Local Mediation:
A Bridge to Peace in Yemen, Libya, and Sudan?

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KEY TAKEAWAYS

Local Mediation is a Prerequisite - not an Alternative - to International Peace Efforts

It does not replace international tracks but but is essential to their effectiveness in contexts of state collapse and fragmented authority, such as Yemen, Libya, and Sudan. Its social legitimacy enables rapid, practical outcomes that formal processes often fail to achieve.

Context-Specific Mediation Models Face Common Limitations

While local mediation varies across Yemen, Libya, and Sudan - from tribal arbitration to reconciliation committees and jūdiyya structures - it confronts similar constraints. Women and civil society increasingly enhance legitimacy but remain institutionally marginalized.

Effectiveness is Rooted in Social Legitimacy but Constrained by Structural Fragility

Local mediation draws strength from deeply embedded tribal, religious, and community networks and flexible customary mechanisms that help contain violence despite weak institutions. Yet outcomes remain partial and fragile due to security risks, weak guarantees, and shifting power balances.

Sustainable Peace Depends on Careful Support and National Integration

Strengthening local mediation requires funding, training, and protection without politicization or substituting for state-building. Integrating local outcomes into national processes enables incremental, more durable peace than reliance on fragile comprehensive agreements.

KEYWORDS

Local Mediation

Peacebuilding

State Collapse

Yemen

Libya

Sudan

Cover Image: Houthi fighters raise Lebanese Hezbollah and national flags during a rally held in the Houthi-controlled capital Sanaa on October 4, 2024, in protest against Israel's attacks on Lebanon and the ongoing war between Israel and Hamas militants in the Gaza Strip. (Photo by Mohammed HUWAIS / AFP)

Yemen, Libya, and Sudan are all in the grip of armed conflicts that have led to the collapse of state institutions and the fragmentation of central authorities among multiple, externally supported actors. Over the past decade, international efforts have proven insufficient, on their own, to resolve these protracted conflicts and achieve comprehensive peace in these countries. This has brought to the fore local mediation mechanisms, which show potential as key ways to manage and resolve domestic conflicts at the grassroots level. In environments characterized by protracted conflict, the proliferation of armed forces, and the fragmentation of the ruling system, local mediation can complement or provide an effective alternative to international and national efforts, which often find it hard to address the root causes of conflict in a way acceptable to all sides.

> Local mediation differs from international efforts in several ways. The former relies on actors from within the conflict-affected community, drawing on local customs and values. Agreements are often verbal, underpinned by customary traditions, and aimed at containing escalation or restoring the situation to the status quo prior to the conflict.

In Yemen, United Nations-led peace negotiations have repeatedly faltered due to the intransigence of warring factions and their conflicting local and regional agendas. Meanwhile, local initiatives such as mediation efforts by tribal leaders and community figures have achieved limited but tangible breakthroughs on the ground, including by reopening blocked roads, facilitating exchanges of bodies and prisoners, and establishing temporary humanitarian truces. In Sudan, local mediation in accordance with social norms, based on a traditional form of community arbitration known as jūdiyya,[1] has helped to strengthen peaceful coexistence and prevent conflicts from escalating into large-scale armed confrontations. In Libya, local mediation in the form of reconciliation committees has in many cases helped prevent armed clashes from escalating, as well as helping reopen roads between cities and regions, and mediating the exchange of bodies, prisoners, and detainees. The work of these committees has often come as a complement to existing truces, which are mainly established between the leaders of armed militias and military units. Yet although their achievements may seem small, their impact in terms of alleviating suffering and saving lives is significant within the context of Libya's long-running political impasse.

Local mediation differs from international efforts in several ways. The former relies on actors from within the conflict-affected community, drawing on local customs and values. Agreements are often verbal, underpinned by customary traditions, and aimed at containing escalation or restoring the situation to the status quo prior to the conflict. International mediation, on the other hand, depends on a foreign third party, is often limited to a specific timeframe, and seeks technical solutions derived from diplomacy and international law or norms. This often attracts suspicion from local parties to the conflict, or from their competing external backers, lest their interests be threatened.

The process of mediation starts when the conflicting parties come together, or the mediator enters talks with each party separately. This stage involves each party listening to the others' narratives and establishing the facts. This leads to the proposal of compromise solutions such as the payment of compensation and damages in cases of killing, establishing pathways for care, or temporarily halting the fighting until national law can resolve the conflict. The agreement is usually announced to the community, and

sometimes written down, making it binding on all parties. Local administrations or committees then monitor implementation and impose fines on those who violate the agreement. This makes such a mechanism effective, in the short term, in reducing violence or mitigating its humanitarian impact. However, the absence of an institutional framework to protect these solutions leaves them in a fragile state when the balance of power shifts and the conflict expands. This means it is essential to consider ways to integrate them into broader national and regional peace processes.

> While efforts toward a comprehensive, formal peace agreement have faltered, dozens of local mediation efforts have kicked into action on the ground, successfully keeping some areas out of the fighting, and brokering limited ceasefires that have had a positive impact on civilians.

Notwithstanding the different contexts of the three conflicts, this brief offers a comparative analysis of experiences of local mediation in Yemen, Libya, and Sudan, exploring similarities and differences in their mechanisms, actors, and outcomes. The paper argues that when the state weakens, local solutions based on customary, tribal, and religious mediation mechanisms step in to fill the void created by the absence or weakness of a central authority. Through our analysis of these three cases, we aim to draw practical lessons for policymakers on how to support, activate, and ensure the sustainability of local mediation, alongside formal conflict resolution processes.

The Background to Conflicts and Local Mediation Efforts

The wars in Libya, Yemen, and Sudan have caused vast human and economic devastation. In Libya, some 823,000 people, including nearly a quarter of

a million children, are now in need of humanitarian assistance, with more than 147,000 internally displaced and approximately 900,000 migrants impacted.[2] The conflict has cost the Libyan economy an estimated $576 billion.[3] In Yemen, nearly 19.5 million people required humanitarian assistance in 2025, while per-capita real Gross Domestic Product has collapsed by some 58 percent since 2015.[4] The damage to Yemen's 16 major cities has already been estimated at between $6.8 billion and $8.3 billion.[5] Sudan, for its part, today faces the world's largest displacement crisis, with conflict displacing approximately 11.7 million people, more than four million of whom have fled to neighboring countries.[6] Sudan's GDP also contracted by 29 percent in 2023 and again by 13 percent of the remainder in 2024.[7] Oil production has fallen by more than half, and the cost of reconstructing the country is estimated at up to $1 trillion.[8]

Yemen: A Deeply Rooted Tribal Legacy

Yemen's latest civil war erupted in late 2014, and escalated further with the Saudi-led regional "Operation Decisive Storm" military intervention in 2015. This led to the collapse of state institutions, and Yemen became divided among multiple de facto authorities. This created a security and judicial vacuum, forcing the population to rely on tribal customs and social figures to maintain some modicum of order. Yemen has a long tradition of resolving disputes through tribal mechanisms. Even before the war, Yemenis preferred to resolve 80 to 90 percent of disputes amicably, through customary law, rather than through the courts.[9] Over the course of the current conflict, Yemeni tribes and community leaders have continued to play this role; indeed, it has grown in importance. While efforts toward a comprehensive, formal peace agreement have faltered, dozens of local mediation efforts have kicked into action on the ground, successfully keeping some areas out of the fighting, and brokering limited ceasefires that have had a positive impact on civilians. For example, local mediators intervened to coordinate

exchanges of prisoners and bodies between the internationally recognized Yemeni government and the Ansar Allah (Houthi) group outside the framework of formal negotiations, resulting in local deals that led to the release of hundreds of prisoners. Thus, tribal and community mediation in Yemen has emerged as a stabilizing factor, mitigating the deterioration of the humanitarian situation even as the conflict has metastasized into a full-scale nationwide war.[10]

A Complex Network of Mediators

Local mediation in Yemen relies on a deeply rooted community network, primarily based around the tribe. When a conflict arises between two groups (whether tribes or armed factions), respected tribal sheikhs intervene, using customary tools such as tribal arbitration and censure to pressure them to reach a settlement. For example, if a blood feud breaks out between two tribes, the sheikh might send a representative who carries his rifle upside down as a symbol that he is seeking safe passage and initiating reconciliation. The parties meet in a customary session known as taḥkīm—arbitration—and pledge to end the fighting and hand over the perpetrators. The sheikh then sets the amount of blood money and compensation required by local custom, and asks both parties to swear an oath to abide by the agreement.[11] In this way, disputes are often resolved without recourse to the state.

Over the course of the current war, civil society figures have emerged alongside sheikhs as mediators in certain cases. They include activist Hadi Jumaan, who has worked at an individual level to mediate exchanges of prisoners and bodies,[12] and the Abductees' Mothers Association, which has campaigned for the release of information on the fate of hostages and worked for their release.[13] Yemeni women have also played a discreet but influential role, leveraging their "protected" status within tribal society to facilitate negotiations. Mothers and wives of detainees have on many occasions fearlessly stormed public squares and government buildings to demand the release of their loved ones; older women use symbolic methods such as removing their head coverings to compel reconciliation.[14] The role of religious leaders also deserves a mention; imams and local preachers frequently remind those engaged in feuds of their religious duty to prevent bloodshed. This combination of traditional and religious mechanisms has endowed local mediation with a large degree of persuasive power within Yemeni society.

Libya: Diverse Mediation Mechanisms Between East and West

Following the fall of Moammar Gaddafi's regime in 2011, Libya descended into a maelstrom of armed conflict. While the international community focused on formulating a plan for a political transition and national elections, local mediation efforts flourished on the ground, going some way to reining in the country's descent into total chaos. As security institutions collapsed, many communities were forced to rely on tribal customs and local reconciliation committees to settle disputes and provide some semblance of security within the community. Libya has a long history of tribal traditions for resolving disputes, especially in rural areas. These include the practices of al-mīʿād and jabr al-khawāṭir, which involve tribal elders meeting to settle disputes and promote harmony in the event of a community-level conflict over a certain issue. After 2011, new entities such as municipal councils and civil society organizations emerged and came to mediate in such conflicts.[15]

Between 2011 and 2018, at least eight reconciliation agreements were concluded between local Libyan groups linked to various armed militias from various Libyan regions and cities and with differing objectives and loyalties.[16] One of the most prominent such agreements was the Misrata-Tawergha Agreement (2016–2018), which led to the return of thousands of displaced Tawergha residents to their city after seven years of forced displacement. A senior UN official remarked that "Local mediation is the best thing

that has happened in Libya since the revolution."[17] Similarly, mediation efforts led by tribal councils in the southern region of Sabha resulted in a peace agreement between armed groups from the Tebu and Tuareg communities in 2015 after repeated bouts of armed violence. While successive governments have failed to unify and rebuild Libya's security institutions, such grassroots reconciliation efforts have played a crucial role in containing localized conflicts and preventing them from escalating. That said, their impact has often remained limited, and their success has varied across both space and time due to the absence of a unifying national framework.

> In summary, local mediation mechanisms in Libya have evolved from traditional meetings in private living rooms into national reconciliation conferences sponsored by the government and the international community, mainly seeking to prevent local disputes from escalating or spreading.

A Mix of Traditional and Modern Actors

Local mediation in Libya is organized at the group level, often through "reconciliation committees" comprising tribal elders and sheikhs, religious figures, local council members, and civil society activists. These bodies are typically formed in response to armed clashes, whether on a large scale or within a certain locality. They often include real or nominal representatives of the conflicting parties, along with "neutral" figures and dignitaries not affiliated with any side.

A string of ceasefire agreements in western Libya in 2014-2015—between the Misrata and Warshafana militias; Misrata and Zintan; Zintan and Gharyan; Zuwara and Zawiya; as well as neighboring towns in the Nafusa Mountains—serve as pertinent examples of the role of mediation committees in containing conflict and de-escalating tensions in western Libya. In most of these cases, the truces were supported by confidence-building measures, as stipulated in the peace agreements signed by committees representing the belligerents. These measures typically included a ceasefire, prisoner exchanges, the withdrawal of armed forces from contact zones, the reopening of closed roads, compensation for victims and the return of displaced persons, among other things. This approach made a notable contribution to installing a general state of peace in western Libya which paved the way for the signing of the Libya-wide peace deal known as the Skhirat Agreement, in December 2015.[18]

The United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) later played a bigger role in supporting these local mediation efforts. From 2015 onwards, it began to rely partially on local mediators in its own efforts, providing them with technical expertise or even accompanying them with observers on national reconciliation committees, to give the latter international momentum. Another important mechanism in Libya is that of the tribal social councils, which were resurrected in certain cities and regions after the 2011 uprising. For example, the Warfalla Tribal Social Council managed the affairs of the city of Bani Walid with a fair degree of independence from the main power centers of eastern and western Libya, helping to resolve conflicts between armed groups in the city through the historical legacy of local and tribal customs.[19] In summary, local mediation mechanisms in Libya have evolved from traditional meetings in private living rooms into national reconciliation conferences sponsored by the government and the international community, mainly seeking to prevent local disputes from escalating or spreading.

Sudan: A Historical Legacy and a Renewed Role

Sudan has witnessed decades of conflict, ranging from power struggles to tribal and regional conflicts, in a band stretching across the country's south from Darfur to Kordofan and the Blue Nile.

These conflicts have been fueled by differences and disparities in lifestyle among an array of ethnicities and tribes. Access to land, water, and resources has also played a key role, especially given the weakness of state institutions and the absence of effective justice mechanisms in remote areas. The result has been a pattern of recurring conflicts that have proven difficult to contain.

The most recent chapter of conflict in Sudan is the war that erupted in April 2023, pitting the Sudanese army against the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and its allies. The war has resulted in the near-total collapse of state institutions and formal systems of justice. Local mediation initiatives, led by elders and traditional leaders (ajāwīd), have emerged to fill this vacuum, drawing on a long tradition of local peace conferences to help contain the conflict and mitigate its humanitarian consequences. While efforts to reach a nationwide ceasefire have faltered, these grassroots initiatives have achieved tangible humanitarian breakthroughs, such as opening corridors for evacuations and aid deliveries, facilitating burials of bodies, brokering short-term ceasefires, and coordinating prisoner and body exchanges between warring parties, as documented by independent media and human rights reports.[20] This helped forestall the country's descent into full-blown civil war, albeit to a limited and temporary extent.

One of the most prominent examples took place in late 2023 in El Fasher, the capital of North Darfur, where the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) were on the verge of launching a major offensive to seize control of the city and annex it to the rest of the Darfur region.[21] A local mediation committee was formed, comprised of prominent figures from the city including tribal leaders, administrators, professionals, and representatives from women's and youth groups. The committee successfully brokered a ceasefire, providing a respite for the population. Although this quickly collapsed, and the city was the scene of atrocities, the episode demonstrated the local community's capacity to intervene in critical moments, albeit on a limited scale, to avert disaster.

Similar efforts have been seen in other states of the Darfur region and parts of Kordofan, where local leaders have sought to contain violence and protect civilians in the absence of any effective central authority. This has underlined the importance of Sudan's system of community-level, informal mediation—known as jūdiyya—in both its traditional and modern forms, despite historical accusations of politicization. This remains a local mechanism that has contributed, and continues to contribute, to resolving conflicts and preventing their escalation and spread—even if it remains incapable of addressing the structural roots of the conflict over the state (the fragmentation of power, war economy and crises over land and resources).

Multiple Mediators

Local mediation committees are one mechanism that has helped maintain a modicum of social cohesion in Sudan, despite frequent conflicts and weak state institutions. This is helped by the fact that these committees do not merely represent a traditional practice, but are also the product of a historical accumulation of customs and sources of social authority, embodied in community administration and councils of elders and respected dignitaries (ajāwīd). These committees consist of tribal notables and leaders of community administrations, including chieftains, village heads, and sheikhs (with various titles among different tribes and ethnicities, including shartāy, damangāwi, farsha, and sul̤ān). These bodies sometimes include community, religious, and legal figures, as well as representatives of women's groups, youth and civil society organizations. One such initiative contributed to restoring communication between the Masalit and Falata ethnic groups in South Darfur after a 20-year estrangement, through meetings, reciprocal visits, community activities and even sports events, building on local desires and remaining free from political interference.[22] The diversity within the committees grants them broad authority, as they reflect social structures

and the dynamics of popular trust in conflict zones, giving them influence and helping them gain acceptance from a range of actors.[23]

These mediation efforts have worked to de-escalate tensions and halt attacks through direct dialogue and informal negotiations, as well as opening channels of communication between conflicting groups. In many instances, their role has extended beyond traditional mediation to encompass security-related tasks such as monitoring violations, ensuring adherence to agreements, and issuing local follow-up reports. This has strengthened belligerents' trust in them and given them genuine clout in conflict zones. Historically, community administration provided an institutional framework for these efforts, assigning specific geographical areas known as ḥawākīr or diyār[24] to specific tribes and granting their leaders certain judicial, administrative, and financial powers—although this role has somewhat diminished. Such powers include overseeing traditional courts, resolving local disputes, and regulating relations between tribes in areas of contact.[25]

The history of community administration has been marked by fluctuations and power struggles since Sudan's independence. It has been dissolved and replaced by administrative councils at times, while at others it has been used to play an active role in maintaining security and stability. Yet its role has not been immune to politicization. For example, the British colonial administration used traditional administration structures as a tool to weaken nationalism by increasing the political clout of the tribe, thus reinforcing divisions and making national unity more difficult to achieve.

Since then, successive regimes have continued to invest in and exploit these structures, sometimes by empowering certain leaders with money and positions in exchange for their loyalty—and at other times, by removing leaders who refused to comply. As a result, this form of governance has faced increasing criticism, particularly from educated Sudanese. Some believe that it should be

strengthened in order to reduce conflicts, given its track record of resolving disputes through accepted local channels, while others believe that reliance upon it deepens and perpetuates rivalries among tribes and ethnicities at the expense of building a modern nation-state based on the principles of citizenship.[26]

This debate aside, the reality on the ground demonstrates that local mediation relies on a broader spectrum of actors than the traditional leadership alone. Elders and respected figures remain influential figures who are able to intervene to prevent bloodshed thanks to their reputation and impartiality, while religious leaders also contribute through conciliatory sermons and calls for calm. Other segments of society, such as women and youth, also participate in relief efforts, protecting markets and humanitarian corridors, and exert social pressure to end the fighting. Professionals, such as doctors and teachers, also play important roles in mediation to ensure that essential services keep running, and to open routes for the evacuation of the wounded. This broad-based system demonstrates that local mediation is neither static, nor the exclusive domain of one traditional institution; rather, it is a dynamic network that adapts to the changing nature and complexities of the conflict.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

The successes of local mediation efforts in Yemen, Libya, and Sudan have several key characteristics and offer important lessons that can be built upon. Firstly, cultural and social legitimacy is a vital key to success. Besides adding national ownership to peacebuilding, it also gives mediators a form of influence that international institutions cannot provide. Secondly, experience has shown that the tactical flexibility of local mediation allows it to contain escalation quickly, even if these solutions are temporary and partial. Thirdly, while it is clear that local mediation cannot replace the state and its institutions in addressing the root causes of conflicts or putting in place a sustainable peace,

it is nonetheless a key piece of the puzzle, one that complements national and international processes. Finally, the contribution of women and civil society, even if limited, has increased the effectiveness of mediation and given it wider legitimacy by bridging the gap between traditional structures and new actors. In short, despite its fragility, local mediation has shown its value and made a tangible difference in people's lives, representing an indispensable building block in any comprehensive peace process.

> *Such political interference undermines the independence of mediators and limits their ability to play a neutral role, negatively impacting the local community's trust in them.*

These modest successes notwithstanding, local mediation mechanisms face challenges and obstacles stemming from the broader conflict environment, and lack the tools to ensure that their achievements are sustainable and become integrated into broader, national processes. The first challenge is the lack of financial and logistical resources. Local mediators—whether tribal elders, community leaders, or civil society activists—operate in impoverished environments and often lack institutional support. They frequently embark on mediation efforts with their limited personal resources, making them hostage to local circumstances and unable to expand or sustain these efforts for extended periods. This vulnerability leaves mediators susceptible to burnout and a loss of capacity to follow through, especially when dealing with agreements that require long-term monitoring and implementation.

The second challenge lies in the direct security threats mediators face. In Yemen, for example, many tribal leaders who attempted to mediate between warring parties have been killed or threatened; in Sudan, both the army and the RSF have pressured traditional administrations to abandon their neutrality. In Libya, armed groups often view local mediators as obstacles to expanding their own military and economic interests, and have resorted to intimidating them. As a consequence, this dangerous environment undermines public trust in the process itself, as people fear engaging in a process that could lead to personal repercussions. Political interference presents a third, equally serious challenge. In Yemen, belligerents have sought to co-opt certain tribal leaders and transform them into political tools, thus undermining their credibility as mediators. In Libya, armed militias and their political allies have exploited municipal councils, and even certain notables and tribal leaders, to legitimize their own presence and consolidate their influence. In Sudan, warring parties sometimes use traditional administrations to justify their stances. Such political interference undermines the independence of mediators and limits their ability to play a neutral role, negatively impacting the local community's trust in them.

The absence of guarantees is a fourth challenge that threatens many locally mediated agreements with collapse. Accords brokered through local efforts are often verbal or undocumented, relying more on trust and moral commitment than on institutional, executive, or judicial mechanisms. This lack of guarantees is clearly evident in Yemen, where agreements to open roads or exchange prisoners have collapsed as soon as the balance of power shifts. In Libya, too, many ceasefires have disintegrated in cases of significant imbalances of power between the warring parties; in Sudan, local ceasefire agreements are frequently violated due to the ongoing war.

Conclusion

Local mediation efforts in Yemen, Libya, and Sudan reveal that such tools are not merely a traditional mechanism for resolving minor conflicts, but a vital tool that has kept community life going during moments of complete state collapse. These processes have achieved tangible breakthroughs in protecting civilians, opening roads, negotiating prisoner exchanges, and ensuring the delivery of humanitarian aid. However, they have notable limitations, namely their inability to address the root causes of conflict or to ensure the sustainability of agreements in the face of the whims of major political and military powers.

These findings highlight the need for a new approach that sees local mediation as an essential component of peacebuilding, not merely a temporary solution to crises. No national or international agreement can succeed unless it is rooted in legitimacy with the local community and the latter's own mechanisms for conflict resolution. Furthermore, ignoring these mediation mechanisms means leaving vast areas of conflict unmanaged, inevitably leading to a resurgence of violence later on.

Based on these findings, we recommend that international and regional organizations provide sustained financial and technical support to local mediators, including training in negotiation skills and protection mechanisms, without attempting to impose external control over them. Local agreements should be formally recognized and integrated into national political processes, transforming them from ad hoc achievements into the building blocks of a comprehensive peace process. It is also essential that local mediators are provided with effective protection, through international and regional monitoring mechanisms that prevent them from being targeted or blackmailed by armed groups. There is also a need for stronger partnerships between civil society and traditional structures, creating bridges between modern and historical legitimacy.

ENDNOTES

1. *Jūdiyya* is a mediation mechanism based on intervention by *ajāwīd* (community elders and notables) aimed at resolving disputes and differences through dialogue, compromise and compensation, rather than seeking punitive measures through the courts. *Ajāwīd* are respected, trusted figures, whose symbolic position in society enables them to act as mediators between conflicting parties.

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22. The *nāẓir*, or his equivalent, is the highest authority in the traditional administrative system, at the head of the tribe, with broad judicial and administrative powers. Next comes the ʿ*umdah*, who heads tribal units or administers smaller areas, manages local community affairs and coordinates between the *nāẓir* and the sheikhs. The latter lead villages or smaller local units, and are responsible for resolving minor disputes at the grassroots level. See: "Dārfūr: mubādarah li-l-silm al-ijtimāʿī baʿda qaṭīʿah ʿishrīn ʿāman bayna mukawwanayn ahlīyayn" [Darfur: An initiative for social peace after 20 years of division between two local communities], *3ayin*, February 8, 2023, https://3ayin.com/social-peace/.

23. Al-Nour Ahmed Al-Nour, "Mā warāʾ ʿazl zuʿamāʾ qabāʾil wa-idārāt ahlīyah fī gharb al-Sūdān?" [What lies behind the dismissal of tribal chiefs and local administrators in western Sudan?], *Al-Jazeera*, May 31, 2025, https://www.aljazeera.net/politics/2025/5/31/%D9%85%D8%A7-%D9%88%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%A1-%D8%B9%D8%B2%D9%84-%D8%B2%D8%B9%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%A1-%D9%82%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%A6%D9%84-%D9%88%D8%A5%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A3%D9%87%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%A9.

24. The *ḥākūrah* (pl. *ḥawākīr*) is a large piece of land or district that belongs to a particular tribe as its historic property, and is managed via traditional communal mechanisms. It is among the main focal points of disputes in Sudan, especially in Darfur. The *dār* (pl. *diyār*) is the name applied to a similar concept—of a geographical area whose ownership is attributed to a particular tribe or group—elsewhere in Sudan, particularly Kordofan.

25. Uthman al-Asbat, [al-Idārah al-Ahlīyah fī al-Sūdān… hal min dawr muntaẓar?] "Local administration in Sudan… Can it play a role?" *Independent Arabia,* May 1, 2023, https://www.independentarabia.com/node/446416/%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%A9/%D8%AA%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%B1/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D9%87%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%86-%D9%87%D9%84-%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%AF%D9%88%D8%B1-%D9%85%D9%86%D8%AA%D8%B8%D8%B1%D8%9F.

26. Abdu Mukhtar Musa, "ʾAthar al-qabaliyyah fī al-istikrār al-siyāsī fī al-Sūdān (ḥālat Dārfūr)" [The impact of tribalism on political stability in Sudan (the case of Darfur)], *The Center for Arab Unity Studies*, May 9, 2019, https://caus.org.lb/%D8%A3%D8%AB%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D8%A8%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%AA%D9%82%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84-%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%B3%D9%8A-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84/; "Kayfa yuḥāwil al-ʿaskar iḥtawāʾ al-idārāt al-ahlīyah wa-tawẓīfahā li-khidmat ajindatihim al-siyāsīyah?" [How do military officers attempt to contain community administrations and coopt them to serve their agenda?], *Beam Reports*, May 22, 2022, https://www.beamreports.com/2022/05/22/%D9%83%D9%8A%D9%81-%D9%8A%D8%AD%D8%A7%D9%88%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B3%D9%83%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D8%AD%D8%AA%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%A1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D9%87/.

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