

Mohammedin ad Dud Interview

LOCATION: Gurair, North Darfur
DATE: 21st March, 2020
INTERVIEWER: Anton Lin

Sheikh Mohammedin ad-Dud

◊ Nazir of the Rezeigat Mahariya.

A Sudanese Proverb from Sheikh ad Dud
'Clean the resting place of today so you can rest tomorrow.'

His interpretation: You might not be resting in the same place tomorrow. Someone else will be where you were, and you will be where another person was, so we all have to do good to others as we also rely on them doing good to us.



7 Questions

- 1. When you hear the word "Sudan", what first comes to mind?**
'It is my country and I am a Sudanese citizen. I belong to this country and every citizen loves their country by building it.'
- 2. What is your message to the Sudanese people?**
'We must be united. Our rebels who have gone abroad must come back, sit with us, and be united. We all have to look after our country to build it.'
- 3. What is your message to the rest of the world?**
'First, stop supporting fighting, rebels, and groups destroying Sudan. Second, we are suffering from economic sanctions caused by the US. Lift them! Help Sudan! We can be open to the world so take us off the list of State Sponsors of Terrorism.'
- 4. How can the government earn the trust of the people?**
'Safety and economic growth. And work to reduce the suffering.'
- 5. What are you excited about in the next few years?**
'I am excited about the agreement between the military and the civilian government- I hope it will lead to elections.'
- 6. What can Sudan and the international community learn from each other?**
N/A

7. **What impact do you as an individual want to have?**
'Help make Sudan safer and more united.'

PEOPLE

On truth and reconciliation:

'Where specific cases can be proven, people should go to jail, but only then. Otherwise, restitution and forgiveness are a better way forwards than everyone going to jail without proof, and most cases don't have enough proof.'

'This isn't our first experience of having multiple claims over the same pieces of land. We were ruled by the Mahdi, British, Egyptians, and other governments since. Each time, new people would take or be given land that belonged to others. Ownership can be traced back for many years, but ownership and possession have been separated in many cases for a long time. We can solve these problems together, both in the courts and in our own ways.'

POLITICS

On the government:

'Don't blame the government- even Bashir's one- for everything. Life is full of troubles, many of which come from nature. We live next to the largest desert in the world, so can expect suffering from time to time. Weather and drought, which caused many of our conflicts, weren't the government's fault.'

On the 2022 elections:

'The elections will show whether recent change has been good. But we don't like politics out here; in the UK and US you have two major parties, but in Sudan there are more than you can count. So, when a party gets in you don't really know how long it will stay for.'

On why he stayed in Gurair:

'I was born here, and so were my parents. I have a loyalty to this place. During the wars I was waiting for peace or to die here. That is why my house is still under construction; everything here was destroyed. Schools, water, the hospital, animals, everything. But now it is better, peace is coming, and we are rebuilding. We are rebuilding from zero, as the area was completely destroyed by the rebels.'

On the rebel groups during the Darfur wars:

'There were lots of groups and not all were the same. Some were tribal but many weren't. Some wanted just to rule, not to provide anything for the people. Khalil Ibrahim and Abdel Wahid, for example, were ideological leaders, not tribal leaders. Many people from all tribes didn't join any groups because they saw the rebellions as wrong.'

On stopping his people seeking revenge:

'Our people don't have a problem with peace, we are not looking at the past. We are all Sudanese; some are Sudanese first, tribe second, others are tribe first, Sudanese second, and it's an individual choice. But people are not seeking revenge now.'

'Sudan is large and open. It can fit everyone who wants to come. Our hands remain open to everyone, if they want to make peace.'

POWER

On foreign interference in Sudan's security situation:

'I would say to those who complain that Sudan's security forces are too large: you are the ones who caused our rebellions in the first place. Even today rebel leaders can't come back to make peace because you keep them in your western countries. That is how I see the western world working, it is very bad.'

'We are an independent country, we should decide what security to have. Our country is looking for peace because our citizens want it.'

'Life during the fighting was hard, as everything was destroyed. There were illegal weapons everywhere, and rebel groups supported by foreign influences, which led to the wars.'