**Southern Kordofan: Unfinished Business**

**By Al Jazeera**

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***With exclusive access, Al Jazeera investigates a hidden war in the remote state of Southern Kordofan in Sudan.***

Sudan, once Africa's biggest country, has been in conflict for decades. The mainly African south and predominately Arab north fought for almost 40 years over the past six decades over differences in ideology, politics, resources, land and oil.

The most recent war raged from 1983 to 2005, claiming the lives of at least two million people and leaving another four million displaced.

When South Sudan became independent in July 2011, it was supposed to usher in a new period of peace and stability in the region.

But Sudan is still highly unstable with a continuing humanitarian crisis in Darfur in the west and fighting in oil-rich regions bordering South Sudan together known as the “Three Areas”. The country is also recovering from a conflict in the east.

Southern Kordofan is region that used to be the geographical centre of Sudan, but when the south won independence, it found itself on the southern border.

At its heart is the Nuba Mountains where some 50 black African tribes have lived for thousands of years.

There was heavy fighting in the region during the north-south civil war, but the comprehensive peace agreement that ended the conflict never resolved its status.

In a special show, Al Jazeera investigates a hidden war in the remote state of Southern Kordofan in Sudan where rebels are fighting to defend their people against what they say is “genocide”.

Al Jazeera’s Peter Greste travelled to the isolated Nuba Mountains where he found entire communities hiding in caves from a bombing campaign that Khartoum says is aimed only at putting down an armed insurrection.

But the conflict has stopped people from tending their fields and food is running out. Aid agencies have been banned from the region, and the UN warns of a looming humanitarian disaster.

What will happen to the civilians in the Nuba Mountains? What does the crisis mean for Sudan? And why is the crisis in Southern Kordofan not getting the world's attention?

Joining us to discuss the issues behind the crisis in Southern Kordofan are: Mustafa Osman Ismail, a senior adviser to Omar al-Bashir, the Sudanese president. Ismail was Sudan's foreign minister from 1998 to 2005; and Mukesh Kapila, a former UN resident and humanitarian coordinator for Sudan from 2003 to 2004.

"War is war and the reason why there is war is because rebels are fighting in South Kordofan, they are refusing the election... If they want democracy, we are ready for democracy. If they want political settlement, we are ready for political settlement. But they are taking civilians as shelter. If you have any humanitarian support and you want to send it to the needy people in the Nuba Mountains... we are ready to take it to them now."-Mustafa Osman Ismail, a senior adviser to Omar al-Bashir.

***Source: Al Jazeera***