

Major Abu al-Gasim Ali Musa & Major Gufari al-Awad Interview

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



Major Abu al-Gasim Ali Musa (left), Major Gufari al-Awad (right)

- ◇ Majors in the RSF
- ◇ Commanders of the RSF camp in Zurug
- ◇ From western and eastern Sudan

A Sudanese Proverb from the Majors
'The room cannot stand without the pillar.'

7 Questions

1. **When you hear the word "Sudan", what first comes to mind?**
'It is our beloved country.'
2. **What is your message to the Sudanese people?**
'We all want to live in peace, and we want to develop our country, and we have to do that together.'
3. **What is your message to the rest of the world?**
'Consider the humanitarian situation in Sudan and treat it with more importance. And remove these false ideas you have about Sudan- we are not terrorists, we are the ones fighting terrorists.'

4. **How can the government earn the trust of the people?**
'Justice.'
5. **What are you excited about in the next few years?**
'I am excited about serving the community.'
6. **What can Sudan and the international community learn from each other?**
'The world can learn patience from Sudan, and that revolution can be peaceful. Sudan can learn from the experience and procedures that the international community has in place.'
7. **What impact do you as an individual want to have?**
'I'd like to leave here and see Zurug more developed, and say I was a part of it.'

PEOPLE

On local relations:

'Our main formal points of contact in the local community are the tribal Umdas. We meet as a group at either side's request when there is something to discuss. In general, when people here have an issue, they come to our RSF police or to the civil administration that is with us. Either way we normally pass it to the civil administration to solve.'

'Our orders are to integrate with the people and join into society- we are posted here for three years at a time.'

'When we first arrived here, everyone had their own perspective on what we might be. Now we all get on very well, soldiers and communities, as we do work that the government never previously did for the people.'

'We consume a large amount of food, fuel, and water, so have to ask the community for support. When we need things we can't buy here, we have to travel for long distances to buy it. We also share a lot of our consumables with the locals. Sharing in both directions is a norm in Sudan.'

POLITICS

On doing government work:

'None of us mind doing work the government should be doing. We are trained for it and it is what we do anyway as a force.'

'The RSF here provides a lot of help for the people. We frequently transport pregnant women to clinics, we dig wells, build schools and clinics, sometimes get involved in local crime, and work a lot with the civil administration. We are not paid for any of this by the locals, it is all out of our budget, and we just don't have enough soldiers or money to do it all. The government needs to either fund us more for this work or do it themselves.'

POWER

On the nature of their work:

'Most of our work now is humanitarian; wells, schools, helping pregnant women. There is very little conflict among the people, so the area is peaceful- the exception is the smuggling and human trafficking. Those people are violent and still attack us, so dealing with that makes up the majority of our military operations. Our focus is on freeing victims, who come from many different countries.'

'We also do wildlife protection, and have a unit focused only on this. Their focus is on a special antelope that lives here, which suffers from poaching.'

On the main security threat:

'There are drugs smugglers, but the main threat are people traffickers. These criminals are mostly Sudanese or Libyan, some Ethiopians even this far west. They shoot back and have very good weapons and communications systems.'