

Juma Dagalo Musa Interview

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INTERVIEWER: Anton Lin



Juma Dagalo Musa

- ◇ Umda of the Mahariya
- ◇ Uncle to Hemeti

A Sudanese Proverb from Mr. Juma
'What is in the past is dead.'

His interpretation: The Holy Quran says that 'who forgives, receives virtue from Allah'.

PEOPLE

On being Mahariya:

'We are originally Darfuri Arabic camel herders, from the north of Darfur around Zurug and Wadi Hawar. But we can be found across Darfur. I don't agree with focusing on tribal names- we are all Arabs, and we are all Africans.'

'When I was a boy, we lived with the Fur as we roamed. Before 2003, everything was safe, the markets were safe, and all tribes worked together in the markets. When we had issues, the civil administration would solve them.'

'Only 1% of our population is educated, because we are always on the move.'

'The Mahariya are now focusing on settling down and educating our children. But we won't lose our knowledge of our old ways of life just because we live in cities. The Netherlands is an example of a country with an economy based on cows, yet that lives in cities and goes to schools. I would like to see Zurug grow as large as Khartoum, with its own airport one day.'

On tribal relations:

'The relations between Mahariya, Zaghawa, and Quraan in Zurug are very good. The Quraan were nomads like us who are also settling down now together with us. The Zaghawa lived peacefully with us in our fathers' and grandfathers' generations, and now we live peacefully, too.'

On truth and reconciliation:

'If there are to be courts to try the crimes of Darfur, they should be in Sudan. We have our own systems.'

'Everyone has the right to claim against anyone else, if they can prove the case. My personal view is that it is better for us to forgive.'

POLITICS

On the present government:

'We have a lack of organisation at present in the government. This country is big enough for everyone, yet we still have people living in camps.'

'I support having elections early, next year. The current government is not working well so needs to be replaced. The government made a mistake by giving too much power to the FFC, who are weak and don't really know about Sudan as most of them have only just returned from abroad. Their followings are small.'

On political engagement:

'The people in Zurug feel the government is very far away. The only government they know is the RSF- nobody has ever visited or provided any education or healthcare. But people will still vote.'

'I hope we have an early election, but I don't know whom I would vote for right now.'

On the origins of the wars in Darfur:

'Previously, foreign organisations and countries supported the non-Arab tribes in Darfur, increasing the problems, but now everything is in a better situation.'

'In 2003, the non-Arab tribes had education and wanted roles in Khartoum, but the people there were Arabs and there were conflicts. The non-Arabs thought that by taking control of Darfur, they could then take control of Khartoum.'

'The non-Arabs were better educated than us so could blame us more eloquently.'

On the future for Darfur:

'We will never solve Darfur if people don't forgive each other. Rwanda is an example of the only way forwards. Arabs and non-Arabs are large groups and war between us is terrible, we cannot have it. Both of us have already lost a lot.'

On how he would advise his nephew, Hemeti:

'The security and safety of the people is the most important thing.'

POWER

On the RSF's role in Sudan:

'The government of Bashir asked the RSF to help stop the wars in Darfur. Under Hemeti, they collected weapons and reduced tribal fighting. Right now, you can go anywhere in Darfur in safety. The RSF is not only for Arabs, it is made up of people from all tribes. Hemeti's vision from the start was to unite numerous people under one flag.'

On the security situation:

'There are no longer security problems in the country. There are political and economic ones, but not security ones.'

'UNAMID made no improvement in our security situation when it came last time, so it was a mistake for Hamdok to ask the UN again. We are an independent country and the Sudanese people don't want the UN here.'