

Sudan: Hopes for peace?

CAII • THE CHURCHES' AGENCY ON INTERNATIONAL ISSUES: RESOURCING CHURCHES AND CONGREGATIONS ON GLOBAL CONCERNS

Why is Sudan a Hot Topic?

- The war between the north and south is Africa's longest standing conflict, yet has been largely ignored by western media and leaders
- Millions have been killed and displaced from their homes and the conflict threatens regional and international peace and security
- While the Southern conflict has been ignored, the crisis in the Darfur region of Sudan has hit the headlines as the world's worst humanitarian crisis
- Sudanese churches are one of the only functioning networks in South Sudan and are calling for their ecumenical partners world wide to continue international advocacy for South Sudan and support reconstruction in the region. In the last ten years, New Zealand has hosted two Sudanese church delegations and many New Zealand churches have supported appeals for Sudan through Christian World Service and Caritas.
- Sudanese refugees in New Zealand bring this history with them

"We are really tired of war"

Sudanese Roman Catholic Bishop Joesph Abangitte Gasi.

The signing of a peace agreement, ending Africa's longest running civil war, has been welcomed with joy and hope by South Sudanese and the international community. The people of South Sudan are embracing the chance of a new future; yet face formidable challenges after decades of war. While peace is celebrated between North and South Sudan, the violence in Sudan's western region of Darfur goes on unabated. Millions of civilians continue to be abused and displaced as they struggle for survival in one of the world's worst humanitarian crises. This Hot Topic explores the background to conflict in Sudan, the prospects for lasting peace and the roles of churches and the international community.

Consolidating Peace in the South

"Let us not be misled that the silence of guns is peace"

Dr Haruun Ruun, NSCC



On 9 January 2005 the two main parties in Africa's longest civil war – the Government of Sudan and the Sudan Peoples Liberation Army/Movement (SPLA/M) – signed a Comprehensive Peace Agreement. The latest stage of the war in South Sudan (1983 – 2005) has cost the lives of over 2 million people and displaced over 4 million from their homes. It has separated families, disrupted the education of generations, destroyed infrastructure and houses, and left South Sudan without a functioning economy. Millions have been dependent on food aid, and malnutrition and disease are rife. The people of South Sudan have shown incredible courage and resilience. Now they are hoping that the worst is over.

Yet the joy of the peace agreement finally being signed is tinged with the knowledge of the fragility of peace and the massive tasks of reconciliation and rebuilding that now face the devastated country. The South Sudanese have already witnessed one peace accord (Addis Ababa 1972) collapse and need to ensure that this time the agreement holds and the people themselves benefit from it.

Current Issues

The challenges ahead include the implementation of the peace agreement and monitoring its protocols, managing the return and reintegration of refugees and displaced people, clearing landmines and disarming the population, the spread of HIV/AIDS, and the lack of infrastructure and services. The inevitable influx of international development agencies, peacekeepers and finance will also bring problems and challenges.

Many fear that the war will now move from being an armed conflict to a political and economic battle. They are concerned about the level of political will to democratise the south and carry out the referendum on the South's future status. Will the new agreement bring about sustainable peace or is it giving both sides a chance to regroup before hostilities are renewed? *Read more inside*

Finding Peace in Darfur

While there is hope in the south, there is no joy in Darfur. A separate conflict to that between the Government of Sudan and the South, it has been left out of the peace agreement and may ultimately contribute to its collapse. Over 1.8 million people have been displaced in Darfur, with the number of people directly affected by the conflict at over 2 million and rising, already over one third of the region's people. An estimated 2.3 million people are dependent on food aid. The United Nations (UN) and humanitarian agencies in Sudan have described the situation as one of the world's worst humanitarian crises. Despite ceasefire agreements and UN resolutions and investigations, the violence continues with government backed Arab militias wiping out African villages in what has been called ethnic cleansing and African rebel groups fighting against political and economic marginalisation. *Read more inside.*



The Anglican Church in
Aotearoa, New Zealand
and Polynesia



The Methodist Church of
New Zealand



The Salvation Army in
New Zealand, Fiji and
Tonga



Christian World Service

About Sudan



New Internationalist, 2002

Area: Sudan is the largest country in Africa, occupying an area of 2.5m sq km (966,757 sq miles).

Population: 34.3 million

Ethnicities: African 52%, Arab 39%, Beja 6%, foreigners 2%, other 1%

Religions: Islam 70% (mainly in north), indigenous/animist beliefs 25%, Christian 5% (mostly in south and Khartoum)

Life expectancy: 54 years (men), 57 years (women)

Literacy: 61.1% (male 71.8%, female 50.5%)

Capital: Khartoum

Current government: authoritarian regime. The ruling military junta took power in 1989; government is run by an alliance of the military and the National Congress Party (NCP), formerly the National Islamic Front (NIF), which espouses an Islamist platform.

Political history: Sudan gained independence from Britain in 1956. Civil war between the north and south has been waged since 1955, with 11 years of peace between 1972 and 1983. Under the latest peace agreement, there will be an independence referendum in the south after a six-year interim period of autonomy.

Economy: Sudan is considered a Heavily-Indebted Poor Country by the World Bank/IMF. GNI per capita is estimated at between US \$460 and \$1900. The main exports are oil, cotton, sesame, livestock and hides, groundnuts, gum, and sugar. Other resources include large areas of cultivatable land, water, cattle, gold, and other minerals.

About South Sudan

It is extremely difficult to get statistics and information relating to the South only. These figures are based on a report by the New Sudan Centre for Statistics and Evaluation (May 2004)

Area: approx. 640,000 square kms. There are territorial disputes with the north. The current regional borders are based on the official boundaries demarcated in 1937. The region is divided into 10 states: Eastern Equatoria State, Bhar-el Jabel State, Western Equatoria, Western Bhar-el-Ghazel State, Northern Bhar-el-Ghazel State, Lakes state, Warap State, Upper Nile State, Sobat State, and Jonglei State.

Population (of SPLMA controlled areas): 7.5 million. It is one of the youngest populations in the world with 21% of the population under 5.

Religions: predominantly traditional/animist and Christian

Ethnicities: a diverse mixture of African tribal groupings including the Nuer, Dinka and Equatorial tribes.

Health: One in four children will die before the age of 5 – they are 3 times more likely to die than children in other areas of Sudan. 1 in 9 women die during pregnancy or childbirth. There is only one doctor for every 100,000 people. Nearly half of all children under 5 suffer malnutrition (48%) with 1 in 5 suffering severe malnutrition, three times higher than in the rest of Sudan. Only 27% of the population has access to an improved water source, three times lower than the rest of Sudan. Only 16% of people have access to sanitation facilities four times lower than the level of access in the rest of Sudan

Education: Only 1 in 5 school age children are able to go to school, the worst school enrolment rate in the world. Only 1 in 50 finishes primary education (4 times as many boys as girls). Three times more boys go to school than girls. 3 in 4 adults are illiterate. 88% of women are illiterate. Only 7% of teachers are trained (1 yr pre service training). There are 1600 schools for 1.6 million school aged children . Only 10% are permanent buildings. 80% of school children have no bench to sit on.

Economy: 90% of the population earns less than \$US 1 a day. The Gross National Income per capita is estimated to be less than \$90 US per year.

About Darfur

Area: 493,180 km² in the western part of Sudan.

Population: estimated 6 million

Religion: mainly Islam

Ethnicities: The main ethnic groups are the Fur (after whom the region is named), an ethnically African people, and the Arab Baggara. Others include the African Zaghawa, Masalit, and Midob peoples.

Economy: subsistence agriculture, livestock. Over one third of the population are dependent on food aid. The UN's World Food Programme says 22% of children under the age of 5 are malnourished and half of all families do not have enough food.

Hot Topics

Issue 2, March 2005: Sudan- Hopes for peace?

Editor: Liz Martyn

Sudan and its Region

Sudan straddles the divide between the Arab dominated North of Africa and Sub Saharan Africa. It borders Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Libya, and Uganda. The conflicts in Sudan have impacted on its African neighbours, already amongst the world's poorest nations, who are hosting the majority of displaced people. In Chad, for example, a country that is recovering from 30 years of civil strife with few resources, 10,000s of Darfurians are adding additional pressures. The long running reign of terror of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in North Uganda has been inflamed by the South Sudan conflict. The Government of Sudan has been accused of supplying it with arms to destabilise the south. With a peace agreement, Ugandan authorities are hoping they can now take decisive action against the LRA. Other regional implications of the conflict involve Egypt, which relies on the Nile for its water and is uneasy about who will control it. Many fear a regional conflict over control and use of the Nile and it's tributaries in South Sudan.

Sudan and the world

The Sudan conflicts have international implications in the current climate of the 'war on terror' and perceived US interest in controlling oil reserves around the world. Relations with the US have been tense over terrorism from the 1970s. In 1996, the Clinton administration, believing that Sudan was supporting international terrorism and developing chemical weapons, launched a missile attack on a legitimate pharmaceutical plant. Sudan remains on the US list of states believed to sponsor terrorism. Arab governments are watching US and international interventions carefully. The Government of Sudan is portraying itself as the victim of anti-Islamic sentiment in the west. In addition, the Darfur crisis exposes yet again the slow response of the international community to African genocide/ crises and the inability to respond appropriately.



The Forgotten War: South Sudan

"War is not an easy thing, war is not a good thing. We wouldn't like anyone to experience what we have" Angus, Maridi

The civil conflict in Sudan is one of the longest and most complex in the world, yet has been largely ignored by the world's media and leaders. The latest hostilities began in 1983, when the 1972 Addis Ababa peace accords broke down. The 1972 peace accords brought a temporary end to fighting that had begun in 1955. But the roots of conflict go back even further.

Throughout history, the southern part of what is now Sudan has been an area exploited by people from the North – slavers, ivory traders and raiders. Arab invaders settled the land, pushing indigenous Africans into the interior or enslaving them – a pattern South Sudanese maintain continues to this day.

Spanning at least 20 centuries, the area of present day Sudan has had a long and colourful history, with the rise and fall of different civilisations and numerous independent nations. By the 900s, the northern area was Islamised and Arabised. Sudan came under the rule of Egypt by the 1800s, concerned to keep control of the Nile for its water, agricultural, transport and industrial needs. By 1882, Britain had occupied Egypt and found itself facing a rebellion against Egyptian rule in the Sudan. It was not until 1899 that Britain overcame other colonial powers, the rebellion and Egyptian interests to jointly control Sudan with Egypt. Britain had administrative control with the understanding its policies would not upset Egyptian interests. Many argue Sudan as a country is a colonial construct, created out of the European scramble for Africa and the 1885 Berlin Conference that imposed European borders on the continent.

Under British rule, the south was closed off. Some histories attribute this to frequent southern uprisings and efforts to prevent the spread of nationalism to the north. Other interpretations cite Egyptian plans to unite the Nile politically with Cairo while British efforts sought to undermine any union. Whatever the reasons, the outcome was the prevention of contact between north and south. Trade, cultural and social exchanges were forbidden and illegal. Southern Sudanese could not be employed in the north, excluding them from colonial administrative positions that were concentrated in Khartoum. The British ruled in their own complex imperialist interests (including Sudan's strategic importance for trade routes to India via the Suez Canal and the desire to limit French influence). For the south this translated into political and economic marginalisation. The area was left undeveloped and without infrastructure while the north progressed.

After World War Two, Egypt sought total control over the country, but the Sudanese resisted. In 1952, Britain and Egypt agreed on a constitution for Sudan, allowing free elections and a referendum on independence. In 1953, Sudan obtained a self-governing statute. A parliament was elected in 1955 and independence declared on 1 January 1956. The south felt politically dominated by the mainly Muslim north and argued it had been marginalised in the independence process. A mutiny in the Southern town of Torit in mid 1955 began a civil war that lasted until 1972. The south sought independence from the Government of Sudan, based in the north.

In May 1969, a military coup in the north installed Jafaar al-Nimeri as president. Nimeri negotiated a settlement with the south in 1972, which granted the South qualified autonomy, far less than parity within a federal structure demanded by the South. The agreement collapsed in 1983, following the introduction of Islamic Sharia law, intended to placate increasingly troublesome Muslim elements complaining about the austerity programme introduced on the instruction of the IMF earlier in the year, and President Nimeri's decision to divide the government of the south into three regional units despite previously agreeing on a single government for the south.

The south returned to armed struggle under the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA), led by John Garang. Governments in the north were overthrown in 1985 and 1988, bringing General Omar al-Bashir into power. Sharia law was once again introduced at the beginning of 1991.

In the south, the SPLA split in 1991 into two factions – the 'Torit', mostly Dinka tribespeople who remained loyal to the veteran SPLA leader John Garang, and the 'Nasir', mainly drawn from the Nu'er tribe, who followed the breakaway leader Riek Macahar. The churches attempted reconciliation talks, which became the basis for their involvement in southern peace building work.

In 1999, oil deposits (discovered in 1989) came on stream. This added a new dimension to the conflict, with oil reserves in the south being accessed by the north in a brutal programme of land 'clearance' (where helicopters were used to hunt down villagers and depopulate the regions). The issue of who would enjoy the revenue from oil became another point of contention while the money raised from oil sales effectively funded the the Government of Sudan's war on the south.

In late 2002 new peace talks began (see the peace process).

Key issues in the South Sudan conflict

- northern economic, political, and social domination of non-Muslim, non-Arab southern Sudanese
- southern desire for control over their resources and the right to decide how their land and people are governed
- southern exclusion from oil revenues and access to other mineral resources
- lack of development in the south
- imposition of sharia law

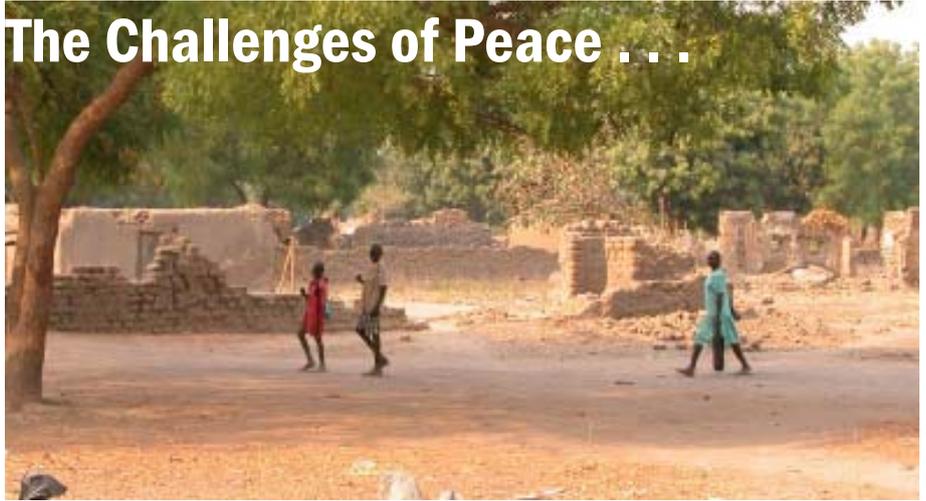
These have culminated in a conflict largely represented as an ethnic struggle between those identifying as Arabs in the north and those identifying as Africans in the south.

Impact of the war

“Death that was once a tragedy in the society has become a normal daily routine of human life” NSCC

- 2 million deaths since 1983
- more than 4 million people displaced
- Sudanese diaspora around the world
- widespread human rights abuses by both sides including systematic rape and sexual violence
- targeting of civilians
- heightened level of violence within the south and extremely high incidence of sexual violence against women and girls
- destruction of homes and property
- destruction of infrastructure: there are less than 500m of sealed roads, no phone systems, no electricity services, little access to safe water
- collapse of health and education services
- spread of disease
- famine
- abject poverty and lack of development
- widespread trauma
- proliferation of weapons
- extraordinary resilience of the South Sudanese.

The Challenges of Peace . . .



CWS/L Martyn

“Happiness comes as a result of everything being in abundance. Among us are people who are hungry, people who are thirsty, people who are sick. These people are so many. It is hard to talk about peace with all this happening.” Therese Ater, Rumbek

Rehabilitation and poverty: People are expecting tangible benefits from peace. Hopes are high for improvements in health, water and education services and better livelihoods and living conditions. Widespread and equal access to development will be crucial if peace is to be stabilised. The job of reconstruction is massive. Many observers say the only signs of the 20th century in Sudan are the guns – everything else is like the Stone Age.

Monitoring: Effective monitoring of the peace agreement protocols and provisions is essential if both sides are to continue working towards lasting peace. The South Sudanese have already experienced the collapse of one peace agreement. International support is needed to ensure that further bouts of violence don’t destroy the process and to make sure all commitments are met.

Social reconstruction: For peace and development to proceed in South Sudan, there must be urgent attention to the high levels of trauma amongst the South Sudanese people. Generations have only known war, family ties have been severed, millions of family members have been killed and people are terrorised and traumatized by the protracted war. The Sudanese will need help to rediscover meaning to their lives and to rebuild a sense of community.

Land mines and disarmament: It is estimated that there are as many as two million landmines in southern Sudan and parts of eastern Sudan. These will continue to kill people long after the peace accord and slow the pace of development. Mine clearance will need to be a priority if agriculture is to be resumed so South Sudan can feed itself. The proliferation of small arms is another danger.

Reintegration of returnees: Millions of South Sudanese were displaced, and many are in neighbouring countries awaiting the chance to return. For South Sudanese churches, this creates a potential ‘disaster’ as there are currently not the resources or services to handle an influx of people. There is potential for tension and conflict as people return to find internally displaced people living on their old family lands, and from the cultural and education differences between the people who stayed and the people who fled. Food supplies and other resources are insufficient to meet the demands of a growing population. Returnees will come back to a situation as bad or worse than their place of refuge. The challenge will be compounded by the fact that most of the returnees are young people who have never been to Sudan and are likely to suffer from cultural shock.

Civil education/capacity and democratisation: Formal education and engagement in civil society/political processes have been virtually non-existent for over 20 years. People in South Sudan need to build up the skills to manage their future political and economic development and engage with the peace process so they can articulate their vision for the future. The SPLM/A has a poor record on democracy, transparency and inclusivity.

... the Challenges of Peace

Unifying the south: Another challenge is to ensure peace between southern tribes. With the common enemy gone southern tribalism is a threat to maintaining peace. Some fear the potential for the north to undermine the process through its well practised 'divide and rule' tactics.

HIV/AIDS: This has been called 'the second front'. With the lack of formal education and health services, awareness of HIV/AIDS is very low. The level of poverty, other diseases and sexual violence will contribute to its rapid spread. Many people will be returning from countries where HIV/AIDS prevalence is very high. The country does not have the resources to treat the disease.

Reconciliation: There is a lot of distrust of the North from people in the South and many are unsure of how much they can trust the peace process, including delivery of the referendum on the future of the south, if the northern-based Government of Sudan controls it. Many Southerners feel the north treats them as slaves or as sub-human. Resentment against this is strong.

Interfaith relations: In what has sometimes been a religious conflict, there is a danger of religion being used as a divide and rule tactic. The diversity within Sudan needs to be acknowledged and positive relations between faiths need to be developed if Sudan is to end the marginalisation of people that has been at the root of the conflict.

Peacekeepers: The issue of peacekeepers is also problematic in a country traumatised by its experience of conflict, soldiers and arms. Peacekeepers can often create as many problems as they are there to resolve, especially in terms of distorting local economies and sexual exploitation of local women. The UN is ready to establish a full-fledged peacekeeping operation to implement the north-south peace agreement.

Sudanese ownership of the peace: Peace in many ways puts South Sudan in a dangerous situation. The critical issue is how to ensure that the South Sudanese benefit from peace. Based on previous examples of post-conflict situations where a massive development and rebuilding task needs to be undertaken, it is easy for the local people who stayed to be sidelined from the reconstruction process. In particular, their natural resources are at risk of exploitation and many of the more highly educated among the local population are often drawn to work for the UN and international NGOs for higher pay rather than going into the new civil service/administration where they are desperately needed.

The referendum: The outcome of the referendum could itself upset the peace process. Will the north accept an independent south? Will Africa? Egypt is opposed to a new state on its lifeline – The Nile – and it could set a chaotic precedent for changing the boundaries of African nations. The African Union is opposed to changing any of Africa's borders because to do so could open up good arguments for changing almost every border in Africa to better represent languages, ethnicities, cultures and religions. There are also concerns about whether the people of the south will be ready for a referendum. Will they have access to the information, knowledge and political experience they need to make an informed decision. Will the failure to resolve the conflict in Darfur poison the process?

Global politics: With Sudan's position on what some call the 'fault line' between the Middle East and Africa, its Arabic and Islamist government, its oil and water reserves and past terrorist links, the global political climate could have a huge influence on Sudan's future stability. The world's only superpower, the US, continues to watch events closely, stating several strategic interests. Sudan could once again be sacrificed to outside political interests.

Making peace last

According to the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative on Sudan, Jan Pronk, there are three conditions that need to be met for a comprehensive and sustainable solution of the Sudanese conflicts:

- political leaders, including the Government, should protect the people, guarantee their rights and provide them with the chances for a decent life.
- the country's constitutional and institutional framework should reflect the existing diversities within the nation and provide for a fair degree of regional autonomy.
- an economic development policy is needed based on a fair distribution of the country's resources, with poverty reduction and sustainable development as the foremost objective.

He has called on the international community to provide adequate humanitarian assistance and protection and increased financial assistance for the transition from relief and protection towards rehabilitation, capacity-building and development. (Press Release SC/8206 5/10/2004)

The Peace Process



"Always separate peace from the document. This document will stop the killing, the fighting, but it will not be peace by itself" Harun Ruun, NSCC

The latest peace process began in 2002, with a new round of peace negotiations under IGAD*. The Government of Sudan and the SPLM/A were the two parties to the negotiations. While this made it a simpler process, northern opposition parties and small southern regional militias were not included in talks. There are some concerns about what ownership other Sudanese groups will have of the process and what its chances are if the regimes change.

20 July 2002: signing of the Machakos Protocol, giving a framework for broader negotiations. Key provisions included a 6 year interim period, after which a referendum on self-determination will be held in the South, offering a choice of remaining part of a united Sudan and independence. The government accepted autonomy for the south, while the SPLA conceded the application of Islamic Sharia law in government-controlled areas.

August 2002: Talks on power and wealth sharing began.

15 October 2002: Both parties signed a ceasefire agreement. This agreement was strengthened in February 2003. Although both sides violated it, most areas enjoyed a cessation in open conflict.

1 December 2003: The two sides agreed on wealth sharing protocols.

26 May 2004: The parties signed key protocols on the disputed territories of Nuba Mountains, Blue Nile and Abeyei and power sharing (with the SPLM/A leader becoming a Vice President of Sudan), clearing the way for the signing of the comprehensive peace agreement.

9 January 2005: signing of the Peace Agreement. The SPLM/A will set up a semi-autonomous administration in the south until the holding of the referendum in 6 years.

See <http://splmtoday.com/>

for the peace process agreements.

*The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in Eastern Africa was created in 1996 to supersede the Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD) which was founded in 1986. The members are Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda. The IGAD MISSION is to assist and complement the efforts of the Member States to achieve, through increased cooperation: food security and environmental protection, promotion and maintenance of peace and security and humanitarian affairs, and economic cooperation and integration.

Darfur: The Ongoing War

The conflict in Darfur gained international profile at the end of 2002 with reports of systematic arbitrary executions of civilians, rape and torture, looting and burning of entire villages and infrastructure. Although sharing some common points with the North-South war, it is a separate, largely unrelated conflict.

Open warfare began in early 2003 when two loosely allied rebel groups – the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) attacked military installations. The rebel groups took up arms in opposition to government neglect of the region, resulting in its marginalisation and underdevelopment, and oppression of Africans in favour of Arabs.

While African rebel attacks continued, the Government of Sudan responded quickly, initiating ethnically backed violence on a massive scale. They armed and backed Arab militias, the Janjaweed, who began leading horrific attacks on African villages. Reports of summary execution, sexual violence, abduction of children, looting and destruction of homes, property, water supplies and crops began to spread.

These attacks went on largely unnoticed until mid January 2004. In March 2004, the UN announced that the pro-government Arab “Janjaweed” militias were carrying out systematic killings of African villagers in Darfur. Larger tracts of land were reported as depopulated of their former Fur, Zaghawa, Massaleit and other African inhabitants. This has been labelled as ‘genocide’ by the US administration. While a UN report in February 2005 shopped short of calling the violence ‘genocide’ (not finding evidence of intent to destroy a national, ethnic or religious group), it acknowledged widespread human rights abuses and crimes against humanity. The report said rebels were carrying out serious crimes against the people of Darfur but blamed the government for supporting and joining with the Janjaweed militias, who are held responsible for most of the atrocities.

Between April and June, reports on the atrocities and humanitarian need increased. Over 1.8 million people have been displaced, thousands killed and millions affected by the conflict. The UN has called this one of the world’s worst humanitarian crises with people relying on international aid to survive. More than 2.3 million need food aid. Ongoing violence and attacks, despite a ceasefire agreement, are

hampering aid efforts and put the security of traumatised, displaced people at further risk.

This conflict has built on centuries of tension over land use in the Darfur region. While Africans fleeing the Janjaweed are the vast majority of the displaced people, Arab communities have also had to flee from African rebel groups. In some areas the fighting is between rival Arab groups. The region is used by both nomadic grazers and settled farmers and disputes over the best grazing land –and resentments from those left with the arid desert like spaces – have long simmered.

British colonial rule imposed administrative areas to different tribes – but nomads were left outside the system. They traditionally migrated to find grazing. By the 1980s, when drought, desertification and expansion of farms meant less land was available, conflicts over nomads use of it intensified. With little government presence and no services or infrastructure, groups armed themselves and fought over limited resources. Some argue that the distinction between Arab and African has only developed in the last 20 years and used to create division. The causes are more complicated than simply Arab versus African, and like the war in the South, lie with political, economic and developmental neglect of the region as well as its colonial history. Some analysts also believe the progress in the South’s peace process prompted Darfurians to take to arms, having seen the effectiveness of fighting as a strategy to have grievances addressed.

For the people of the South, they are left wondering why the world has paid Darfur such attention when it ignored their plight for decades.

On Human Rights Abuses in Darfur see:
<http://hrw.org/backgrounders/africa/sudan/2004>



Voices from Darfur

Howa Hassien now lives in a basic shelter in a displaced person’s camp with her three-month-old daughter, Ihlam. Its scant bamboo frame has only a few rags attached and provides no protection from the sun or rain. The wind whips the sand around her and blows through the bamboo. “When the Janjaweed attacked our village, they murdered my husband,” she said. “I came here with my three children and the rest of my family. At home, we had a crop of dura but the Janjaweed took it. Now, I don’t have enough to eat and neither do the children. I collect and sell leaves to earn a little money.”

Isahage Abubaka was a farmer in his home village. “I had 20 cows, 40 goats, two horses and three donkeys. When the Janjaweed attacked, they took everything apart from one donkey. They left the donkey because my son had gone to market on the donkey, so it was not there for the Janjaweed to steal”. The Janjaweed had machine guns mounted on trucks as they attacked the village. Isahage lost 18 members of his family. 133 of the 600 people living in the village were killed. “I had a garden, which was full of orange trees and the Janjaweed cut down all the trees.” But he cannot go home. “My village is not safe now and not ready for people to move back, because there is nothing. It was burnt down to the ground after we left.”



Sudan ... & the International Community

NZ's Position: New Zealand has no direct bilateral links with Sudan although recent New Zealand statistics record a small amount of trade. The only diplomatic post in Africa is in Pretoria and Sudan is not accredited to it. New Zealand's engagement with the conflicts in South Sudan and Darfur has largely been through the United Nations.

New Zealand has raised concerns and supported resolutions on human rights violations with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights regarding the situation in Sudan, including child soldiers, over a number of years. Humanitarian aid has been funded in both South Sudan (through NGOs) and Darfur (through NGOs and the UN).

Most recently "grave concern" has been expressed about the situation in Darfur, with support for UN calls for effective action to stop flow of weapons into Sudan, imposition of realistic sanctions against the Government of Sudan and support for the deployment of African Union. On 8 February 2005, Foreign Minister Phil Goff issues a statement urging the United Nations Security Council to act swiftly on the findings of serious human rights violations in Darfur. The report found the Sudanese government was responsible for the worst atrocities and Goff stated New Zealand's support for the matter to be referred to the International Criminal Court (ICC).
Download full statement from: <http://www.cws.org.nz/Resources/Sudan.asp>

The response to South Sudan: The conflict in South Sudan, along with the general human rights situation in Sudan, has been the subject of many UN resolutions and reports. The latest peace process, supported by the historic meeting of the UN Security Council in Nairobi (one of the only times it has met outside New York) in November 2004, has been led by African states. In April 1989, Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS) was established as a consortium of UN agencies and over 40 non-governmental organisations to provide humanitarian relief in South Sudan. It negotiated with the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) to deliver humanitarian assistance to all civilians in need, regardless of their location. It's work continues as the need for food and other relief is far from over. The major issues for the international community now are to find ways to consolidate the peace process. This will include peacekeeping forces and aid for reconstruction/rebuilding. Both are potentially problematic and will need to be well managed. Peacekeepers will need to be gender sensitised to the plight of women and girls and be aware of the trauma the population has experienced at the hands of armed soldiers. With the peace agreement, an influx of aid groups and money with different motives, concerns, and ideologies is on its way. Reconstruction needs to be handled responsibly so that a culture of dependency is not created, the local economy is stimulated not distorted and that local people can decide priorities and have the opportunity to participate in their future.

The response to Darfur: The UN Security Council has passed numerous resolutions calling on the Government of Sudan to disarm the Janjaweed militias in Darfur, provide full humanitarian access and promote security in Darfur. Additional measures such as sanctions have been threatened if resolutions are not complied with, however there have been no deadlines. A UN commission has recommended referring cases of human rights abuses to the International Criminal Court, the first permanent global criminal tribunal. The United States, which opposes the court, has proposed a war crimes tribunal in Tanzania to prosecute atrocities committed in Darfur. Soldiers from member countries of the African Union have been serving in Darfur as ceasefire monitors and the AU supports peace talks.

The Arms Trade: In both South Sudan and Darfur there has been a pattern of villages being cleared out as Government forces make use of Antonov aircraft, MIG fighter jets and helicopter gunship. Government armed militias use AK47 assault rifles, rocket propelled grenades and jeep mounted machine guns. Arms and ammunition have proliferated. Today, almost all men have a gun. An Amnesty International report (November 2004) argues that outside governments that "have allowed the supply of arms to Sudan over the past few years have contributed to the capacity of Sudanese leaders to use their army and air force to carry out grave violations of international humanitarian and human rights laws". The arms trade has enabled the arming and deployment of militias and full military engagements. Despite EU arms embargoes (1994 and 2004) against Sudan and UN Security Council resolution 1556 calling on all states to take measures to prevent the sale or supply of weapons to all non-government entities in Darfur, weapons, military equipment and training advice have continued to be provided to the GoS. The report links military supplies, related services, logistics equipment, and small arms from China, Iran, Russian Federation, UK, UAAE, Belgium, Poland, Ireland, France, Saudi Arabia, Switzerland, Ukraine, Brazil, Hungary, Israel, South Africa, Sweden, US, Australia and others with human rights abuses and military action against civilians in Sudan.
(<http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/ENGAFR541392004>)

& the churches

"You responded to our distress call with commitment and kept your advocacy work active for Sudan"

New Sudan Council of Churches

The churches have played an important role in responding to the conflict in South Sudan. Both within South Sudan and internationally churches have been involved in peace building, emergency relief, advocacy and community development.

Within the South, the churches have been one of the only facets of civil society to keep functioning during the destruction of towns, villages, infrastructure and a normal life and bombardment of churches. They have worked to keep schools and health clinics going, provide information to their local communities, offer pastoral care to the many people left traumatised, coordinate humanitarian relief and community development, build peace, and advocate for international assistance. Sudanese church leaders say they are ready to receive millions of refugees returning home but caution that huge resources are needed. "They don't have homes. They don't have food. Our challenge is how we can resettle them," says Archbishop Joseph Marona of the Episcopal Church of Sudan.

Internationally, the World Council of Churches has been involved with Sudan for 35 years. The WCC together with the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) was instrumental in mediating the Addis Ababa peace agreement signed in 1972. In 1994, the WCC facilitated the formation of Sudan Ecumenical Forum (SEF). This network brought together the Sudanese churches, church-related donor agencies, Catholic agencies and the AACC under the leadership and facilitation of WCC. The SEF has played a major role in advocacy on the bombing of South Sudan, oil, and self-determination. The WCC has supported peace negotiations. ACT International, a global alliance of WCC and LWF Protestant and Orthodox churches and their related relief agencies founded by the WCC and LWF, has played an important supportive role in Sudan in the area of humanitarian response. In Darfur, ACT International is working with Caritas Internationalis, its Catholic equivalent, to provide humanitarian assistance.

In New Zealand, churches have long supported relief efforts, peace programmes and calls for advocacy through Christian World Service and Caritas.

Often the churches have been a lone voice calling for international attention and assistance, on behalf of the Sudanese churches, to end the suffering in Sudan.



Questions for Reflection

1. How did European colonialism shape the politics of Sudan?
2. What are the prospects for long term peace in South Sudan? What roles might the churches play in the future?
3. What do you think needs to be done to bring an end to the suffering and loss of life in Darfur?
4. How will the realities of global politics affect the future of South Sudan?
5. What part does religion play in the situation? How might it be a vehicle for greater understanding and unity?
6. Sudan is a Heavily Indebted Poor Country according to the World Bank's assessment. How might aid and/or debt cancellation be used to create greater prosperity for the poorest people?
7. What are some of the challenges associated with exploiting the oil and other natural resources in the region?
8. What role do you think the New Zealand Government should play in Darfur and in fostering peace in Sudan?
9. What further roles might the United Nations and or African Union have in ending the conflict in Darfur and promoting greater security in Africa?

Take Action

- ➔ Find out more about the situation in Sudan and the role of the New Sudan Council of Churches in promoting peace. Borrow the video study: Make Peace from CWS and check out websites including WCC (www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/english.html) and Christian Aid (www.christianaid.org.uk).
- ➔ Seek opportunities to share the history of Sudan and raise some of the issues with people who you meet.
- ➔ Write a letter to Phil Goff, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, expressing your views on New Zealand's position, and asking for greater assistance/increased aid to Sudanese.
- ➔ Invite a Sudanese member of your local community to share their story with a group you are part of and seek ways to assist them.
- ➔ Pray for the people of Sudan and all those caught up in conflict.
- ➔ Think about issues of violence in your own community and choose one on which to take action. CCANZ's Decade to Overcome Violence may be helpful.
- ➔ Find out about the Arms trade and identify an appropriate action that you can take.



Sudan on the web

www.irinnews.org (choose East Africa news)

www.sudan.net

<http://splmtoday.com/> the official website of the SPLM/A

<http://www.unsudanig.org/> The UN in Sudan

<http://www.peacesudan.org/> established by the Government of

Sudan to give information on Sudan

http://www.suna-sd.net/Index_EN.htm Sudan News Service (Government of Sudan)

<http://www.sudan.gov.sd/english.htm> Government of Sudan official website

<http://allafrica.com/sudan/newswire/>

A Shared Faith?

The New Sudan Council of Churches honours us when they speak of our solidarity with them. We take heart from their faith and sacrificial living. But can we really know that the God that sustains them is the God they assume we share with them? I find myself reluctant to even begin to claim that confidence they express in us? For if the God that sustains them is the God that we lay claim to, where is our collective resilience in resisting the violence that finds expression in this land? Where is our collective resilience in living alongside other faiths and spiritualities which also share this land with us? Where is our collective resilience in not being defeated by the ways in which we benefit from the unequal economic practices?

Perhaps if we want to know the God who sustains the peoples of South Sudan, we won't be too hasty in celebrating resurrection on Easter Day when, as we are reminded by Dr Haruun Ruun, NSCC, "Let us not be misled that the silence of guns is peace".

- Contributed by Barbara Stephens

"In a nutshell, the challenge before us is how to effectively restore the dynamic perspective of life for the Sudanese that not only gives meaning to life but also makes life itself positively purposeful. For people who have been engaged or exposed to the effects of Africa's longest civil war, this is not an easy task. Sudan is now on the path to the recovery of the political independence that was lost 49 years ago. Our hard-won peace should not slip away again as it did 21 years ago.

The war galvanized people to fight for survival, dignity and justice. The human and economic costs were enormous. Time has come for a change of gear, to develop a new sense of nationalism for committed nation building. This will require the participation of all churches and all our institutions with vigour. It will also require active collaboration and a clear sense of coordination." **Rev. Dr. Haruun Ruun**

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