

Faris al-Nour Interview

LOCATION: Khartoum
DATE: 4th April, 2020
INTERVIEWER: Anton Lin



Faris al-Nour

- ◇ Chairman and Founder, Mogadedon Foundation
- ◇ Consultant to Hemeti on political affairs
- ◇ From the White Nile areas

7 Questions

1. **When you hear the word “Sudan”, what first comes to mind?**
‘Big resources. The longest river, the Nile. Resources.’
2. **What is your message to the Sudanese people?**
‘We can make a change and we can build our country, when we are untied and co-operate. We need a program for development.’
3. **What is your message to the rest of the world?**
‘You can make a win-win situation with Sudan, solving our problems and yours. We can make a Marshall Plan to let people from across Africa stay in Sudan rather than migrating to Europe. We have a huge country with a tiny population, so help us to become an even greater country by attracting the immigration that currently goes to Europe.’

4. **How can the government earn the trust of the people?**
'Development. All governments with all of their ideologies need one thing; a good economy. After that, do what you want!'
5. **What are you excited about in the next few years?**
'I dream that I can help the leaders here make Sudan one of the tiger economies in Africa. We have so many resources, it could be huge.'
6. **What can Sudan and the international community learn from each other?**
'The world can learn from us how our army and civilians have made a government together. All of our neighbours failed to do this. We have some problems but it looks like it's succeeding. And we must learn from other countries how they develop their economies, and also learn from their bad experiences.'
7. **What impact do you as an individual want to have?**
'I would like to stop there being a single hungry child in Sudan.'

PEOPLE

On the birth of the Foundation:

'I had helped a school with some uniforms for the kids, but the headmaster told me that what he really needed was food- hunger was the main cause of children leaving school. He brought in a girl whose food for the whole day was a bottle of water with some crumbs in it.'

'The next day, I delivered them some sandwiches. Three months later, I was at 1,000 sandwiches per day. After a year, we were feeding 100,000 students daily. Today, it's not just sandwiches! In eight years, we have made over fifty-three million meals.'

'We also provide other things to schools, like electricity. We have installed water facilities in 57 schools, dug 40 wells, and in some places actually build classrooms, where previously the only school was shade under a tree.'

'We were funded by donations from local communities. Nobody knew it was like this. Mosques also started to help, and large companies did, too. Today, large numbers of passers-by donate to the kitchens as well as giving schools money directly so they can buy food. We also now help homeless people on the streets, and in 2017 started doing microfinance for women.'

On Bashir's treatment of the Foundation:

'All of our work is done by volunteers; we have no government links. Bashir didn't like us, and the current government is broke so can't support us anyway. Bashir's police interrogated me a few times. His police sometimes took our donation money, or would come to our stands and film themselves as though they were the ones doing the work.'

On the revolution:

'I had moved to London but returned when the revolution began and was arrested a few days later. A social campaign led to my release in February 2019.'

'During the sit-in, we provided the food for the protesters. We had all the logistics anyway, and the schools were shut. We fed up to 100,000 protesters at the peak. Hemeti also provided some of the food for the protesters.'

POLITICS

On the government:

'I feel comfortable with the current government because I feel it is my government. They make lots of mistakes, but it is much better than before.'

'We will still suffer for a few more years, until our elections in 2022. Things will get better after that. But until then, the problem for the transitional government is that it can't make decisions on lots of topics.'

'I am not a member of the FFC because I want to be a bridge between the civilians and the army.'

On the economy:

'We need peace agreements from the Juba talks and an end to the conflict, in order to allow the economy to grow. Political stability has to remain for a time, and the State Sponsor of Terror designation needs to be lifted.'

POWER

On his relationship with Hemeti:

'On March 8th, 2020, I became a consultant to Hemeti. In 2018, I had won an award from Dubai for my humanitarian work. After winning the award, I went to Darfur and met Hemeti there. He had built schools, dug wells, and did a lot of work for the people there. There is a lot of propaganda about him by supporters of the old government, but I have had a relationship with him since 2018 and it is not true. He was the main humanitarian provider in Darfur, and provided a lot of the food during the sit-in in Khartoum in 2019.'

'I told him that everyone needs to support the transitional government Sudanese history is full of revolutions followed by military coups a few years later. I asked him to guard against it. He agreed to do so, and so now I am working with him on how he can support democracy in the country.'

'June 3rd is being dealt with by a judicial process. We don't know what happened on the day or who did what so let's not judge until the process makes its findings.'

On the security situation:

'Sudan is safe now; our volunteers do not have problems anymore. There are some hot areas, especially around the borders.'