

Fact-finding mission to Sudan finds reality not what the British claim

by Muriel Mirak Weissbach

In an editorial in the Feb. 7 issue of *EIR*, Lyndon LaRouche warned that the Clinton administration would be entering a quagmire, like that of the catastrophic Vietnam War, if it were to participate in the military invasion of Sudan, being mounted by the British Commonwealth empire, and its proxies in Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Uganda. Since the invasion from Eritrean and Ethiopian soil started on Jan. 12, Washington has tried to walk the tightrope: On the one hand, State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns was forced to retreat from explicit support of the invasion, and to urge all neighboring countries to stay out of the fray. On the other hand, however, crucial political cover, as well as military logistics, has been provided by parts of the U.S. government. Not only did the State Department agree in November to provide \$20 million in military aid to what it called the "front-line states" engaged in aggression against Sudan, but reports from the front charge that U.S. aircraft have been used in support of insurgent forces.

The consensus among those complicit in the British war against its former colony, is that a military defeat of the Khartoum government is near. The strategy against Sudan, shaped over 18 months by British Intelligence's Baroness Caroline Cox, and associated players in the House of Lords, the Foreign Office, and the Colonial Office (Overseas Development), has been to extend the front of military aggression, from the south, to the long eastern border with Ethiopia and Eritrea, and to set up the government in the capital, Khartoum, for overthrow. This strategy is based militarily on the destruction of a hydroelectric power plant at the Rosieres Dam, near the Blue Nile State capital of Damazin, which would cut off 80% of the capital's supply of water and electricity. Under such circumstances, the British believe, the population would be easily whipped up into a frenzy to stage an uprising against the government.

To this end, Baroness Cox and her associates carefully prepared and engineered an alliance between the political elements of the opposition, Sadiq al-Mahdi of the Umma party and Mohamed Osman al-Mirghani of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), and the sole military rebel group still fighting the government, the Sudanese Peoples Liberation Army faction led by John Garang. Cox also set up the arrangements whereby the Eritrean government of Isaias Afwerki would host her government-in-waiting, giving the new alliance, known as the National Democratic Alliance, the former

Sudanese embassy in Asmara as its headquarters, and would deploy a greatly enhanced Ethiopian military machine to lead the invasion. (The U.S. Ambassador to Sudan, Timothy Michael Kearney, was reportedly present, when Afwerki handed the embassy building over to the rebels.)

Now, the belligerent forces under British colonial command have been putting out the story, on the Cable News Network (CNN) and other complicit media outlets, that their victory is near. On Feb. 25, the former leader of the Congressional Black Caucus, Rep. Donald Payne (D-N.J.), testified in hearings of the House International Relations Committee, on talks he had held in Uganda with the "liberation people in southern Sudan." Payne wanted to know what the state of preparedness of American aid agencies was, regarding the humanitarian catastrophe which he thought was imminent in Sudan.

U.S. Agency for International Development administrator, J. Brian Atwood, who also testified, said there were difficulties in transporting food to the war zone, but that "the situation is even more tenuous there, in terms of the longevity of the Sudanese government. . . . There is a major effort under way, and we may see a major change in the coming weeks." Payne replied that as the Garang forces "continue to move toward the hydroelectric [dam], once that area falls, then Khartoum is going to lack electricity and energy, and that is really going to shift things, and it is in the near future." Payne was referring explicitly to the allegedly imminent fall of the Khartoum government.

U.S. has no direct intelligence reading

It has been of utmost importance to the British to ensure that the U.S. participation in their eastern African scheme, be entirely organized and controlled by the British themselves. Washington must be led, blindfolded, by London, to do its dirty work. In point of fact, the Clinton administration, has *no direct intelligence reading* on the situation in Sudan, and has had none since Jan. 31, 1996, when, under British prompting, it withdrew its embassy personnel from Khartoum. The British had just engineered the passage of a resolution in the United Nations Security Council, condemning Sudan for allegedly harboring of terrorists, when the State Department cabled its embassy in Khartoum, to abandon the post, on the grounds that the security of the diplomatic personnel was not guaranteed. Ambassador Kearney, who since that time has



There are 3.5 million displaced persons in Sudan, the result of the British-organized war to destroy that nation. Here, the Schiller Institute fact-finding team visits a refugee camp in the Blue Nile State. At left is María Elena Milton, the LaRouche Democrat who earned national recognition for her campaign against Gingrich Republican John Shadegg in Arizona. Lawrence Freeman is at center in cap, and at right is Sudanese Education Minister Abu el-Hassan Maken.

been relocated to Nairobi, Kenya, with his staff, thus has no independent evaluation of Sudanese developments. He is utterly dependent on the eyes and ears of the British, who have quietly remained behind in Khartoum.

Even Representative Payne, who has accepted the appointment given him by Baroness Cox, as the token black politician supporting the genocidal war, has been informed primarily by British briefings on Sudan. Congressional hearings on alleged slavery in Sudan, in which he took part last year, featuring Baroness Cox, were prepared by Cox's Christian Solidarity International (CSI). Legislation which Payne presented at year's end, for sanctions against Khartoum on grounds of support for slavery, was shaped by Cox's Congressional testimony.

When it came time for Payne to join the war effort on the side of the British, he did not bother to inquire more closely into the military or political realities in the nation whose destruction he is willing to oversee. Payne travelled Cox's route to the area, flying to Uganda, to meet with Ugandan dictator Yoweri Museveni, and with SPLA representatives who were holding out in Kampala. But he did not venture to discuss the situation with the legitimate representatives of the Sudanese government or National Assembly (parliament). Nor, apparently, did Payne bother to inspect the actual military relationship of forces, along the front line, created by the invading armies. He evidently thought it more prudent to stay away from the combat zone, and simply believe the press reports he was being fed, on the inexorable advance of the "rebels" toward Damazin, the imminent destruction of the dam at Rosieres, and the collapse of the Khartoum government, that was to follow immediately thereafter. Such press reports were

being filed from Cairo, Adis Abeba, Asmara, and Nairobi—far from the front.

A U.S. delegation gathers firsthand reports

It is to the credit of the United States, that a group of four political and civic leaders had the courage to do what Cox has made sure Payne, et al., do not do: travel to Sudan; explore the political, social, and economic reality; visit the combat zone; and develop an independent assessment of the reality on the ground, so as to be able to help shape a sound foreign policy approach to the nation. The four, who visited Sudan Feb. 17-25, under the auspices of the Schiller Institute, were Harold James, a member of the Pennsylvania state legislature and the chairman of its Legislative Black Caucus; Theo W. Mitchell, a former member of South Carolina's State Senate, and a former Democrat nominee for governor (the first African-American to seek statewide office in South Carolina since Reconstruction); James Barnett, the head of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists for northwest Alabama, and a longtime civil rights activist; and María Elena Milton, a LaRouche Democrat who earned national recognition for her campaign for Congress against Arizona Rep. John Shadegg, a Gingrich Republican. Accompanying the delegates were Lawrence Freeman and Muriel Mirak Weissbach, both of the Schiller Institute.

The delegation went to Sudan at the invitation of the Khartoum State Assembly. Their mission was to investigate the plethora of allegations against Sudan that it was violating human rights: from slavery to oppression of Christian and other non-Muslim religious groups. Given the dramatic escalation of events just prior to their departure, the delegation decided, as well, to investigate the nature of the military con-

frontation in the eastern part of the state. Therefore, it added to its itinerary a visit to the combat zone in Damazin and the Rosieres Dam, in the Blue Nile State.

Preliminary report of the Schiller delegation

What follows is a preliminary, partial report of the findings of the delegation, which is the first to conduct such an on-the-ground, fact-finding mission. It is hoped that the relevant government authorities in the United States, will make use of the findings presented here, to correct their faulty intelligence assessment and revise the U.S. posture toward the war there, before it falls into the quagmire.

Religious oppression and the war

Allegations spread by Cox's CSI, and other non-governmental organizations operating as intelligence fronts, assert that the "Islamic fundamentalist" government in Khartoum is waging war against Christian and animist populations in the south. The war is thus presented as a war of religions, and the aim of the Khartoum government is said to be to annihilate the non-Muslim populations, or force them to convert to Islam. This war against its own people is portrayed as the first step in a long march across Africa, which the "Islamic fundamentalist" north is said to be undertaking, in coordination with the Islamic Republic of Iran, to "Islamize" the African continent.

In the course of the war, Islamic "militias" are allegedly commissioned by the government to make raids against animist tribes, capture their women and children, enslave them, and force them to become Muslims. Internally, the government is accused of persecuting non-Muslims, especially Christians, refusing them the right to worship, the right to meaningful employment, and the right to equal participation in political and civic affairs.

During its week-long stay in Sudan, the delegation found no evidence to indicate that any of these allegations are true. The International Council for Peoples Friendship (CIPF) received the Americans on Feb. 22, and gave them an initial briefing. Ahmed Abd Al-Rahman Mohamed, the secretary-general of the CIPF, explained that the purpose of the CIPF was to promote "people to people" friendship. Although on the grassroots level, he said, there were no problems in relations among religious groups, at the institutional level, there was a need to create a vehicle for dialogue. The resulting Inter-Religious Dialogue Association initiated a religious dialogue in 1991, and held a second conference in 1993. At that conference, Helga Zepp LaRouche, founder of the Schiller Institute, spoke on ecumenical dialogue. The next year's conference, in 1994, attended by a high-level Vatican delegation, gave rise to the Sudanese Inter-religious Dialogue Association.

The CIPF secretary-general explained to the delegation, that the north-south divide in Sudan does not correspond to a

religious divide, as there are Christians and Muslims in both areas. The fact that 1 million southern Sudanese, in search of refuge from the war zones, had decided to flee to the capital in the north, Khartoum, instead of emigrating to a neighboring country to the south, he offered as evidence that non-Muslims among the southerners had no fear of persecution. "Why would they come to their enemies?" he asked.

The real divide, he said, was the one created by the British colonial masters, who pursued a policy of strict separation between north and south, even through legislation (the Closed District Order of 1930), which forbade travel of Sudanese citizens from one area to the other. The objective of the act was "to create self-contained racial and tribal units in the south." This difference was further exacerbated by differences in education: Whereas the predominantly Muslim population in the north had access to schools and the university in Khartoum, until independence in 1956, Sudanese in the south could have access to education only through the church, which monopolized schools. This meant that one had to convert to be able to go to school.

The secretary-general complained of pressures on Sudan regarding religion: "For Americans, religion is a personal question, so why should they try to impose it here?"

Churches and mosques operate unhindered

Later that day, the U.S. delegation received a report by the Ministry of Social Planning, which documented the status of Christians under Sudanese law. Prepared by a Christian undersecretary, Angela Hart, the report showed that there are 149 churches, plus 242 churches in shantytowns (camps); 475 foreign preachers; 222 church-related schools and institutes; 82 health centers, and so on. The churches in Sudan include the Catholic, Coptic orthodox, Episcopalian, Evangelical, Presbyterian, Sudan Interior, Pentecostal, Maronite, Greek, Ethiopian, Eritrean, Armenian, Brothers, Interior African, Sudan Christ, New Apostolic Church, Seventh Day Adventist, and so forth. It was stressed, that equality before the law in Sudan is guaranteed through citizenship, regardless of creed, color, ethnic group, and so on.

The Schiller Institute group took the opportunity to visit places of worship on Friday, the Muslim holy day, and Sunday. Friday is a holiday for all Sudanese, and Sunday, Christians also have a half-holiday, to attend church, if they wish. On Friday, Feb. 21, the group walked to a mosque near its hotel in North Khartoum, without any accompanying Sudanese personnel. The group was cordially invited into the mosque after prayers had ended, and was given a tour of the mosque and its Quran school. The young boys attending the school, came from all parts of the country, and had been admitted on the basis of their having memorized a certain number of Suras (chapters) of the Quran. The students showed the delegates their wooden writing tablets, on which they had written those Suras in the process of being memorized.

The elder members of the mosque extended their hospitality to the visitors, insisting that they join them for their



The Schiller Institute delegation poses with a group of students outside the National Museum in Khartoum, during its Feb. 17-19 visit to Sudan. Members of the delegation (back row, left to right): Theo Mitchell, James Barnett, Lawrence Freeman, and Harold James; (third from right, seated): María Elena Milton.

Friday meal. One striking feature noted by the delegates during the impromptu visit, was the fact that the mosque belongs to the Khadmiyya sect, an Islamic sect associated in Sudan with one of the opposition parties, the DUP, which is currently allied with the foreign aggressors. A photograph of the group's spiritual and political leader, was on display. This means, that despite the current situation, in which sect followers are in a state of belligerency against the Sudanese government, the mosque was allowed to conduct its regular worship services, and even to invite in foreign guests and converse with them.

On Sunday, the American fact-finding group attended mass at the Catholic Cathedral in Khartoum. The group arrived as the Arabic-language mass was concluding, and stayed for the English-language mass, which followed. This was very well-attended, and was conducted as in any other Catholic church anywhere in the world. The group also visited a second Catholic church, between masses, and spoke with the Italian parish priest there. This priest explained that his principal activity was training missionaries in Sudan, a task he was carrying out under quite normal conditions.

The third church the group visited was a Coptic Church in Omdurman. This church, also full to capacity, is the oldest church in Sudan, having been established by missionaries centuries before Islam arrived. The Coptic Church, which the British colonial power had prevented from operating in the south (because its language of worship was Arabic, not English), is well represented, particularly in northern Sudan, and is the second largest denomination, after the Catholics.

The delegation met with numerous Christians throughout its visit, including many who occupy high-ranking positions

in the Parliament and government. Among the latter, was Bishop Gabriel Roric, State Minister of External Affairs. Bishop Roric is an Episcopalian church leader, who comes from southern Sudan. He explained that in Sudan, the church has decided to experiment, practicing cooperation with the government instead of observing a strict separation of church and state. Bishop Roric's briefing concentrated on the history of the civil war, which has plagued Sudan since 1955, shortly before the British colonial masters withdrew. The war started, he said, as "a fight to solve the problem of political rights of citizens," and it "was never a religious problem."

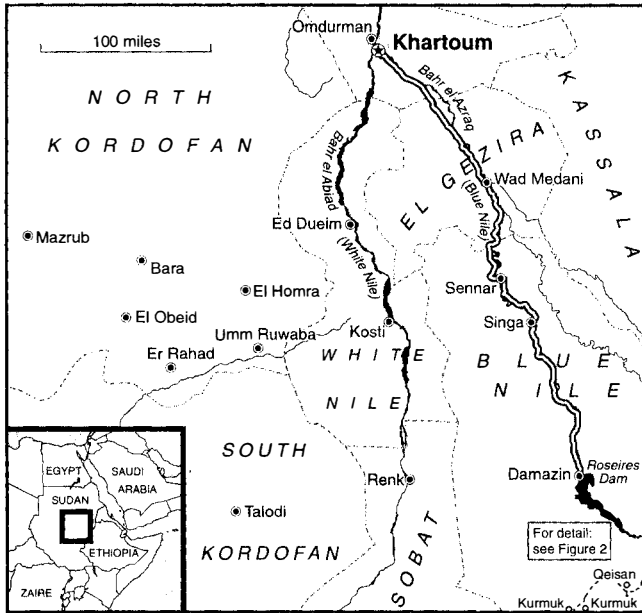
Bishop Roric said that SPLA faction leader, John Garang, had made the religious question an issue, as a "political offensive against this government," which has opted for peace negotiations. The bishop also stressed that those political figures, like Umma party leader Sadiq al-Mahdi, who are part of the British-led aggression today, had never utilized the opportunities they had, to do something positive for the country. Sadiq al-Mahdi, who had been in power as prime minister until 1989, never tried to solve the political problem of the south, and never made any attempts at opening talks with the rebels, to negotiate a peace settlement.

Meeting with the opposition

The most insightful evaluation of the political line-up among the warring factions was provided to the Schiller delegation in a lengthy meeting with political and military leaders of the rebels, both Christians and Muslims, who had formerly fought alongside Garang. Under the auspices of the Higher Council for Peace, and its chairman, Mohamed El Amin Khalifa, the American group met with Simon Mori, of the SPLA;

FIGURE 1

Route of the Schiller Institute delegation



Mohamed Haruka Kafi, of the SPLA/M Nuba Mountains; Arok Thon Arok, the founder of the SPLA; Taban Deng Gai of the SSIM; and Dr. Riak Machar, head of the SSIM. Also present was Ambassador Shafi al Mohamed, president of the Human Rights Department of the Foreign Ministry.

All these leaders represent factions of the rebels, which have joined the government in a bid for peace. They signed the Political Charter of April 1996, which outlined the principles for a durable peace. The Nuba Mountains group joined the Political Charter, by signing a separate document in July that year. (See *EIR*, Jan. 24 and Feb. 14, 1997.) Together, they represent 80% of the rebel forces formerly at war. At present, their military contingents are deployed alongside those of the Sudanese government, in the south.

Arok Thon Arok, who founded the SPLA, which John Garang later joined, was unequivocal in his commitment to peace. Summarizing the reasons which led him and others in the SPLA and SSIM, to seek an agreement with the government, Arok said, "Priority must be given to peace to achieve stability and development; only thereafter can we talk about the system of government, whether liberal or participatory democracy." Arok reiterated the need to "make peace now with the government of the day." War, he said, "is not for itself, but is waged to achieve objectives, which we feel we can achieve by peaceful means." Reflecting on the devastation caused by the continuing conflict, he said, "The message of war has reached every household, which has martyrs, wounded, people who are without food, education, medical attention, all over the country, north, south, east, and west."

The economic crisis, Arok added, which is a result of the war, "is being felt to a greater degree by southern Sudanese

citizens, because they have been displaced or have become refugees abroad." Thus, he said, "when we saw that these people, who are the people we took up arms to liberate, are the ones being destroyed by the war, we had to give peace a chance." Mr. Arok also pointed to the broader, strategic implications of the current attacks against Khartoum. Sudan, he said, "is a vast, huge country, now under siege. If the central authority of the state, which is being targeted, does disintegrate, then none of the country's problems will be able to be solved."

Sudan, with its 583 different tribes, he said, its vast territory, and many different cultural, religious, and ethnic components, is very different from Somalia. Yet, he said, if the central power disintegrated, there would be no force capable of putting it together again.

An 'open-ended' Political Charter

The Political Charter, which he and others signed last April, is an "open-ended document," which remaining rebel factions can join, and which will be the basis for a peace treaty. Arok stressed the importance of the Political Charter, which "covers all important issues: identity, national unity, power and wealth sharing, the system of government, and the relationship between religion and the state." He explained how the Political Charter came into being: "Dr. Riak Machar, head of the SSIM, from the forests in southern Sudan, wrote to the Khartoum government, asking them to visit the war zone. We thought, if the government were serious about peace, it would respond. We didn't believe anyone would. Then the first vice president arrived at the camp. There was no way out: the dialogue began, and a draft of the charter as well. The first vice president then left for Khartoum, saying he would write to Machar, which he later did, inviting the rebel leader to Khartoum, to continue the dialogue. Machar had to consider, that the vice president had travelled to the war zone, where anything could have happened; he thought he could not refuse the invitation, and went to Khartoum."

Mohamed Kafi, chairman of the SPLA/M from the Nuba Mountains, stressed the fact that the current government, of Gen. Omar al Bashir, is "the first government to acknowledge the problems in the Nuba Mountains" and to seek a negotiated settlement. Kafi, a Muslim, also emphasized the fact that power sharing and sharing the immense potential wealth of the Nuba Mountains, was at the root of the conflict, not religious considerations. He said that the problem was that the agricultural resources of the area, which had been highlighted at the 1975 World Food Conference as the potential breadbasket of the continent, had been under the control of northerners, and that had to be changed. Now, in the dialogue with the government, power sharing and wealth sharing were being worked out.

The former rebel leaders provided precious insight, as well, into the character of rebel faction leader John Garang, with whom they had fought for so many years. Garang, who "took up arms with a 1983 manifesto, said he was launching a

war of national liberation from the brutal and destructive acts of the traditional Sudanese sectarian parties, the Umma and the DUP.” Then, Garang changed his tune, and, “instead of fighting for unity, called for the division of the country. Instead of fighting the Umma and DUP, he is now cooperating with those parties he had identified in his manifesto as the enemy.”

Another former rebel leader, Taban Deng Gai of the SSIM, ridiculed the characterization of Garang given by Cox, Bona Malwal, Francis Deng, and other opposition figures, as “a Christian fighting slavery and fighting Islam.” Taban Deng, was a field officer in Garang’s ranks, who split from him in 1991, when SSIM leader Dr. Riak Machar left Garang. At that time, Arok Thon Arok, the SPLA founder, and another leading military commander, Karabino, also joined ranks with Machar. Thus, as Mohamed Kafi added, Garang does not represent any “mainstream” at all. Against him today are the SSIM, together with the SPLA Bahr al Gazal, the SPLA Bor, and the SPLA Nuba Mountains, plus the Equatorial Defense Force and the Union of Sudanese African Parties.

Garang supported from abroad

Garang’s forces, which represent only 20% of the SPLA fighting forces, are able to still wage warfare only because of the “huge force” built up in Ethiopia and Eritrea to support him. According to intelligence gathered from prisoners of war, and others on the ground, there has also been U.S. logistical support for the Garang forces. Rebel troops have reportedly been airlifted from Entebbe, Uganda, to Asmara, Eritrea, and then deployed to fight near Kassala. Furthermore, there have been reports of C-130s, flying from southern Sudan to western Ethiopia. Reports of U.S. planes involved in transport have been picked up in Adis Abeba and in Nairobi.

The assessment of the rebels’ strength and backing—provided by military commanders who had spent more than a decade with Garang in combat, and therefore know him well—was fully confirmed by Sudanese government military commanders in eastern Sudan. As the Schiller Institute delegation was able to verify, firsthand, during a trip to Damazin, the headquarters of the Blue Nile State, and to the strategic dam at Rosieres, the area is fully under government control and well fortified. (See *EIR*, March 7, p. 50.)

The weak, the poor, and the homeless

The continuing warfare against Sudan has brought untold suffering to the population in a poor country. It was, therefore, the concern of the fact-finding group, to inquire into the fate of those who are particularly exposed to the ravages of war: the poor, the homeless, the orphans, and the handicapped. During a lengthy session at the Ministry of Social Planning, the U.S. political figures received in-depth briefings on the efforts being made by the government to provide for the weakest members of society.

In its meeting with the Minister of Social Planning, Mohamed Osman Khalifa, and the State Minister of Social Planning, Dr. Sayda Mohamed Bashar, the fact-finding group

learned that many of Sudan’s economic problems had been the direct result of the application of the Structural Adjustment Program of the International Monetary Fund. Minister Khalifa explained that his large ministry, with three undersecretaries, sees as its priority, the eradication of poverty. The means through which they are trying to alleviate suffering, include the Zakat, a religious tax levied on all Muslims. Through Zakat, one pays 2.5% of one’s savings, or a percentage of one’s agricultural yield (which varies, according to whether the land is irrigated or not). In this way, 60 billion Sudanese pounds were raised last year and allocated to the fight against poverty.

In addition, Khalifa described the social bank for the poor. This Savings and Social Development Bank, constituted in 1995, under the supervision of the minister for social planning, is, he said, “the first bank registered in the name of the poor.” According to the bank’s founding document, its objectives are “to promote and encourage savings awareness among citizens, to collect savings, and hence invest them in economic and social development spheres.” The bank is to provide financing, “especially projects directed toward the poor, small producers, craftsmen, professionals, productive families, low-income people, the Zakat beneficiaries, students, women, organizations and individual employers.”

The bank’s authorized capital amounts to 500 million Sudanese dinars, paid by various endowments and corporations. The transitional order which established the bank states: “The bank’s capital is an endowment (Waqf) possessed by the poor. It shall be managed according to the provisions of this act, and no body is entitled to claim any private revenue as for the funds paid as subscriptions in the bank’s capital and resources.”

The minister explained that the bank was set up to provide capital for those who have no collateral, because of their poverty. In place of collateral, a bank/family partnership is established and co-managed through labor and/or land. Among the first projects financed by the bank, were family clothing manufacturers, employing 15 families, and providing revenue to support 20 families.

Another focus of attention of the Social Planning Ministry is the condition of women and children. Women are given micro-credits, in order to begin income-generating activities. There is, in addition, a special project for displaced women. The most exposed among children, are those without homes. In programs jointly run with Unicef and some international non-governmental organizations, Sudan has set up reception centers for street children, where they are provided with vocational, spiritual, social, psychological, and health assistance, before being reunified with their families. Children stay a maximum of six months in the reception centers.

The vagrancy of children is caused by the war which has displaced so many people, and adverse weather conditions, such as the drought of the early 1980s. It was pointed out that, although many children are found on the streets, there are no children categorized as “orphans” in Sudan, in the sense of having no family members. Given the existence of the ex-

Religious, civil relations in Sudan

The following is from a report on the status of Christian-Muslim relations in Sudan, prepared by the Ministry for Social Planning. It was presented to the Schiller Institute delegation on Feb. 22.

The Sudanese are one nation, united by one citizenship . . . belief in religions forms a basic factor in their fabric and culture. The Sudan today has restored the morals of the holy books, the Quran and the Holy Bible. Islam is the religion of the majority of the population, and Christianity and African creeds are professed by a considerable number among them. Freedom of worship is guaranteed to all Sudanese, as the Holy Quran states that "There shall be no compulsion in religion." . . .

The Rights of the Non-Muslims under Islamic Jurisprudence: Rights, like the right to life, and the right to marriage, divorce, and cohabitation, [are defined by] the religion or custom followed by the concerned people [Christian law for Christians, law of custom for native African religions.]

Civil rights: A non-Muslim has the following rights: Equality before the law, prosecution, appeal; sanctity of the family, of the individual; freedom of conscience and choosing one's faith; freedom of worship and the relevant religious expressions and celebrations; construction of churches; freedom of expression of religious views and arguing with Muslims about their belief. A non-Muslim woman may not be compelled to embrace Islam if she is

married to a Muslim husband.

Economic rights: Islam guarantees for the non-Muslim the right of work, of trade, of possessing and inheriting land, [real] estate. In brief, they enjoy all the economic rights on equal footing with Muslims.

Political Rights: As the Sudan is a multi-religious, multi-cultural society, the non-Muslims derive their rights by virtue of their citizenship, and law. The non-Muslims in the Sudan have not acquired their status following the war with the Muslims; rather, their status is that of natural citizens. The salient feature that describes the status of the non-Muslims in the Sudan today may be summed up as follows:

1. Equality in rights and duties irrespective of race, culture, creed, or ethnic origin, including political rights, such as holding public posts, nomination, and election.

2. Custom and *Sharia* [Islamic law] are the two sources of legislation. Custom and tradition among non-Muslims have thus become an important tributary of national legislation, which enables them to preserve their specific character and identity.

3. Adoption of legal pluralism at two levels: a) The federal level, where states having a non-Muslim majority are exempted from application of *hudud* [definition of a criminal act according to Islamic law] and other penalties of a specific religious nature. b) The personal level, within the states that apply Islamic laws: Here the non-Muslim is not subject to legal [prosecution] in crimes which his religious denomination does not consider to be crimes punishable by law.

4. Full expression of their religious and cultural identities as well as raising their families according to their faith and culture. . . .

tended family, children with only one parent or with none, are reunited with members of the extended family. Financial support, as well as foodstuffs and clothing, are provided for families with no bread-winner, and complete support for education (schooling, books, school uniforms, etc.) is provided through the Zakat chamber and social care centers. The chamber in Khartoum State, currently supports 400 families, including 2,000 children.

Similar agencies have been created, and are supervised by the Ministry for Social Planning, to provide care for the aged, and the disabled.

Aid for the 3.5 million displaced persons

A social category of special concern is that of displaced persons. The Schiller Institute delegation met with a large group of intellectuals from the south, in Khartoum on Feb. 22, and heard direct reports on the condition of the most exposed, the refugees and internally displaced persons, who

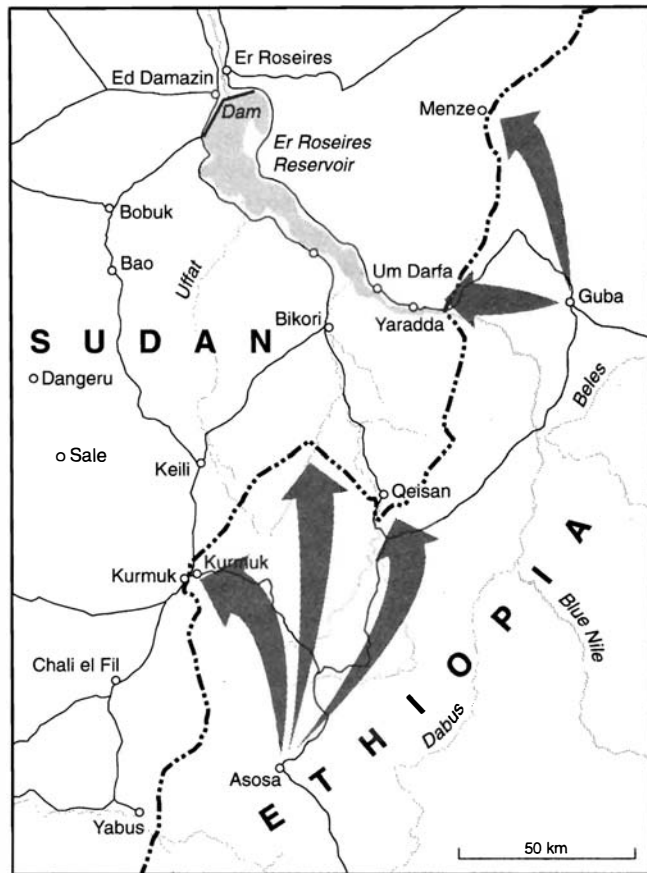
have sought safety from the war zone, by fleeing abroad, or by moving to the north. There are 3.5 million displaced persons in northern Sudan, from the southern war zones, and another 1 million abroad. As Dr. Ghazi Salahuddin, secretary-general of the National Congress, stressed, repatriation of these citizens is a top priority, because "no one is in a worse situation than a refugee in Africa."

Dr. Salahuddin also emphasized the importance of organizing international efforts to repatriate these citizens, who otherwise will be used as cannon fodder by Garang, who is recruiting among the refugees. Until now, the international agencies, such as the Red Cross and the United Nations, he said, have, at best, turned a blind eye to this group of people. In some cases, they have actually collaborated with the rebel forces. The incident in which an International Red Cross plane was caught carrying rebel troops and materiel in southern Sudan, is exemplary.

The drama of the displaced persons population was played

FIGURE 2

British-backed military thrusts against central Sudan



out before the eyes of the American visitors, when they travelled to a camp in the Blue Nile State. Following extensive briefings on the nature of the foreign invasion, the group rode for an hour over rough, makeshift roads, to Kerma, the site of a new camp for displaced persons. There, they saw the most elementary of shantytowns: Each family had been given a plot of land, on which to build a makeshift hut of straw. In hut after hut, families crowded together, with nothing but the black, volcanic ash-like soil, for a floor. Most were people who had been forced to leave their homes, when the Ethiopian-rebel invasion began; they had nothing but the shirts on their backs.

Until they were given refuge at Kerma, they had sought shelter with family or relatives in nearby villages. Some, who had been evacuated with government help from villages near the combat zone, had brought with them a few belongings—a blanket, a few pieces of clothing, or cooking utensils. According to the Commissioner of Rosieres, Ali M.A. Mageit, and Mohamed al-Hassan, the minister of health and chairman of the displaced persons committee, seven to eight villages in Rosieres province had been affected immediately by the

Ethiopian aerial bombardments, forcing civilians to flee for their lives. Those in Yaradda and Menze, two of the locations occupied by the invaders, fled westwards, and ended up in Kerma, where at least temporary shelter and a minimum supply of food were available. There are now eight camps in the area of Rosieres, two south of Kerma, and the others north. About 11,000 displaced persons are thus taken care of in Rosieres province, within the larger displaced person population of 40,000 in the state.

The problems in the camps are immense, as Mohamed al Hassan readily acknowledged: The people may be safe and have basic needs supplied, but they are certainly not happy. There are no educational structures yet in the new camps. The thatched roof huts are inadequate, and the Sudanese have applied to international humanitarian aid agencies for help, at least for tents and blankets. As yet, none but the Muslim Red Crescent organization, has responded. In the Kerma camp, the only such humanitarian group is the Birr International (*birr* is Arabic for water well), which has 6 people on hand to service 4,300 in the camp. Food is shipped in once a week (sorghum, cooking oil, nuts) and only the simplest medical supplies are available.

Displaced persons swell urban populations

What happens to people, such as those displaced by the most recent invasion, after months, if no improved conditions are made available? Most will try to migrate to urban centers, like the capital, in search of something more permanent. The dimensions of the urban problems created by such migratory flows of displaced persons, over the years of the war, are beyond imagination. A study prepared by Dr. Sharaf Eldin Ibrahim Bannaga from the ministry of engineering affairs, and entitled “Unauthorized and Squatter Settlements in Khartoum,” provided the basis for a background briefing given to the Schiller Institute delegation at the Khartoum State Ministry of Housing. During the course of this briefing the delegation realized that the displaced persons arriving in the capital over decades, have swelled the numbers of city residents, but there has been no corresponding increase in housing.

The population of the three major urban centers, Khartoum, Khartoum North, and Omdurman, went from 730,000 in 1970 to 1.8 million in 1983. From 1983, when the war began again, to 1991, it grew to 3.36 million, and since then has risen to 5.5 million. Given the lack of any centralized infrastructure plan in the 1980s, people streaming into the capital simply occupied land indiscriminately and established themselves as squatters. In 1991, a plan was drafted by a group of consultants of the World Bank, and passed on to the government. The idea was to spread out the population, by setting up urban centers along the Nile River, southwards away from the city. These “localities” are now 35 in number, divided among 7 provinces (3 in Omdurman, 2 in Khartoum, and 2 in Khartoum North).

When the consultants recommended by the World Bank started their survey, they found that two-thirds of the total

area of the three Khartoum cities, and their populations, were squatters. To alleviate crowding, the consultants decided either to integrate the settlers into existing urban areas, if possible, or to relocate them entirely.

The plan developed by the government, and now in effect, is based on a self-help system: The government gives a plot of land (minimum 200 square meters) to homeless citizens and provides water and educational facilities in the area. The citizen must do the rest. Forty percent of the total area in the capital which has been designated for such development, is allocated for infrastructure: roads, schools, and public utilities. Government housing is provided for local government administrators, police, and so on. The rest must be done as private initiative.

The shortcomings of such a system are obvious; just as obvious is the reason that major, government-sponsored housing projects for low-income families have not been launched. Under a state of siege, cutoff from any international aid or reasonable credit, the Sudanese are forced to make do with what little they have, and pursue such makeshift solutions. What is extraordinary is that, under conditions of years of internal warfare, now exacerbated by external, foreign aggression, the Sudanese have managed to survive at all.

Basic human rights denied—by British geopolitics

When, therefore, one speaks of human rights violations in Sudan, one must face the simple fact, that millions of human beings are being denied their most basic human rights—to life, meaningful labor, and a future—by the continuation of a war steered from abroad. It is not only the human rights violations committed by the invading Ethiopian and SPLA troops last January, documented by an independent commission of inquiry (see *Documentation*), but the continuing violation of the right to peace and development, as a result of the geopolitical commitment of the British Empire, to destroy Sudan.

And, it must be stressed, these rights are being denied to Sudanese Muslims as well as to Sudanese Christians or Sudanese animists. The Schiller Institute delegation found that there was no distinction of religion, ethnic group, or geographical origin, among the dwellers in the displaced persons camps, or in the sprawling squatters' neighborhoods, or anywhere else.

This reality, which a group of American legislators and trade unionists were able to grasp firsthand, is what official Washington is blocking out. Having evacuated its diplomatic representatives to Nairobi, the United States has cut off what contacts it had. One of the priorities defined by the Schiller Institute delegates, in the course of their visit, was to ensure that the U.S. government reverse its rash decision of last year, and immediately reestablish its full diplomatic presence in Khartoum.

This means, as well, initiating a wholesale reevaluation of American policy vis-à-vis Sudan. Ironically, it is to the United States that those circles most doggedly seeking an end to the

war, would like to turn for international support. In their meetings with the former SPLA and SSIM rebel leaders, as well as in their encounter with military commanders at the front, the members of the Schiller Institute's fact-finding delegation heard the same refrain: Why doesn't the United States help broker peace in Sudan, instead of supporting the aggressors?

One of the leaders of the former rebel forces stated outright, that the U.S. government had been a major factor in hindering peace initiatives which, earlier, had been made by the group of countries in IGAD, the Inter-Governmental Authority for Development. He further reported, that the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi had told the former military leaders, that they "could not defend the peace" which they were embarking on with the Political Charter, because they "had no weapons." When the former military leaders responded, that they hoped they would have the support of the American people, it was indicated to them that Washington would smash every initiative taken. The same former colleague of Garang also said, that some U.S. circles were "pressuring South African President Mandela not to create a venue for peace negotiations for Sudan."

U.S. policy-making on Sudan 'immature'

The problem of U.S. policymaking is not a mystery to members of the Sudanese intelligentsia. Dr. Ghazi Salahuddin, the secretary-general of the National Assembly, which is the constituency organization of Sudanese society, minced no words in his evaluation. "The problem in our relations with the U.S.," he told his American guests, "is that they have given the responsibility for policymaking to immature, political adolescents, whether in the State Department, or the CIA." He said that although these agencies had been trying for seven years to "prove the allegations of Sudanese support for international terrorism," they, the CIA and others, had "failed miserably."

The problem is, Dr. Salahuddin said, "that there is no mature person in any of these agencies, to fulfill the tasks assigned." Indeed, he said, one big problem is "the staffers of the Congress." These are the ones who, without any knowledge of the subject, have been presenting papers and studies on slavery, terrorism, and the like.

Furthermore, U.S. responses to Sudan's gestures of good will provoked only consternation. Dr. Salahuddin referenced the efforts made by his country, to mediate in inner Palestinian conflicts. "Take the case of Hamas," he said: "We do not believe in terrorism. In the case of Hamas's opposition to the Palestine Liberation Organization, we decided to use our moderating influence, by bringing together PLO Chairman Arafat and Hamas representatives, in the interests of the peace process." Two such meetings did in fact take place, he reported, in Khartoum, under the auspices of Dr. Hassan al Turabi, now speaker of the National Assembly. Yet, no word of acknowledgment was to be heard from Washington. Not to mention the fact that Sudanese government went out of its way, to facilitate the freeing of an International Red Cross

plane and its crew, which had been caught red-handed in southern Sudan, with rebel troops and supplies on board.

Dr. Salahuddin stressed that the message he would like to have the Schiller delegation take back to Washington, was a message one would think any rational U.S. government official would be delighted to hear. "Sudan," he said, "represents an opportunity, also for American business." Not only would investment in the country be profitable economically, but, also politically. As a leading Muslim country, Sudan "represents a chance for the United States to reach out to Muslims, instead of antagonizing them," he said. There are increasingly hostile attitudes emerging in some Muslim countries in the Middle East, he added, even in Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Turkey. None of this is necessary. "We represent an opportunity for the United States to think rationally and maturely," he said.

The question is, does someone in Washington want to think "rationally and maturely"? Or is the entire government apparatus foolishly committed to obeying London's foreign policy dictates? In the wake of the Schiller Institute's week-long trip to Sudan, the U.S. ambassador was reported to have gone to Khartoum for a visit. Since the shutdown of the embassy, he has been known to stop in for a few days now and again. This time, according to reports, he was staying for two weeks, for extensive discussions with members of the government.

Could it be that rationality is returning to Washington?

Documentation

Atrocities by invading forces are verified

The following report of the Sudan Judiciary was prepared by the Judicial Committee on the Alleged Violation of Human Rights Committed During the Invasion of Kurmuk and Gaisan Areas in the Blue Nile State on Jan. 12, 1997. This document was made available to EIR in mid-February by the Judicial Committee.

By the order of the Chief Justice No. 30, 1997, dated Jan. 26, 1997, a committee was set up to investigate the facts surrounding the armed invasion of the areas in the Blue Nile State on 3rd Ramadan 1417 (12.1.97).

The committee travelled to this region and spent an eight-day period investigating the allegations of Human Rights abuses, during which time they heard and recorded 40 eyewitness testimonies of those affected by the armed aggression in their districts. The Committee visited Karama camp situated about 58 kilometers southeast of Damazin town, and en route

also visited the town of Rosieres. From the evidence of those witnesses on oath the following information has been verified to the satisfaction of the Committee:

On the night of Saturday, 2nd Ramadan, armed forces which had gathered at the Sudanese/Ethiopian border began to make preparations to invade the Republic of Sudan. On Sunday morning 3 Ramadan (Jan. 12, 1997) at 6:05 a.m., these forces occasioned three rounds of shelling and artillery fire which was launched as a warning. Consequently, 15 minutes later, the warning was followed by heavy artillery fire and tanks. Subsequently, the whole area came under severe attack from the Ethiopian Infantry, which launched an attack on the towns of Kurmuk and Gaissan.

Reports estimate the invading forces to number around 3,000 heavily armed men. The soldiers then targetted the towns, their suburbs, the police station, and the Sudanese Armed Forces, resulting in a large number of casualties among the elderly, men, women, and children. Witnesses stated that the bodies of the dead remained unburied and rotting in the streets for more than two weeks. At the time of the Committee's visit, information from Kurmuk confirmed that there were still corpses in a state of decomposition in the open air being eaten by wild birds, dogs, and other animals. In fact, the whole environment of the town has been totally contaminated, and as such is completely unhealthy.

As a direct consequence of this heavy firing, the inhabitants, including women, children, and the old, fled from the town to evade random gunfire from the invading forces, who looted the town, especially shops, the marketplace, businesses, and houses. The seized property was transported across the border back inside Ethiopia. Then, the remaining population of Kurmuk was rounded up around a small area called Birka about 20 kilometers north of the town. They were about 5,000 captured, some of whom were severely traumatized by the killings they had witnessed.

Following the fall of Kurmuk and Gaissan, the towns were handed over to the rebel Sudanese forces. The Ethiopian soldiers tried to return across the border with some haste, afraid of being noticed. This was an attempt to make the operation appear as if it was carried out by the rebels only. Some were heard saying that they should not be seen inside Sudanese territories during the daylight with the heavy machinery. This was an attempt to avoid being seen, photographed, or recognized because this might lead to problems with the United Nations. Following their departure, the occupied areas were handed by the Ethiopian army over to the "Allied" forces, as they term themselves. They consisted of Maban, Edoc, Hommag, Engessona, and some other tribes. These forces exercised ferocious, violent, and inhumane actions, slaughtering, killing and torturing, looting, raping, and other atrocities. Stated below are some examples of what has been verified by a number of witnesses on oath:

1. The civilians who were taken out of Kurmuk and the nearby villages were seconded to the area of Birka, a small lake with shallow water. Approximately 5,000 people,

women, children, the old, and some students were forced to sit on the ground for more than three days and were prevented from moving, even to urinate and to pass excrement, which they were ordered to discard in or near the places they slept. No shelter or medical care was offered, nor were they shielded from witnessing torture and killings.

2. All personal effects that had been rescued were confiscated, (even) clean clothes; gold watches, jewelry, and papers were also stolen.

3. They pulled out some men and students at random whom they suspected to be members of the National Defense Force and executed them in front of the captives.

4. Three women were taken to a makeshift tent close to Birka and were raped repeatedly. Their screams and cries could clearly be heard by the captives.

5. Two girls were executed for no apparent reason in full presence of the captives.

6. Some women were woken in the middle of the night on the pretense of being taken to fetch drinking water, but they managed to escape and hide themselves amongst the male captives.

7. A young man called Atif was slaughtered by knife on the grounds that he was a member of the National Defense Force. He had claimed that he was studying, and following his death his identity card fell from his clothes, and he turned out to be a bona-fide student.

8. Abdul Hamid was an officer in the Sudanese Armed Forces and came to the Birka area to quench his thirst, thinking that the people there were Sudanese soldiers, and was surprised to find opposition soldiers. He was shot with rapid machine-gun fire, despite the fact that his hands were raised and his gun had been discarded. In the morning, soldiers from Masan, Homage tribes speared and mutilated his body in full view of the captives.

9. A number of the Fellate tribe (of Nigerian origin) were murdered at the Ethiopian/Sudanese border. Complete families were annihilated by shooting. During the battle, a one-year-old child was killed. Successive swift bullets were poured into the child's body until it turned black from the gun fire penetrating his body. This tribe suffered 44 casualties.

10. Some pregnant women and nursing mothers who had just given birth were made to walk for three days. One of them had delivered only a day previously. She had to crawl on her stomach until she was picked up by two Sudanese soldiers who transported her in an attempt to save her life. But they were caught in an ambush by the rebels, who forced them to take their clothes off and remain with undergarments only. The Sudanese men were then shot in the back. The woman lost her baby and was left without assistance. She managed to make her way to a main road, where she was picked up and taken to Damazin. We (the Committee) visited her at the hospital and registered her statement on oath.

11. A female student under 16 was among three other girl students. One of the rebels tried to shoot her; however his

bullet missed and hit one of his own colleagues in the hand. While he was attending the wounded person, the girl escaped and gave evidence.

12. The Commissioner, President of the Local Town Council, and Secretary of the National Council were all murdered by the rebels, and their corpses were paraded openly to be seen by others.

13. The number of lost people can not be exactly determined. They range from all ages and sexes; however, when escaping to avoid the gunfire, they ran towards areas populated by wild animals only. In general, it is believed that they must have died either of hunger or thirst or have been consumed by wild animals.

14. We (the Committee) met some people who managed to escape from the camps, and they were unaware of what has happened to their families. One of them worked extremely hard to find his family, but in vain.

15. The Maban soldiers attacked a fellow tribesman in the Birka area, because he refused to join the actions of the rebels. They tortured him and asked him to pick out some of the soldiers that he thought were with the government. In actual fact, he did not know any of them; however, in an attempt to render himself from further abuse he began pointing out some people randomly. The chosen individuals were immediately shot or slaughtered in the manner suffered by the student Atif.

16. Two women teachers were shot by the Ethiopian soldiers, one of whom was shot in the thigh and the other was taken to the Ethiopian town of El Kurmuk (the border between the two Kurmuks is separated by a stream of about 100 yards).

17. At Damazin Civil hospital, the Committee found five people had been travelling in a lorry and were blown up by a mine. They were all seriously injured. They are still in the hospital and in a critical position. These mines were planted by the invaders in some of the places they occupied. One witness who deserted the rebel forces described some of methods of torture used by the rebels against the children and civilians. He stated that the rebels killed the civilians in a vicious, vengeful, and destructive manner in settlement of previous personal and tribal grievances.

18. The Captives suffered from hunger, cold, and diseases, as there was scant supply of food provisions. In the end, the food supplies were completely exhausted, and then they relied on whatever they could capture from passing lorries. They captured only one lorry.

19. Kurmuk town became extremely unsanitary and unsuitable for human or even animal life, because of environmental pollution caused by the rotting corpses. Therefore, returning to the city in such circumstances would result in serious (health) consequences because of the diseases that may prevail given the lack of clinical and medical supplies to combat disease.

In the light of the above mentioned, we are satisfied that at least the following international instruments, have been flagrantly violated:

a) Section 5. of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights reads: No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment.

b) Section 12. of the same declaration reads: No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, home, or correspondence nor to attacks upon his honor and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

c) Section 3. of the African Human and Peoples Rights: Subsection 2. It prohibits the interference in the internal affairs of member countries in the Charter.

d) Subsection 3 [of the above]. Requires countries to respect the sovereignty of all states and lands and right of self-determination.

e) Subsection 4. Mandates a country concerned to settle disputes through negotiation, reconciliation, and arbitration. It also constitutes a violation of Section 43 of the Versailles Convention, which protects the countries from being occupied by other countries.

It is proved that the Ethiopian Military Forces occupied Kurmuk and Gaissan towns and their suburbs, which is clearly within the Sudanese border. In addition, it is a violation of Section 2 Para 3 of the United Nations Convention, which prohibits the waging of war, or to threaten to use force in the international relationship. It imposes that a state member should reach a settlement through peaceful negotiations without endangering the peace, security, and justice.

f) Section 51 of The Charter of the United Nations reads: "Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of the individual or collective self-defense, if an armed attack occurs against a member in the United Nations, until the Security Council had taken the steps necessary to maintain international peace and security. Measures taken by Members in the exercise of this right of self-defense should be immediately reported to the Security Council. . . ." It is the view of the Committee that Sudan has acted perfectly in accordance with this article.

The Ethiopian Army also committed crimes against women, children, and the elderly contrary to sections 30 and 31 of the Hague Convention which obliges countries not to use force against unarmed civilians, or those not assisting military activities of the army. The Ethiopian troops have directed its military activities against these classes of people.

The Ethiopians allowed Sudanese rebels to mutilate corpses; therefore, it is considered that the Ethiopian troops have aided and abetted the rebels to commit these crimes.

h) The Geneva Convention, signed Aug. 22, 1948, imposes an obligation on legitimate invading forces to protect civilians and abstain from taking civilian hostages and attacking human integrity; and also these actions are a violation of Section 14 and thereafter to the Geneva Convention, which imposes the good treatment of the injured, pregnant women, or children less than 7 and all children under 15. It also prohibits taking the money or property of these civilians; this consti-

tutes a violation of section 15 of the Hague Convention and sections 3 and 5 of the Geneva Convention 1949 for the protection of civilians.

We now submit our report during the fixed time in the conveying order of the Committee, and we have come to the conclusion that the Ethiopian Army attacked the civilians, including the old, nursing mothers, and children, and put the lives of the inhabitants of this region under the stress of fear and terror.

Conclusion

1. On Jan. 12, 1997, 3 Ramadan 1417, the towns of Kurmuk and Gaissan were simultaneously attacked and houses were burnt down.

2. The military invasion consists of the Ethiopian Army and some Sudanese Rebels, with a few unidentified white men.

3. A huge number of civilians were killed (approximately 600). Their bodies were scattered for days and were eaten by wild animals.

4. They used silent tanks, heavy artillery, semi-automatic weapons, G.M.4 and GM3, Kalashnikov and R.B.J.

5. Schools and government houses have been destroyed, and all goods have been taken from market, houses, shops, and the invading forces have also confiscated gold, money, and the clothes of civilians.

6. Fellata tribes (of Nigerian origin) in the area have been killed, due to private disputes and grievances; for example, disputes over ownership of land, water wells, and grazing lands.

7. A one-year-old child was machine-gunned to death.

8. Crimes of rape were committed against the female population, close to the area where the captives were kept.

9. Some Sudanese government officials have been slaughtered with knives in front of the same group.

10. They executed death sentences against some civilians, using machine guns at random. As a result of this, a teacher named Munira was seriously injured in her right leg.

11. A huge number of cattle has been captured and confiscated.

12. The rebels ordered captured civilians to return to Kurmuk on foot. Their future is uncertain, bearing in mind that the town has been emptied of all food provision.

N.B.: We (the committee) certify that the above is a true and concise translation of our Arabic Report on Human Rights Violations, committed during the invasion of the Ethiopian Army on a Sudanese territory on Jan. 12, 1997, and afterward.

Signed and sealed, Feb. 15, 1997

Mustafa Muhammed Bashar, Justice of the Supreme Court, President of the Committee

Hussein Awad Abu El Gassin, Justice of the Supreme Court, Member of the Committee

Hashim Hamz Abdul Majid, Justice of the Supreme Court, Member of the Committee