over 200,000 beneficiaries.[115] This involves the coordination and mediation of all NGOs in the region, the police, military, rebel, and community leaders. This massive undertaking is likened to the management of municipalities, as the IRC coordinates all water and sanitation, education, health, gender-based violence services, and training of police within the camps.

As NGOs manage the lives of hundreds of thousands of citizens, there is an obvious set of regulations to which they must adhere. IRC, for its large role, does not have any policies in place for dealing with officials, the government of Sudan, and the official governance of camps. Surprisingly, the IRC Sudan programme does not provide education or policy direction to staff regarding government or even politically related issues. Nor is governance preparation listed in the training guide for all international or national staff. Since many staff, especially those in the field, interact with government on

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[113] "IRC Responds to Crisis in Darfur". 4.
[114] "IRC human Resources release Field Coordinator, Sudan (El Fasher)" The IRC, Friday, 01 June 2007 . <www.unjobs.org>.
[115] Ibid.

a daily basis, training and guidelines would be an important step in creating stronger ties, and perhaps a more amicable and efficient environment in which to work.

In terms of policies to guide their actions, employees are only instructed to adhere to blanket NGO policies that include the Sphere Standards reference guide for minimum standards in disaster response, the Red Cross Standards, and donor standards. IRC-Sudan does not have policies or a procedure manual for negotiating with the government of Sudan, local governments, or the militias, despite the fact that these are undertaken regularly as an inevitable part of working in the field. All interviewees noted a lack of direction from administration in regards to this area, and a general need for them. Staff noted a 'reinventing the wheel' phenomenon that happens with every staff changeover, as new staff must learn the optimal manner to negotiate with government and local powers. This lack of protocol in dealing with any incidences regarding the police and government is certainly to the detriment of the safety and security of IRC Sudan's staff as well as the efficiency of their work.

The Sphere Project, initiated in 1997, is at the forefront of reference guides for NGOs and donors alike for specific targets of minimum standards in an emergency. It is a self-proclaimed "human rights charter and minimum standards in disaster response."[116] NGOs were determined to have quantifiable and attainable outcomes for programmes, and developed a core set of standards that set the minimum level of humanitarian aid that ensures human well being and dignity. Sphere Standards have become the minimum bar to which all NGOs and their projects can be measured against. However, very few of the standards have any guidelines related to governance that would direct employees. The

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[116] "Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response", The Sphere Project, (Geneva: Sphere project, 2004), 5-11.

handbook contains directives only for standards of minimum needs for human survival, and not necessarily those needed to fulfill basic human rights. These include protection, water supply, sanitation and hygiene promotion, food security, nutrition, and food aid, shelter, and health services.[117] Despite the fact that protection is a major focus of humanitarian assistance, the Sphere Standards only acknowledge its importance, leaving the protection strategies or policies to the individual agencies to create.

The Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross Movement and Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief is also part of the curriculum for all new staff of IRC. Developed in 1994, and agreed upon by eight of the world's largest disaster response agencies, these codes attempt to guard NGOs' standards of behaviour and "seeks to maintain high standards of independence, effectiveness and impact to disaster response."[118] These codes of conduct are comprised of the concepts of governance, such as never using aid to further a particular political or religious standpoint or endeavouring not to act as instruments of government foreign policy, this again does not include specifics for NGO employees to engage with governments regarding these issues. The Code of Conduct number 4 states that "[W]e shall endeavour not to act as instruments of government foreign policy."[119] Instead, this complex relationship between the field offices, the local government, and local rebel groups is left to the 'people on the ground' to exercise their judgement.

Another type of training used by the IRC-Sudan programme comes directly from donors and donor governments. In the case of IRC's largest funder, USAID, stipulations

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[117] Ibid, 4.
[118] "Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief", International Committee of the Red Cross, 1994, 3.
[119] Ibid, 6.

in the contract include using medications that come from the United States, flying US airlines as much as possible, using the USAID brand, as well as the promotion of abstinence as the first line of defence from HIV.[120,121]The contracts also note the intent of the projects, such as the improvement of water and sanitation, and the creation of a civil society group. However, the process in which these tasks are carried out is often left to the discretion of the NGO. When the intent is to promote good governance, there is little guidance given, despite the strong democratic rhetoric of the United States government in this area.

The European Union's Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO) functions similarly to USAID, though with much less religiously motivated policy.[122]The thrust of the ECHO Aid Strategy document, released in 2004, points out the need for a strong link between relief, rehabilitation and development, paying specific attention to 'forgotten crises and forgotten needs."[123] Its mission in Sudan involves the coordination of humanitarian assistance through partner organisations, focusing on health, nutrition, water and sanitation, and food security. A significant amount of ECHO's Sudanese aid is filtered through the International Rescue Committee. In fact, between March and October 2005, $2,909,938 USD was provided to IRC for its projects.[124] Despite ECHO's strong

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[120] "ADS Chapter 303: Grants and Cooperation agreements to Non Governmental Organizations," USAID, January 30, 2007. <http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/303.pdf> (Retrieved Aug 27, 2007).
[121] "Guidance for Implementing "TIAHRT" Requirements for Voluntary Family Planning Projects." United States Agency for International Development, April 1999. <http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/global_health/pop/tiahrtqa.pdf>.
[122] USAID policies are influenced greatly by Christian values. As an example, with the election of George W. Bush, USAID policies included removing condom promotion for prevention for HIV, replacing it with abstinence as well as the appointment of Christian missionaries into key USAID positions. For more information on this topic visit: Bill Berkowitz, "Paul Bonicelli/USAID: The Rest of the Story," Media Transparency, January 8, 2006. < http://www.mediatransparency.org/story.php?storyID=102> .
[123] "ECHO Aid Strategy 2004," European Commission Humanitarian Office, December 18, 2003. Brussells: B1049, 2.
[124] "International Rescue Committee" Insight on Conflict <www.insightonconflict.org> (Retrieved May 31, 2007).

presence in Sudan, its focus on basic needs does not lend any policy guides to those employees whose mandate it is to uphold a good goverance related agreement.

Donor standards vary from government to government and charity to charity. Some donors such as ECHO require extensive auditing and financial accountability. Others such as USAID require only the submission of vague budgets that include the sectors (fundraising, water and sanitation, non food items) where donor money was spent. These mixed standards cause confusion with many employees, with hours of time spent researching the donor requirements for reports and creating financial statements. This time could certainly be better used in the creation of countrywide policies and recommendations.

Accountability to donors is also a serious weakness, as results-based project management tools require deadlines (to obtain funding) for donor reports and proposals upon which that funding is usually contingent. Results in the field are also difficult to quantify. Very little statistical research is undertaken by NGOs as a quality measurement for funders, as it would be incredibly costly to do. One memorable statement made by field staff from Darfur regarding the need for a health statistic for a donor report was, "Just make it up, that's what we do." This does not imply that all statistics are taken from thin air. The recent release of rape statistics by IRC, for instance, is taken from confirmed reports and carries significant validity, but that measurement is complex in nature. Furthermore assertions such as "the reduction of malaria cases by 20%" cannot be quantified and qualified without an in-depth and lengthy study. This research would involve taking into account such complexities as the enlargement or decline of the population of camps due to migration, weather, actions taken to reduce malaria, and other

organisations' help. This is certainly not something that a project-funded, employee-strapped organisation could undertake in any formal, objective manner. Therefore, some serious 'estimation' is undertaken for any results based management reports coming out of the field.

The development community reasons backward in order to achieve desired outcomes. It sets ideal results, such as the Sphere Standards of "most amount of people with access to 15L/person/day of water," and then attempts to achieve the desired goal. As the project proceeds there are results that must be achieved in order to meet the intended objectives. Often times, stated goals are over-exaggerated or sometimes impossible to quantify or measure. For instance, the IRC had a project whose goal was to improve the mental health of women in a refugee/IDP camp, but how can that be quantified? This could be an intended objective, however, it is impossible to quantify results without trained specialized professionals both before and after the project. In times of crisis or emergency, rapid assessment surveys may be carried out if the region is new to NGO support, which are rarely comprehensive and for the most part, these surveys are rarely carried out before project funding is obtained or earmarked. The short time frame for the development funding of projects, limits the ability for project coordinators to effectively analyze every issue in the community.

Despite these weaknesses, the IRC has many unique features that make it an important actor in Sudan. NGOs have a number of strengths in their organisational structure that includes their ability to manoeuvre in difficult and ever-changing environments. As well, the ever-changing roles and conditions of funding have pushed the IRC into an advocacy position, functioning as a watchdog and policy advisor of

governments more than ever before. This does not imply that the projects and programmes that the IRC undertakes are not beneficial, but that their role has changed and their scope has expanded to include improving the host countries transparency and accountability. This is in parallel with their effort to kick-start long-term sustainable improvements in communities.

Engaging with governments has become arguably the most important humanitarian aid component that the IRC and other NGOs have been undertaking. Some critics such as Helen Collinson accuse NGOs of attempting to co-opt government roles through the management of State responsibilities such as health care. [125] Instead, she prescribes increasing direct government budget support, which will improve the amount of resources passing through parliament's authority. In Sudan, the strong resistance to NGOs from the Sudanese government, the growth of international media presence, combined with increased NGO funding for advocacy activities have enforced the need of NGOs to act as representatives for the community. The government of Sudan is known to understate facts and figures regarding the conflict and the social-economic circumstances of its citizens in order to save face on the international scene.

When internal campaigning fails, often the IRC is called upon to campaign abroad for their beneficiaries. The organisation serves a long-term function of promoting greater transparency in the government in whose area they act. IRC's watchdog ability despite government pressure, shows its capacity to work both with and against the government of Sudan. However, it is a constant struggle for IRC to strive for balance between calming the tension from the Humanitarian Aid Commission and assisting its beneficiaries.

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[125] Collinson, 5.

The lack of donor presence in the area, as well as loose project mandates gives the IRC flexibility to generally to act with few checks and balances, and act at a moment's notice. NGOs are sometimes more able to respond to the needs of local populations with greater ease and flexibility than the State, as they generally have modest administration costs and limited but targeted resources, making the projects small scale in nature.[126] As an example of this ability to manoeuvre, IRC was able to respond quickly to the acute outburst of jaundice syndrome (Hepatitis E) in Otash camp, South Darfur, mobilizing with CARE to provide countermeasures such as soap and hygiene promotion, as well as constructing more latrines that dispersed the threat.[127] As well, project proposal changes can be generally made quite easily, following the guidelines of the donor agency. Therefore, if conditions change on the ground or demand for non-food items was less then the demand for shelters, the funds can be allocated to fill alternative needs. NGOs such as Doctors without Borders and Red Cross/Crescent have tonnes of emergency rations in shipping containers to be mobilized at a moments notice. States and bureaucratic institutions (and even some of the largest NGOs to some extent) often do not have that flexibility to change their focus mid-stream.

This flexibility gives IRC the ability to go where governments and armies fear to tread. It is in these conflict situations where NGOs are needed most, and rely heavily on the Red Cross/Crescent movement for protection. Organisations and aid workers alike guard this neutrality heavily as it lends some assurance of safety. However, aid can never

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[126] Robert F. Arnove and Rachel Christina, "NGO-State Relations: An Argument in Favour of the State and Complementarity of Efforts," in Comparative Education. (New York: Teachers College Columbia University Press, 2002), 46.

[127] "Sudan Complex Emergency: Situation Report 13" United States Agency for International Development March 30, 2007, <http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/disaster_assistance/countries/sudan/fy2007/sudan_ce_sr13_03-30-2007.pdf> (Retrieved April 15, 2007).

be completely neutral. When an NGO chooses a targeted area to work, it instantly delves into the realm of the political. Once the territory of aid is set, the balancing act begins.

In the Darfur region of Sudan, IRC's neutrality is constantly tested with dozens of independent militia groups all employing different methods in order to be appeased so that aid can continue in their region. Despite setbacks in Darfur, such as the death of an outreach worker in Hasaba camp, North Darfur, the IRC continues to operate. This shield of impartiality is not perfect, however, as aid supplies have also recently become the targets of looting and vandalism and numerous vehicles have been hijacked or stolen. As one aid worker noted, "Since most of the villages have been burned, there is nothing left to loot except aid agencies."[128] This aid can be difficult to administer through negotiations with rebel groups and the government; in response, the IRC has had to reduce the scope of its operations in the highly volatile areas.

With the reduction of its development and rehabilitation activities, IRC has seen a surge in its role as advocate for the people of Darfur and Sudan. This pressuring of governments to change policies and enforce them is a significant function of NGOs in general.[129] Humanitarian organisations have a significant amount of sway at both the international and national levels, which certainly comes at a cost. NGOs must convince the national governments that their intentions are representative of the beneficiaries, and persuade the public that their goals are honourable and selfless.[130] To this end, the IRC hired its first Advocacy Advisor on Sudan in 2006, whose role was to release advocacy papers, petition government and make recommendations to the government and United

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[128] Anonymous Interviewee, former IRC employee, January 21, 2007.
[129] Robert DeChaine, Global Humanitarianism: NGOs and the Crafting of Community (Toronto: Lexington Books, 2005), 56.
[130] Ibid., 57.

Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS). However, the challenge remains that NGOs must build the confidence of critics, as many believe that the NGOs play up crisis as part of an appeal for funds.[131]

One of the strongest mechanisms that IRC uses for advocacy is through membership in the Sudan Advocacy Coalition Committee, an active group of NGOs that includes CARE, Oxfam and Save the Children among many other high profile organisations. These NGOs have joined together to promote the peace negotiations in Sudan, as well as document the plight of their combined beneficiaries. The Coalition promotes a dynamic stance on many contentious issues such as reintegration and mobilization of refugee/IDPs, and also shares information.

IRCs position, between the government of Sudan, society, and international governments gives these organisations strength as advocates. They also have access to locally sourced, current, and important information. This access to information and governments allows the IRC, in theory, to promote change, create policy, and even influence national budgets. The need to balance each of these powers is often where most NGOs have difficultly.

Advocacy for many NGOs encompasses a wide variety and creative methods of marketing and administrative mechanisms to demonstrate the need for public pressure. Fitzduff and Church note, a NGOs informality, spontaneity, flexibility are their greatest assets.[132] Certainly, NGOs have a higher degree of creativity in the face of conflict or calamity. The film "Just Peace," is a film created by the Sudanese Advocacy Coalition to

[131] Whaites, Allan, "NGOs, Disasters, and Advocacy," in Debating Development, ed. Deborah Eade and Ernst Ligteringen. (Oxfam GB: London, 2001), 309.
[132] Mari Fitzduff and Cheyanne Church, "Stepping up to the Table: NGOs Strategies for Influencing Policy on Conflict Issues," in NGOs at the Table Mari Fitzduff and Cheyanne Church eds (Landham MD: Rowman & Littlefield Pub Inc, 2004), 13.

increase awareness of the peace process, the need for international support, and particularly for the inclusion of all of Sudanese society. With the main avenue of influence placed on pressuring the relatively inactive government to act.

Advocacy, flexibility and creativity are important advantages of the IRC, but there are also factors that limit the IRC such as their frequent shortsightedness and singular focus. Some claim that the sheer size of NGOs will make them as bureaucratic as States or companies, while others contend that NGOs special interests will fragment civil society. Certainly the greatest argument against NGOs is their lack of accountability and long-term, big-picture goals. For the purposes of this thesis, I will examine only a few major criticisms of the IRC, including: its lack of transparency, neo-colonial tendencies, advocacy issues, lack of sustainability due to donor mechanisms, and need for capacity building. These limitations will show the failure of the IRC to undertake its own mandate of improving good governance and the difficulty of doing so within an uncooperative State. These criticisms will show that despite positive aspects of the roles that the IRC plays in Sudan, the organisation does require some modifications in order to thrive in a challenging environment.

As seen in national governments, without transparency of operations it is very difficult to hold an institution accountable, opening the door to abuse. Without accountability, values, ethics and the possibility of corruption are always in question. Transparency should be a part of any organisation or entity whose philosophical underpinnings are democratic. Certainly, the ability for NGOs to be perceived as accountable and transparent has its challenges. Certainly one of the greatest of all is a NGOs apolitical status, which clearly separates them from any government. The IRC sees

itself as being accountable to donors, home governments (whomever they report their income tax) and thirdly to its beneficiaries. There is a freedom in being away from donor's scrutiny, with reports being the only channel of information. This can lead to the temptation to craft entirely favourable reports at the expense of accuracy.[133]

Transparency is also needed to observe those NGOs that are not accomplishing their stated and visible goals. One set of 'actors' present in the not-for-profit scene promoting scepticism is those NGOs with less then altruistic goals. Known as "Astroturf" organisations, these are organisations that are funded solely to put forth a certain perspective, or even to sell consumer goods. The Global Climate Coalition is a classic example of this, as it was formed as an advocacy group to downplay the threat of global warming, and was funded entirely by oil companies.[134] Similarly, the goals of some religious NGOs can be perceived only as proselytizing, and not contributing to the common good. It is imperative that NGOs give a clearer picture in regards to their income, expenditure, programmes, and planning. Income tax returns and some pertinent information are available online, but it is rare to have a full budget audit of the organisation. This should surprise some, as some Executive Directors can make over $500,000 (Can) annually, and organisations have budgets in the hundreds of millions.

The IRC also does not maintain a high degree of transparency with their projects, donors or government relations. Project reports from the field, donor's reports, and monitoring and evaluation reports are well-kept secrets and cannot be obtained by the

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[133] Part of NGO accountability, these reports set targets for projects to attain to.
[134] Sharon Beder, "The decline of the Global Climate Coalition," Engineers Australia Nov 2000, 41.

public or even other NGOs.[135] Most would concur that there is a need to share this information, as it would further strengthen the abilities of NGOs, from learning best practices and elevating the quality of service overall. However, these documents are considered to contain 'trade secrets' or information that is sensitive, thus they are not released in full. In fact, when contacted regarding this project, an IRC spokesperson noted that simply discussing the organisation was difficult as Sudan is a "politically sensitive" area.[136]

The protection of information from the public is needed in Sudan in order to create room to manoeuvre, as the IRC must insulate itself from the control of the Humanitarian Aid Commission in order to remain effective. Information that could be used to make a more efficient organisation can also be used against it to co-opt its operations. Therefore, the need to poise itself within a complicated bureaucracy and the beneficiaries is imperative to obtain some semblance of accountability, while also limiting the amount of information available to the government. Hence, the IRC gains their legitimacy from the communities in which they work, as the organisation is essentially a non-elected representative of the community. This is a controversial topic leading some authors such as Julie Hearn to claim that NGOs are a form of colonialism or pseudo-governments. While this tactic may leave room for some to question the legitimacy of the organisation, the IRC will ultimately have a greater capacity to effect change, of a more lasting and sustainable type, if it works with the Sudanese government while remaining autonomous advocates.

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[135] Monitoring and Evaluation reports are done at the end of a project (or determined by the donor in the project cycle) to determine, by a 'non-partisan' employee (usually the Monitoring and Evaluation Manager), if the project met its targets and what, if any, were the lessons learned.
[136] Confidential Interviewee. Email dated January 15, 2007.

However, detractors feel that this push for NGOs presence as advocates is counter-productive. In Nigeria, two NGOs (Actionaid and Oxfam) sit on the Millennium Development committee to monitor the implementation of policies of the Nigerian government. Critics contend that this is in direct violation of Nigeria's sovereignty as these two NGOs have influence on an aid budget of over $31 million in a country of over 130 million people.[137] Rotimi Sankore questioned if this 'step up' for NGOs from advocacy roles to an advisory presence is heralding a new phase of intervention where NGOs will participate in the running of African countries. This is most certainly not the open objective of the IRC but it does suggest some very interesting questions regarding governance of a nation and accountability of NGOs. Who are NGOs accountable to?

The IRC prides itself on being directly connected to communities. However, the authority that is granted to them is usually short term in nature. One major criticism of NGOs in general is their lack of sustainability. Very few, if any, projects are funded long-term; in fact, all project proposals must be within the donor budget year, even those multi-year projects can be denied in the following year if the project does not meet expectations or if funding foci change. Funding for entire NGO programmes is only available to very few NGOs in Canada, leaving most to maintain their operations through project grants.[138] Despite funding instability, the IRC needs to give the appearance of sustainability. It is often noted by NGOs and donors that if a project cannot self-sustain within the project scope, then it would be best be left up to the government. Therefore,

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[137] Sankore, 13.
[138] Sylvie Groulx and Robert Derouin "Voluntary Sector Responsive Programming: the New Approach" Canadian International Development Agency. July 1, 2007. <http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca> (Retrieved September 14, 2008).

most projects, especially those in the areas of infrastructure, must have a plan in which to end the project.

The jargon used by NGOs is that of 'exit strategy,' which is when the project is taken over by the community or by another NGO, or sometimes, even the government. This exit strategy is implemented when project funding has ceased, and no other funding can be found elsewhere. The author met with Sheiks (community leaders) in Kassala, in the North East of Sudan, where lack of donor interest brought to an end ongoing project funding, it was important to maintain good community relations in former project areas, listening to concerns and wishes, despite the knowledge of the lack of forthcoming funding for the region. In this case, the IRC gave the community false hope, as the lack of long-term planning meant that schools, water and sanitation and health projects in the region would cease as they could not be supported by the community. As an official from the IRC noted, "NGOs do some work but they lack an integrated approach. All do sectoral approach, not looking at demands on community to pay for services. They don't ask what a community can sustain."[139]

Another impediment to this sustainability is the fact that NGOs have a high staff turnover rate. As Zoe Marriage notes, most relief workers are only in the country short-term and do not build many relationships with strong political figures.[140] This lack of personal connection in a community weakens the dialogue between the community and NGOs, making it easier to surrender an area when funding dries up. As one NGO aid worker in Southern Sudan noted, "you work with an NGO, tomorrow it's not there. So

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[139] Zoe Marriage, "The Comfort of Denial: External Assistance in Southern Sudan," Development and Change (37:3), 2006), 486.
[140] Ibid, 496.

now they are targeting one area, they do not work properly and then move on to another area."[141]

The shifting of NGOs from area to area is largely due to their nature of funding. The greatest share of financial support to IRC comes from state-funded donors, and thus comes with strings attached. The ratio of private citizen giving can barely be compared anymore with the amount of foundation and governmental donor funding. This has created a dependence on state donors, which, in general, suffer from many of the same issues that NGOs are plagued with such as lack of transparency, accountability and partisanship. There is a certain level of flexibility needed between donors and NGOs, as noted above, as organisations must be able to change project objectives at a moment's notice and have a variety of funding mechanisms – such as direct budgeting, and working with and through local NGOs.

Donors for the most part do not identify the inherent problems with lack of transparency and accountability in a country, as they too are political actors giving money to specific areas, religions and sectors depending on their government's objectives. For instance the Canadian Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART), which was sent to Sri Lanka after the tsunami, was strategically sent to Tamil majority areas for assistance.[142] As Canada has the largest number of Tamil refugees within its borders, it is not difficult to understand why the DART team focused less on Singhalese areas.

One of the greatest issues that NGOs face is that they have incentives to avoid implicating themselves in failure, to deny responsibility and to exaggerate outcomes. As most donors are far removed from the operational theatre, it is no wonder that NGOs feel

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[141]Ibid, 483.
[142] F. Abbas Rana, "Karygiannis defends trip into Tamil Tiger-controlled regions of Sri Lanka" The Hill Times January 17, 2005. <http://www.thehilltimes.ca>.

the need to keep the donors satisfied with favourable reports of high numbers of beneficiaries and hide failures by limiting the amount of negative information available. This disconnect also encourages NGOs to feel that their 'on the ground' experience is wasted on donors, who rarely consult NGOs or Local NGOs (LNGOs) regarding strategic planning. A DFID (UK Department for International Development) official noted, "DFID has no legal or moral obligation to engage with civil society at a country level."[143] In a meeting between the author and the European Community Humanitarian Organisation (ECHO), the fund administrator noted "We only have money for water and sanitation in {this specific State}."[144] When asked the reason behind the strategic placement and types of services, the administrator responded that it was "political and complicated."[145] Development branches for donor government engagement with NGOs in a recipient country are an afterthought. The Canadian Consulate in Khartoum in 2005-2006, for example, did not have an in-country CIDA representative, despite the fact that the Canadian government committed $90 million over two years to implementing and strengthening the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.[146] Of this sum, $40 million was allocated to go to development resources in multi-donor trust funds, and $40 million for continued humanitarian assistance, with $10 million to support bilateral reconstruction and rehabilitation programmes.[147] A Sudan CIDA representative was not in the country until two years after the funds were available, showing the lack of direct consultation when distributing funds.

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[143] Collinson, 6.
[144] Confidential meeting with Echo and the Author January, 2006.
[145] Ibid.
[146] "Sudan" Government of Canada, <u>Canadian International Development Agency</u>. <<u>http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/CIDAWEB/acdicida.nsf/En/8717BE91827C355A8525711800616963?OpenDocument</u>> (Retrieved February 21, 2006).
[147] Ibid.

There is an institutional demand to create the realities that donors insist on, a fantasy if you will, despite the actual situation. The IRC cannot and will not allow the project to fail, at least on paper. The donor must also persist in the appearance of success, as they are accountable to their own governments and voters. Given the power that international donors wield with other country governments, it is important that both international NGOs and local NGOs be consulted, as they will ultimately be tasked with the implementation of the donors' mandates, and the political will of the people.

Of concern for both governments and NGOs is the time frame of an "emergency."[148] Despite peace agreements and lack of natural disaster, Sudan is still classified as an emergency setting by NGOs and donors. Relief work even now comprises the majority of IRC's projects, and rehabilitation (development) work is still far off in many regions. Many groups claim that dependency in this emergency setting is an issue when it comes to relief work, as it will undermine the beneficiary's ability to deal with the crisis on its own. In the case of Sudan, the protracted emergency situation has created a unique type of economy – an externally dependent war-economy, which is little understood.[149] What will be important as the region moves toward peace is to create a stable platform for development to take root.

Donors such as DFID, CIDA, and USAID have, for the past few years, been shifting focus to integrate lessons learned and to decrease administration costs. This has shifted programme-funded operations to project-funded and then to larger-scale programmes that have a local civil society component. This funding change challenges most NGOs as they still cannot prepare for the years ahead, generally exhibiting short-term thinking in order

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[148] Duffield, Mark. "Complex Emergencies and the Crisis of Developmentalism," Institute of Development Studies Bulletin: Linking Relief and Development. (25)4, 1994.
[149] Ibid.

to accommodate the whims of donors. There has been an effort by the NGOs in Sudan to move to a consolidated appeals process, such as the United Nations Sudan Work Plan. Administrated by the UN and NGOs, the Work Plan creates a year-long strategic funding and support plan that would fund most humanitarian, recovery, and development programming in Sudan. The Work Plan is a 'wish list' for NGOs, who use the document to garner greater international support through a mass appeal. The strategic plan includes all projects that the NGOs would like to undertake throughout the year. However, this has proved to be a difficult undertaking as, by the UN's own admissions, funding mechanisms have delayed the implementation of these projects and only 49% of pledged non-food aid funding was received in 2006.[150]

In another attempt to smooth out the budgetary issues, Afghanistan, for example, has been trying to monitor its own aid flow, which combines country level and international monitoring, the results of which can be found online.[151] Donors and aid agencies want to coordinate, as they do not want to have overlapping funding with other organisations. Nevertheless it does happen, as in Banda Ache, when a little girl developed measles symptoms after receiving the immunization three different times from three agencies.[152]

Competition for finite resources has forced most NGOs to divert attention from programme management, to fundraising, proposal writing, and event coordination. This competition sometimes forces out organisations that have partisan political or religious beliefs, or are too small to compete with the larger NGOs. Focused funding mechanisms target NGOs with specific experience and talent, which creates niche markets, and co-

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[150] "2007 United Nations Work Plan"
[151] "Global Humanitarian Assistance Update 2004-2005." Global Humanitarian Assistance and Good Humanitarian Donorship Project, Development Initiatives, 2005,28.
[152] Claudio Munoz, "The Non-aligned movement – The Quantity of aid matters as much as the quantity," The Economist, April 4th, 2007. <www.economist.com>

opts or expels others. The question remains as to whether NGOs will lose control of their agendas. Will donors push these community building blocks into areas in which they can no longer effect real change?

Authors such as Charles Quist-Adede and Anita van Wyk claim that NGOs perpetuate a self-serving myth that allows them to gain the confidence of international communities and governments alike: that is, the belief that the developing world would be miserable without NGOs' help.[153] Africa holds a great amount of resources and wealth but NGOs, with their 'poor-pornography' and media coverage of only the harshest conflicts, portray Africa to be indeed the 'Dark Continent.' The formal ideology is the claim that NGOs around the globe are helping the "poorest of the poor." Critics such as Rory Stewart note that this is not often the case. The ability to reach the poorest is hampered often by the lack of knowledge of an area or region. As NGOs enter an area, they often rely on groups of community leaders or elders, which in Sudan are most often men. These men are then the ones determining those who are the "poorest of the poor". Obviously this can give way to partisanship and corruption within this system of selection. Those who benefit the elders could be chosen rather then the poorest in the community who are most often women, the elderly and the disabled who have been historically neglected by the community.

This neglect of particular groups has led to the critique that International NGOs should not be working in countries that have functional local NGOs, as they are more able to target marginalized segments of society. These INGOs and LNGOs are often at odds, as donor dollars are targeted to go to those NGOs with ties to the donor

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[153] Charles Quist-Adede, Anita van Wyk, "The Roles of NGOs in Canada and the USA in transformation of the socio-cultural structures of Africa", Africa Development, V32 N2, 66.

government. Only international NGOs can receive funding for projects in Sudan from the Canadian government for instance, despite local NGOs being both competent and efficient, and having solid community knowledge. LNGOs certainly would also come at a smaller administrative cost then international NGOs. An expatriate worker for the IRC, who comes from abroad can cost upwards of $CAD 80,000 to maintain however a local NGO worker of equal competence, education and knowledge would cost a small fraction of that.[154]

For the most part, Sudan's personnel would benefit from the continued utilization of the International Rescue Committee for capacity building. The ability to pass on knowledge from international workers to local staff encompasses the main reason for hiring local staff to key positions. IRC, like many NGOs, employs this practice of capacity building in most of their projects and practices. The organisation works to promote those local staff that have the 'skills' needed to manage a complex programme. The author was lent a local staff member with whom to work, and actively worked to pass along my knowledge. However, often this information worked in cooperation as the local staff member excelled in regional information, and the author aided with donor requirements. The need for international staff is a controversial issue as donors such as USAID, DFID, and CIDA require that all reports and proposals be submitted in the English language. Oddly, IRC's donor reports were usually submitted in the host country to a person whose first language was Arabic, the second being English. Therefore a language barrier was created between two native Arabic speakers (the report writer and reader), who were forced to speak English due to convention. The need for international

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[154] Estimation based on author's salary, flights, insurance, in-country travel, vehicles, staff, and vacation and sick leave.

specialized report writing teams would all but be eliminated if donors accepted reports in the language of the country.

The IRC has a unique view of the State, as they are neither elected officials nor voters: they are constantly striving to maintain room to manoeuvre. The IRC views the State as an important component in their daily activities, but also as a hindrance. The fact remains that the IRC is limited in its authority not its resources, and the government has authority, but lacks resources. In an ideal sense, they would complement each other to make positive change. The IRC is, as an institution, lacking in depth and must constantly struggle for autonomy within the uncooperative government, while striving for effective projects with its small staff, weak funding mechanisms, uneven resources, and short-term mandates that hamper its ability to think long-term.[155] The interdependency between the IRC and the Government of Sudan to provide aid in the country is a fragile association with the uncooperative government. Organisations in the country lament working with or through the Humanitarian Aid Commission, while the government of Sudan would unquestionably like to remove all international NGOs from the country keeping the aid money. One feels certain that the beneficiaries see it differently. Some argue that the government of Sudan might not be the best organisation for determining aid and development given their past and current tendency to use aid to further its strategic goals. This in turn has led to starvation, death, and massive migration. However, there can also be a problem when NGOs and the government join to provide these needs, as these State-NGO partnerships can lead to cooptation, weakening their legitimacy to the community and donors.[156]

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[155] Arnove and Christina, 46.
[156] Ibid.

The relationship between the government of Sudan and its localities, as seen in Chapter Two, creates sycophants and spreads nepotism at the municipal level. As taxation and transfers to localities are uncommon, bribes are often needed to engage with the government system, with basic services at a pay-for-use structure. This can be seen in the visa system where gifts are given to government employees to process visas in a timely manner. NGO's camp managers, who function at the same level as municipalities, can have greater accountability, fewer pay-for-use services, as well as fewer instances of bribery needed to obtain basic provisions.

While there are a litany of ills that plague NGOs, they are vital in times of crisis. However, the IRC, quite simply, is too narrowly focused and has too short a funding horizon to work without the government of Sudan. Nevertheless, in times of crisis IRCs size and ability to focus its services and funding will enable it to fill the roles of providing health care, water and sanitation, and camp management, and will engage other NGOs to aid in food distribution or other services need. This substantial breadth and depth of operations of NGOs is sometimes of concern to governments, as they believe that NGOs may be instilling values or practices that go against its authority.[157] In areas such as neglected Darfur or infrastructure-poor Southern Sudan, NGOs can be the only authority or organisation creating stability in the region, giving NGOs an appearance of governing the region *in absentia*.

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[157] Fitzduff and Church, 11.

CHAPTER FOUR: Conclusions and Recommendations for the Future

Decades of war, structural adjustment programmes, weak and authoritarian governments, famine, and migration, have left the people of Sudan in a precarious position. On the verge of economic growth and/or war, this massive country with great disparities in wealth and power depending on region, is a land of polarization. NGOs that operate in the country have learned to cope with a high level of bureaucratic management by the Humanitarian Aid Commission branch of government, along with the natural infrastructure challenges, and have been able to accomplish many remarkable goals. The International Rescue Committee has altruistic objectives however its lack of cohesive policies has weakened the perception of their ability to provide accountable relief. This is especially ironic when, as with the IRC, the goal is to strengthen governance and civil society.

The critiques levelled against NGOs are often valid. There must be a system of checks and balances for NGOs. Policing by funding agencies and donors places a strain on funding systems, however, it also lends legitimacy to the function of both donors and NGOs, as those that do not meet an acceptable level of accountability and transparency will not be funded in the future. But the level of policing must leave room for flexibility, as the ever-changing conditions on the ground are not accommodating of strict policies. One must accept and acknowledge the important contributions that NGOs like the IRC make in the face of emergencies: stabilization, creativity, ability to manoeuvre, and good governance.

As seen in the initial chapter, the concept of good governance is certainly a complex topic. NGOs must learn to navigate this terrain, putting into operation accountability mechanisms and policy decisions of the government. In order to solidify their positions as advocates, NGOs should clarify their terms of good governance, not just in their strategic plan and employee policies, but also with their beneficiaries who depend on their work to survive. The definitional issue should be addressed in stakeholder meetings and in staff training, including changing the definition of good governance to suit the needs and wishes of the community. What can be especially counter-productive for communities are definitions that have a lack of solid understanding such as 'governance' or 'participation'. There is a serious need to define the terms in order to strengthen these areas, especially when good governance is a requirement of the IRC and its main funders.

What is certainly apparent and repeated often in this thesis is the need for specific, situation appropriate and effective policies for the promotion of good governance and increased accountability in NGOs. These policies should be detailed and look at the political realities of the region in which they operate. There should be local level staff input into these policies, and they should be somewhat malleable to the local situation on the ground. NGO administrations claim that good governance policies are not a priority as the organisation in Sudan is in a state of emergency. However, the country has been in a state of emergency in one way or another since IRC entered Sudan (and decades before that). In the over two decades that IRC has spent in the country, there has been ample time to develop a country specific policy for its employees, and an appropriate organisational structure. Given the amount of interaction with government and militias, IRC needs a formal modus operandi regarding these groups.

As the bond between the Sudanese government and IRC grows, so too does the need to have a strong advocacy role in order to carve our room to manoeuvre. The current position of Policy Advocate for IRC Sudan must be strengthened, considering the growing importance of the role. This position should supervise the creation of good governance definitions for regional offices, and represent beneficiaries abroad and to the local government. The position should be tasked with bilateral education – both to and from the government. The Advocate must also advise all project coordinators and managers on effective and long-term strategies of good governance and give them the policy tools to strengthen civil society. This should also include aiding the field offices to create their own Codes of Conduct and policies regarding specific groups and networks. The role of the Sudan Advocacy Coalition should encourage its partners to join in the creation of good governance policies. As well, every new staff member should be trained in the area of good governance, including policies and regional concerns.

In the same regard, mandates of donors should be tasked with preserving the present advocacy and project management roles of civil society and non governmental organisations. As aid has become politicized, the suspicion that NGOs act with political motives has increased. It is imperative that donors adopt policies for NGOs that are neutral, and provide good governance and accountability without hindering the management and decision-making. This would ensure that each organisation is held accountable, through an open dialogue to promote positive change.

During the time the author was working in Sudan, an organisational audit of IRC was carried out by IRC-New York (head office), which aimed to improve the administrational strategy of the IRC-Sudan office. Numerous experts in budgeting, human resources and

management toured the programme and projects to give suggestions for the improvement of the operation. Unfortunately, to the detriment of the programme, the audit did not take into account the ability to pay for staffing, only the need for it. There was only a modest local staff input on the issues at hand and local civil society partners were not consulted. Consequently, the organisation developed what could be described as an under-funded top-heavy management structure, which has not been able to cope with the funding challenges. It is imperative that this bloated management structure regain its financial footing, as the increase of international staff members, especially at the higher levels, means a subsequent decrease in money spent directly on beneficiaries. Unconfirmed by IRC, this expansion of administration costs has meant using up to 80% of project budgets to fund staffing costs, which is an unacceptable proportion.[158]

Another area that IRC must concentrate on is creating programme quality, as its current financial and project difficulties largely stem from over-stretching its financial resources. It is imperative that IRC focus its attention with a long-term view on areas in which it has expertise, and certainly only in areas that IRC currently has field stations, lest it overextend itself. IRC cannot take on the management of all sectors in large regions, as donor funding will always hinder the organisation's long-term planning. This can be remedied with better coordination with the relevant government actors and other NGOs, who can fulfil the 'exit strategy' in the future.

Finally, donor giving has changed the relationship with NGOs and host and home governments. The funding specifications have changed the role of the IRC from neutral entity, to one that promotes a western perspective of good governance. IRC represents Sudan and their beneficiaries at the supranational level including to the United Nations

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[158] Anonymous Interviewee, Interview with the Author, January 21, 2008.

and the World Bank, and even to the Sudan government. This role as advocate has changed the perspective of NGOs as neutral entities, and shifted to create entities that critically analyse values. Therefore the IRC must improve its transparency with governments and other organisations to strengthen its good governance mechanisms. The IRC, which currently works with the Advocacy Coalition to fulfill this mandate, cannot simply rely on it, as the Coalition does not currently have teeth on the international scene or in Sudan. In order to do so, more staffing and funding is imperative. Currently, there is only one staff member who works with the Advocacy Coalition in Sudan, with two in Nairobi.

This advocacy role must be linked directly with improved policies of ethics and accountability into the overall structure of the organisation. IRC should adopt the recent Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP), and focus more on the transparency of its operations. The inclusion of IRC into the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership would ensure that IRCs accountability would be on par with the strongest NGOs on the planet, making it a leader in its field, and fixing the serious reporting problems. Perhaps just as importantly, the key staffing areas must be filled in a timely manner. Those positions left vacant for long periods of time shift the burden of work on to fewer people, causing staff to burn out, and creating a 'history void', where important information is not passed on from staff to staff.

The accountability mechanisms should also be improved in NGO reports. Information should not be a closely guarded secret, as these are not traditional businesses protecting profitability. Instead, to develop strong accountability these reports should be shared within the NGO community. Since the Sudanese government uses this information

against the NGOs, the information could be anonymized, for the sole purpose of knowledge exchange. Certainly, there is some information that needs to be guarded, especially when dealing with a corrupt government such as that of Sudan. However, if reports were released, there would be a stronger mechanism to keep the government in check, as reports of the frequent abuses occurring in Darfur would be documented on a regular basis. One NGO could not be targeted if all actors reported these issues. This transparency must also be put into effect in report writing. While few NGO are willing to admit that its methods or management have been incorrect, the passing on of best and worst practices is one of the few ways in which development organisations will be seen as accountable. A recommendation to this effect would see a more complete open and shared 'lessons learned' section for both proposal and report writing to donors.

Many NGOs have contempt for the ever-changing funding strategy of governments. However, it is the opinion of this author that we are witnessing a positive move from purely state-to-state funding, to funding predominantly NGOs, to a return to inter-state transfers while keeping a strong advocacy role for NGOs. This can be seen as progress, as active country governments are better suited to conduct large-scale, long-term, multi-sectoral operations.

There are many criticisms of NGOs, however, I do not believe that the organisations have worked themselves out of a job quite yet, as their roles are ever-changing and much work still needs to be completed in Sudan. The good governance structures that the IRC promotes in its actions, but not necessarily its policies, is something that must be remedied in order to secure the organisation's future workings with and against the Humanitarian Aid Commission and the Sudanese Government. The IRC's programmes

of health care, camp management, and promotion of rule of law and its mandate of support for civil society combined with the link with the Humanitarian Aid Commission is a challenging relationship with the IRC constantly struggling for space to operate.

The IRC will become more accountable and efficient in the future, as they become more settled and issue focused. IRC in particular should streamline its operations to focus on areas of specialization, and become strong advocates for the beneficiaries in its region of operation. An emphasis on clear and measurable objectives must be complemented by a willingness to monitor and evaluate results. Advocacy strategies should be kept immediate and local, and should only be undertaken with the consent of the majority of beneficiaries. Despite the fact that there are many criticisms, there is one universal belief: that the Sudanese people will depend on the IRC for many years to come.

Further research should involve examining the linkages between States, NGOs/LNGOs, and donors as there is an inherent connection that shows how policy is created and implemented and how that can weaken or strengthen the developing world's state structure. Trends in world funding are also something that should be studied in great depth, especially as it effects the roles NGOs play, as they are increasingly called on to provide government policy oversight while aligning their activities with those of donor and host governments.

The balancing act that the IRC plays daily is precarious at best. The IRC attempts to be an advocate for its beneficiaries, but also must also brace itself from an uncooperative government known for its human rights abuses. The poise needed to manage both the needs of the people, the Humanitarian Aid Commission, and donors is remarkable, and would impress even the most skilled diplomat. IRC's creativity, fluidity and ability to

shift allow it to be effective within this context. All things must change with time, and one can hope for the sake of many marginalized Sudanese that the International Rescue Committee can continue to find room to manoeuvre within this challenging situation.

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