



Community Voices for Peace and Pluralism WhatsApp Workshop Seminar

Series 18

Conversation with, Samia El Hashmi, Sudan

Sudan; the conflict and the peace agreement

Community Voices for Peace and Pluralism - Africa (CVPP) is a non-profit network of women professionals providing services in preventing, transforming and solving violent conflict, including ethnic and religious conflicts around the world. CVPP also builds capacities through a peace and pluralism approach. This is ensured as CVPP is composed of women and a few men from networks that are dedicated to address societal gender inequalities. The network is composed of professional women who can also offer consulting services on global peace and security.

The WhatsApp Workshop Seminar Series initiative began in the wake of Global COVID-19 Pandemic which rendered physical meetings impossible globally. The Pandemic has hit the world's vulnerable and most marginalized hardest. These are the communities a huge number of women under CVPP work and interact with in their various and diverse societies. As such members of CVPP decided to meet this unprecedented challenge by having weekly discussions. In which they share stories, new skills from each other through the WhatsApp platform. The WhatsApp platform is more convenient because it is cheaper and can reach far and wide societies at a fairly cheaper cost than that of the Zoom, Skype platforms that may be beyond reach for most African communities.

Seminar Series Convener: Mandiedza Parichi (PhD), Zimbabwe

Moderator: Doreen Nkala (PhD)

Presenter: Samia El Hashmi

Seminar Series Rapporteur: Selina Kwamini

Participants: Members of Community Voices for Peace and Pluralism Africa

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This Seminar Series is available through the Community Voices for Peace and Pluralism website, <https://peaceandpluralism.org/>. The publication of this Series was made possible through the voluntary work of members of Community Voices for Peace and Pluralism.

Introduction by Doreen Nkala (Ph.D), Zimbabwe: Afternoon to you all CVPP family. I hope that your weekend is going well from wherever you are in the different parts of our continent of Africa and beyond. Today we have an opportunity to listen to the GREAT peace builder Samia El Hashmi of Sudan.

Selina has before this presentation posted her rich Bio and we all look forward to the discussion by one of Africa's great daughters.

Without taking much of your time please sit back and enjoy this great conversation by Samia El Hashmi of Sudan.

Samia El Hashmi, Sudan: Thank you Doreen for the great introduction, I feel humble amongst great sisters and brothers

I will upload my presentation now.

Thank you all for your interest and your time.

Doreen Nkala (Ph.D), Zimbabwe (responding to Samia El Hashmi, Sudan): Thanks Samia

Samia El Hashmi, Sudan: Good evening my sisters and brothers in Community Voices for Peace and Plurality. Thank you all for availing the opportunity for me to present conflict in or Sudan or peace agreement. This is the second time I am giving presentation about Sudan. Before I start talking about the conflict in Sudan or the peace agreement, I need to shade light on the conflict history of Sudan which is very old. Sudan's conflict started same day as declaration of its Independence Day in 19th January 1956. The root cause of the conflict goes back during colonisation era by the British and the Egyptians who colonised Sudan for more than 100 years. The conflict started when they both ruled that Sudan has to be divided to two areas, South and North and they put restrictions between them so as not to move freely. So, they build on differences of the two regions which are that the South is pure Africans and the North is mixed African and Arab. However, their plan was just to divide the country and at last they managed to do so. This is the root cause of the conflict between the South and the North.

Before the independence of the South in 2005, there were many attempts from different governments to reach peace agreements and to keep the country united. The most important attempt was in 1973. There was a peace agreement called the Addis Ababa Agreement (1972). This agreement gave us a break for 10 years to live in peace and to develop the country. However, because of some differences in interpretation of some articles in that agreement, the war started again and it never ended till the peace agreement in 2005. One of the important things we should mention is that, this long war between the North and South,

different governments come to power trying to tune it to serve the purpose of being in power for long time. I mean for instance Al-bashir era, the war turned to be a religious war. So they started to use the differences in religions between the North and the South though the North aren't all Muslims and the South all Christians. However, they instigated this war using religious propaganda and tried to sell the idea to other countries to get support from them. They managed to use this and the war at the end appeared to be religious. After heavy engagement of the International Community in this conflict, a peace agreement was signed in Machakos. So, one of the most important statements in the peace agreement was self-determination.

The self determination right was granted to the South Sudanese people after 5 years of being united. A referendum was conducted in 2011 and obviously South Sudanese people chose to have their own country. Immediately after the separation of South Sudan from the greater Sudan, a war started in Blue-Nile and Nuba Mountain in 2011. But during the period 2003 to 2005, a war had started in Darfur. The war started by a conflict between Arab tribes and African tribes. The cause of the fight was over resources between nomads who had cattle and farmers. However, the tribal element was used to fuel and agitate for war using reasons such as tribal differences, ethnicity or differences that might not be the root cause of the conflict. This is typically what happened. The conflict starts with small things but they use other elements to fuel and agitate it more and more.

This is the brief history about conflict in Sudan. However, what I want to talk about is the Peace Agreement after revolution in December 2018. Actually, political and constitutional declaration was signed in August 2019 after the peaceful revolution took place in Sudan. One of the important articles in the political and constitutional declaration is to attain peace in the first 6 months of the transition period which was supposed to be three years. Immediately after the set up of the government, they constituted a peace Commission to take care of peace talks. The good thing is that Sudanese people chose Juba and South-Sudan as venue for peace talks. All Sudanese people were happy about this matter because they are familiar with each other. South-Sudanese government played the role of the mediator between the interim government and the army groups which were in negotiations to reach peace and thus, Peace Agreement. The modality of the peace talks divided Sudan into 5 tracks; Darfur, South Coast, Blue Nile, Central, Northern and Eastern. Five political protocols were assigned to reach agreement between interim government and these tracks. Each track dealt with conflict in its area. In Darfur and South Coast and Blue Nile were security arrangements because there was army conflict. In the Northern, Eastern and Central there was no army conflict and some

demands had to be fulfilled in terms of ruling these areas. The Al-bashir government had distributed the lands of these especially Central and Northern areas to investors coming from outside Sudan and they confiscated lands from owners and leased them for like 100 years. This was more of confiscation rather than investment. Also the Eastern part of Sudan is an area where the regional and international community has an interest because the Red Sea area is an area where the world wants to rule and control. Also, the conflict in the Horn of Africa has its shade in the conflict in the East Sudan. They are using tribal differences and elements to agitate for war in the area. Now especially after the conflict of Tigray region, more than 40,000 refugees flee to Sudan. This has impact on Sudan's economic and political situation.

Before I start talking about the role of women in this Agreement and negotiations before reaching the Agreement, I want to give an idea about the main elements of Peace Agreement between the parties. First of all, division of power and security arrangements were well taken care of. 75 seats out of 300 in the Legislative Council were granted to the army groups. Three seats in the Sovereignty Council, 25% seats from the Executive authorities of the army groups and 40% of the local government was granted the Darfunians in Darfur area. Briefly, the main features of the Agreement were about the support of nearly 90% of the Sudanese people. When we come to the engagement of women, we as Sudanese women are not happy about the standard or level of engagement of women. Actually, the women of Sudan are the ones who made the Resolution happen. They also constitute more than 60% of the people who made it happen. The participation of women in the peace negotiation table was not up to our ambitions as people who made it possible. The women were engaged in the corridors pushing for the Peace Agreement to be signed and talked to different parties to sign the agreement. They talked to different parties to sign the agreement and reminded them that it is not about them but about our people. The army groups were more accommodative this time to women unlike the past. We as civil societies talked to them many times in many events so as to engage more women in their delegations and as people in charge of reaching the peace agreement. But the political parties who were engaged in the peace talks, only talked about the importance of women inclusion but in reality, they were not committed. We kept talking about this and now they are talking about other engagements of women in the implementation of the peace process. Women are taking the lead of organising women at grassroots levels, talking to them and orienting them regarding the Peace Agreement and how it could be something to normalise the life between different tribes in other communities. This is what women are doing right now. One of the important things I need to highlight is that the constitution declaration mentioned that the Legislative Council will constitute 40% of

women. The Peace Agreement stated that 40% of the nominees of the Legislative Council will be women, just like, in the Executive Council. We want this to be reality although we talked about equality, why aren't they granted 50%? We have qualifications and the capacity. However, we need political good will to make it happen.

Before I conclude, I just want to add few words about our late, Sadiq Al-Mahdi and his support to the Sudanese women. He has been very supportive. His support has been clear in his ideas and speeches. He talked about women being engaged and participated actively in all levels of governance. For his party, the spokesperson was a lady and the VP of the UMA party is a lady who he spoke of positively. He encouraged the government to ratify CEDAW. He drafted a book talking about how CEDAW is not in contradiction of Islam as some people are trying to say. I think we need to learn from him regarding supporting women. Sudanese women and people are shocked at losing such a leader at a critical time. We pray his soul may rest in peace. Another thing I want to talk about as I conclude is the legal framework. Sudanese women right now have to push for the active participation and engagement in not only peace talks but, in the Government, Executive and Legislative Council. We have the constitutional declaration. We have the National Plan of Action of resolution 1625. We have the commitment made by political leaders that they want to implement the resolution. Also, we have the Security Council aiming to support Sudan in building peace after the civil revolution. There is another UN mission assigned to Sudan that will start in January 2021. I think this entire legal framework will enable Sudanese women to demand their deserved rights to be engaged in this government and to push women's agenda. This is not only for women issues but for other different issues like security arrangements and economy because one of the challenges is the current economic crisis due to the corruption from Al-bashir's regime. The wealth of Sudan been transferred outside Sudan and we need to restore or bring it back. In brief this is the situation in Sudan right now. I am happy to receive your comments or questions now. Thank you.

This is me....



Doreen Nkala (Ph.D), Zimbabwe: As soon as we have gone through a clip ladies and gentlemen of this family we can send in our questions

Dr. Shukria Dini, Somali (responding to Samia El Hashmi, Sudan): ma shaa Allah

Salim Umar, Nigeria: Thank you Samia for a brief but elaborate historical perspective on Sudan and its challenges.

Our moderator has opened the floor for us to begin the engagement with our questions.

Doreen Nkala (Ph.D), Zimbabwe: Yes Salim kindly go ahead

Jacqueline Oneil: Thank you so much for this excellent presentation. The work of Sudanese women is an inspiration and a model for the world.

My questions are: How confident are you that the 40% quota will be reached and what can we all do to help?

And, how are women involved now in reforming the security sector? Thank you, Samia!

Salim Umar, Nigeria: You raised the issue of farmers and herders as one of the many challenges in Sudan. Is there any dialogue going on now with a view of resolving the issues? And in our context here (Nigeria) the farmers and herders crisis is often given religious colourations. Is it the same in Sudan?

Samia El Hashmi, Sudan (responding to Salim Umar, Nigeria): You are welcome

Mandiedza Parichi, PhD, Zimbabwe: Thank you so much Samia for the comprehensive insightful presentation. You mentioned Samia that most of the challenges in Sudan are from external influences that take a tribal twist what measures have been put in place to manage that challenge if any.

Samia El Hashmi, Sudan (responding to Jacqueline Oneil): responding to Jacque: Yes, Jacque you are one of witnesses who can give testimony. We are working hard to make it happen. Of course, we need the international community to make our voices heard... In addition, we need women to come together in particular in this issue.

Samia El Hashmi, Sudan (responding to Salim Umar, Nigeria): In Sudan we have traditional ways of resolving conflicts between farmers and nomads... But politicians now are using this to serve other purposes. What we need is to eliminate such attitudes. And to go back to the traditional ways to resolve conflicts.

Doreen Nkala (Ph.D), Zimbabwe: Thank you Samia for the insight. Noticing the church is part of the conflict how can women use the same structure to de-escalate conflict?

Nawal Khidir Nasir Alamin (responding to Samia El Hashmi, Sudan): Thanks, Samia. To add to your answer. We need political participation of women. Doing so needs training and international help. Such as information about political issues that have international dimension. Creating platform such as this one where women can have support

Samia El Hashmi, Sudan (responding to Mandiedza Parichi, PhD, Zimbabwe): After the revolution Sudanese young people formed what we call resilience committees. Now they are the watch dog of the revolution against and attempt of interference. But you know we need to raise the awareness of people and political parties about the dangers coming from this interference especially from the region.

Even this regional attempt of interference they doing it by proxy

Mandiedza Parichi, PhD, Zimbabwe (responding to Nawal Khidir Nasir Alamin): Yes precisely!

Doreen Nkala (Ph.D), Zimbabwe (responding to Samia El Hashmi, Sudan): For a long time traditional systems have been interfered with by politicians how can this be minimized in Sudan

Doreen Nkala (Ph.D), Zimbabwe (responding to Nawal Khidir Nasir Alamin): On point

Samia El Hashmi, Sudan (responding to Doreen Nkala (Ph.D), Zimbabwe): I think civil society can do more in getting it back. By using it in the training and train young people from these tribes on how important it is to use traditional ways of resolving conflict.

Also, to exchange experience between African countries... In traditional ways to resolve conflicts

Conduct dialog between different tribes.

Salim Umar, Nigeria: There is no doubt that Sudan is facing a lot in the political terrain. The present administration is a product of years of discontent by the Sudanese on the last government of Al-bashir. What role do the civil society organizations play in galvanising the Sudanese to come together and craft a future for their country that is all encompassing and prosperous?

Doreen Nkala (Ph.D), Zimbabwe (responding to Samia El Hashmi, Sudan): I also think this critical

Nawal Khidir Nasir Alamin (responding to Samia El Hashmi, Sudan): Adding to what Samia had said: we need to minimize the cause of conflict more than how to solve and this needs equal sustainable developments and education

Mandy: Why do some elements in Sudan feel that CEDAW convention is against the Islam religion please elaborate

Doreen Nkala (Ph.D), Zimbabwe: Considering the age of the conflict are there women with the history participating in mediation? As I think this might help coz surely, they are tired and have gone through so much pain

Samia El Hashmi, Sudan (responding to Salim Umar, Nigeria): The civil society is doing its best to keep the country united although the past regime is trying using different ways to put obstacles. During Al-bashir era, they portrayed the county to the regional using the face of investment, for instance, Port Sudan. They rent it for 90 years to a country. How?

Now we managed to cancel this contact. The telecommunications industry it has been fully owned by foreigners.

Dr Shukria Dini, Somali: Thanks, so much Samia for such enlightening presentation on the Sudan conflict.

Mandiedza Parichi, PhD, Zimbabwe (responding to Doreen Nkala (Ph.D), Zimbabwe): Sudanese women started to be engaged after Beijing 1995-the women conference

Samia El Hashmi, Sudan (responding to Dr Shukria Dini, Somali): You are most welcome

Doreen Nkala (Ph.D), Zimbabwe (responding to Samia El Hashmi, Sudan): Good but very difficult. Also use commonalities to draw them together it might help. Like a water project for two tribes sharing a boundary

Samia El Hashmi, Sudan (adding to an earlier point she made): You know the Sudanese women have been active in different ways but due to not being in the front line in political parties. This hinders their participation in peace talks in effective way... But always they pushed for peace

Mandiedza Parichi, PhD, Zimbabwe: You also discussed the resources of Sudan. My question is since they are in different regions how is the government managing the resource control conflicts in new Sudan

Samia El Hashmi, Sudan (responding to Doreen Nkala (Ph.D), Zimbabwe): Yes. Now I know a project in eastern Sudan they making tracks and fence to prevent cattle to pass in the farmers.

Christine Mutimura: Thanks so much for your presentation Samia and thanks for the picture- we get to put your beautiful face to the presentation. Bless

Samia El Hashmi, Sudan (responding to Mandiedza Parichi, PhD, Zimbabwe): The control of resources is a challenge not only because of the tribal conflict. But also, the army groups who controlling some gold mines.

Samia El Hashmi, Sudan (responding to Christine Mutimura): It is my pleasure and honour.

@Tamador @Nawal Khidir Nasr Alamin if you have anything to add

Doreen Nkala (Ph.D), Zimbabwe (responding to Samia El Hashmi, Sudan): Is the army ever going to go back to the barracks and you have women who are part of the arm as in women soldiers in Sudan

Tamador: Well, done Samia-very comprehensive

Just to add to what Samia presented that there is strong regional interest in Sudan and the fact that many tribes are divided along borders that shape and will shape the peace in Sudan

Samia El Hashmi, Sudan (responding to Doreen Nkala (Ph.D), Zimbabwe): In security arrangements they agreed to have one army so the army groups will be identified and according to their abilities they will be accommodated in national army

Nawal Khidir Nasir Alamin: Thanks, Samia. Good job. I will be back to talk about CEDAW

Samia El Hashmi, Sudan: For women DDR will be applied to all. We will raise our voices to put more attention to women and child soldiers.

Samia El Hashmi, Sudan (responding to Nawal Khidir Nasir Alamin): This is very important as legal framework for women

Doreen Nkala (Ph.D), Zimbabwe (responding to Samia El Hashmi, Sudan): My stomach child soldiers

Doreen Nkala (Ph.D), Zimbabwe: I learnt that as we cry in our countries others are actually burning in there. Thank you very much Samia for giving us the overview of the Sudanese conflict. Thank you, to all those who participated. Those who might still have some questions kindly throw them in she might have answers later. This is the end of our session

Samia El Hashmi, Sudan: Will do Thank you all once again...

Samia El Hashmi, Sudan (responding to Mandiedza Parichi, PhD, Zimbabwe): Sorry I didn't answer this question.

Salim Umar, Nigeria: Thank you Samia, Nawal and Dr. Doreen Nkala our moderator and all those who contributed for the success of the seminar series today. We are enlightened.

Samia El Hashmi, Sudan: In the past yes... But the previous regime agreed in the upper to ratify with reservations

Mandiedza Parichi, PhD, Zimbabwe (responding to Samia El Hashmi, Sudan): No worries Chair you promised you would. That makes me happier. We will have you again for another session

Wasye: Thanks, Samia for sharing with us the historical background which contributed to the situation that Sudan finds itself in. My question is can political agreements with different armed groups especially in the western/Darfur region resolve the issues tribal conflicts which as you said are more around natural resources and have only been pollicised to serve certain interests. Do the agreements show how conflicts between nomads and farmers will be resolved?

Doreen Nkala (Ph.D), Zimbabwe (responding to Samia El Hashmi, Sudan): The answer to CEDAW question

Samia El Hashmi, Sudan (responding to Doreen Nkala (Ph.D), Zimbabwe): Now and very soon it will be ratified

Doreen Nkala (Ph.D), Zimbabwe: we will officially close now but conversations can go on informally. Thank you family peace begins with each of us.

Nawal Khidir Nasir Alamin (reiterating her point): This has been used by politicians for their interests. As you know in Sudan, people are so sensitive for their principles. In CEDAW some articles could be interpreted differently and some could not be applied so elites use it the way could to help them to get support. What actually we need as Muslim women, is to be part of any issues that UN bodies is establishing just to help of its implementation

This could help us to support the issue and to advocate for it. Considering these issues Sudanese women need to talk about it openly highlight the good of it and to suggest what can be done with articles that create conflict and to push for implementation. Women internationally could help by trying to consider culture differences when issues are established so politicians couldn't find way to stop it.

Sorry for typing mistakes

Mandiedza Parichi, PhD, Zimbabwe (responding to Nawal Khidir Nasir Alamin):

Nawal: Thank you so much Nawal for the clarity

Samia El Hashmi, Sudan (responding to Wasye): This very interesting... Will answer you...

I will have a break and come back. Much respect, & love to you all

The conflict in Darfur started as development issue. Groups of people protested against lack of health and education services, they used weapons, the government dealt with it as crimes against the state, these groups grow and many people from Darfur joint.

This conflict could have been resolved if the government dealt with it in rationale way. Then the government started to use the Arab tribes to fight and take lands from them. Even they brought citizens from neighbouring countries to occupy the land.

I think the peace agreement will facilitate and enable the stakeholders in Darfur to come to terms because the peace agreement talked about the issue of land and distribution of resources.

Allocation of 40% of the resources from Darfur region to Darfur will help with a great deal to develop the region. If is used in proper way and no corruption in managing it.

I hope I answered your question.

Selah Simiyu, Kenya: Thanks, Samia for the elaborate presentation. It was truly enriching to learn the history and the outcomes of the peace agreement made in my country. Am thankful to also read the answers you have given to the various questions.

Mandiedza Parichi, PhD, Zimbabwe: Thank you very much Chair Samia for the insightful discussion. It's always nice to have something to look forward to every Saturday as we continue to learn from each other and improve our situations too. We are glad Sudan is on the mend and we continue to support their cause. Peace is not a day's job it has to be nurtured. The most important aspect of Chair Samia's presentation is how the Sudanese women are also trying to occupy space to change their disposition.

Thank you, Dr Nkala for being a smooth Moderator. Thank you, Selina and all the Coordinators, behind the scenes for the brilliant work you continue to do to keep us going. Thank you CVPP family for the great and insightful interactions with Chair Samia and Dr Nkala. Without you there is no CVPP. Kijala and I are grateful for your unwavering dedication and support to grow the network.

Enjoy the rest of your weekend my brothers and sisters.

Biographies



Samia El Hashmi

Samia El Hashmi, from Sudan, is an attorney and co-founder and Chairwoman of Mutawinat Benevolent Company. Mutawinat works for the rights of children and women in Sudan through the provision of legal aid services and advocacy, training of trainers, awareness-raising, and research focusing on different ways to protect human rights.

Ms. Elhashmi has been a member and elected board member of Women in Law and Development in Africa for the past five years. She is a founding member of the Sudanese Network for Peace, the FGM Network, and the Women of Solidarity Network.

She is also a member of the Women Waging Peace Network, the Sudanese Movement of Children, and the Sudanese Bar Association. Ms. Elhashmi is now core member of the Task force of engagement of women, which is high level advocacy group pushing for meaningful engagement of women in public and political arena.

Samia presented working papers at conferences on topics such as the status of Sudanese women under the constitution, the status of women in security arrangements, and women's rights in employment in the international conventions, refugees' rights in Sudanese laws, constitution making commission. Lastly, she has recently joined the drafting committee for personal matters law for Muslims as the Chair.



Doreen Nkala (Ph.D)

Doreen Nkala (Ph.D) is Zimbabwean national working as a lecturer at the Midlands State University in Zimbabwe. She is an experienced peace builder and founder of the Zimbabwean chapter Peace Pioneer accredited by Generations for Peace (GFP). She is a member of the FemWise Network of Africa and also belongs to the Community Voices for peace and Pluralism which is also a regional peace network.

Doreen currently works fulltime at Midlands State University in Zvishavane/Gweru Zimbabwe as a lecturer for Entrepreneurship. After being trained by Generations for Peace Jordan, Doreen leads pioneer for Generations for Peace Midlands State University, Zimbabwe and is a mentor for a team of 7 other student pioneers and volunteers. She has been patron for Generations for Peace Club Zimbabwe since 2010. The club seeks to build peace from the grass roots level. Generations for Peace club seeks to empower youths to analyse conflicts and design programs to suit the university community and the community in general. She has championed a number of youth peace initiatives at community, national, regional and international levels.

Dr Nkala is also an expert in conflict analysis, dialogue, gender empowerment and mediation. She has also worked with the Constitution Parliamentary Committee, (COPAC) during the formation of the Zimbabwe constitution, as a Rapporteur in 26 District in Masvingo Province of Zimbabwe. She has participated as an elections officer in Zimbabwe general elections (2005, 2008, and 2013). Doreen is an active member of the marriages, counselling trauma team for the local church in Bhasera Gutu, and has worked with families to minimise or reduce conflict in the neighbourhood which is testimony she can work with the grassroots communities. Among her numerous achievements she was awarded the Samsung Sustainability Award.