

Conflict Resolution in the Sudan: A Case Study of Intolerance in Contemporary African Societies

By Eluzai Moga Yokwe

Abstract

Intolerance in the contemporary African societies has been best manifested in bitter wars, loss of lives and property, rampant violation of human rights and in some cases total lack of law and order creating chaos in the continent. The complexities of such conflicts vary from one country to another making it impossible for the organizations concerned to find one single mechanism for conflict resolution. A lot more is to be done by the churches and the world bodies to explore common factors in social conflicts; to sensitize the participants in matters of religious tolerance, justice and peace; to highlight support and encourage the role of churches and other groups in promoting dialogue among the warring protagonists. This article portrays the situation in the Sudan and provides indications as to how the problems should be addressed in an enlightened manner. The article focuses on the issues that caused the Sudanese conflict plus the wars and their impact on the Sudanese people as their neighbours. It looks at the peace initiatives and makes pertinent suggestions and recommendations.

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Résolution des Conflits au Soudan: Etude d'un Cas d'Intolérance dans les Sociétés de l'Afrique Contemporaine

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Résumé:

L'intolérance dans les sociétés de l'Afrique contemporaine se manifeste en forme de guerres sanglantes, perte de vie et de bien-être matériel ainsi que par la violation des Droits de l'Homme. Parfois on viole toutes les lois, créant ainsi une anarchie totale. La complexité de ces conflits est tel qu'il s'avère impossible de trouver une solution universelle. De ce fait, on demande aux églises ainsi qu'à d'autres organisations sociales de contribuer à la recherche d'un dénominateur commun. Car, selon Yokwe, ce n'est qu'en faisant cela qu'on peut sensibiliser les acteurs concernés à la tolérance religieuse, au respect de la justice et aux mérites de la paix. Les efforts ainsi conjugués pourraient aboutir à l'établissement d'un dialogue fructueux, entre les églises et les autres organisations sociales, d'un côté, et les antagonistes, de l'autre côté. La communication de Yokwe s'efforce d'exposer les causes de la situation conflictuelle au Soudan, sans pour autant oublier de formuler des solutions pratiques.

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1. Introduction

The Sudan case is rather unique and more intricate than the rest of the African countries in similar situations. For example, Sudan became independent in 1956, forty one (41) years ago, and ever since it has been in conflict with itself. Many serious peace negotiations and agreements have been initiated but in vain. A question is usually asked: what is the problem bothering the Sudan?

The case of the Sudan conflict centres on the question of "Self determination" demanded by the African South but rejected by the Arab North since British colonial rule (1898 - 1952) until to date. The reasons behind this demand arose from conflict of interests between the North and the South. The Southerners have always strongly believed that the Northerners have been subjugating them politically; exploiting them socially and economically; dominating and assimilating them culturally, racially and religiously. The Southerners in turn have always resisted such practices through parliament sessions, political conferences or through armed struggle when necessary. The seventeen-year war (1955 - 72) was brought to an end through "Addis Ababa Agreement 1972". The on-going war has now lasted for fourteen years and probably more to come. The agents of peace and conflict resolutions are doing everything within their power to bring peace, justice and religious tolerance to the Sudan. Presently peace negotiations are going on between Khartoum and the SPLM/A.

That is one part of the story concerning the North - South conflict of the Sudan. The other impact is the North - North conflict and South - South conflict. The North - North conflict is mainly based on the ethnic struggle for power in Khartoum. The National Democratic Alliance (NDA), which includes the Umma Party; the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP); Sudan Communist Party (SCP); Union of Sudan African Parties (USAP); SPLM/A

Legitimate Command of the Sudanese Armed Forces, The Beja Congress; Sudanese Trade Union; The Nuba Congress; and Independent National Personalities, are united under the umbrella of NDA to fight the Bhasir government and the National Islamic Front (NIF) party. The NDA political parties are bitter against Bhasir and its master mind, NIF, for having overthrown their democratically elected government in June 1989. The military wing of the NDA is now fighting in the North-East of the country and have captured military garrisons of Kurmuk, Maizan, and are currently advancing towards Damazen Town .

In the South-south conflict two powerful groups have emerged resulting from the split of SPLM/A in August 1991 into SPLM/A main organization commanded by Dr Garang and the splinter group of SSIM/A commanded by Dr. Machar. Several attempts have been carried out to unite the two organizations but without success. Instead the two have been engaged in attacking each other militarily and politically. The Southern people who used to struggle together against the North are now polarized into supporting one side or the other. The consequence is the surrendering of SSIM/A group to Khartoum where Machar and others signed 'the Sudan Peace Agreement', on April 21, 1997 Both sides of Machar and Bashir swore to fight and uproot the SPLM/A and its supporters from the South.

2.0 Background Information

2.1 The National Question

The inhabitants of the Sudan are mainly of Arab and Negroid races occupying Northern and Southern parts of the country, respectively. The ethnicity of these two main races is well summarized in Jaden (1965) as follows:

The Sudan falls sharply into two distinct areas, both in geographical area and ethnic group, and cultural systems. The Northern Sudan is occupied by a hybrid Arab race who

are united by their common language, common culture, and common religion; and they look to the Arab world for their cultural and political inspiration. The people of the Southern Sudan, on the other hand, belong to the African ethnic group of East Africa. They do not only differ from the hybrid Arab race in origin, arrangement and basic systems but in all conceivable purposes

The British colonial administration (1898-1952) in the Sudan later on recognized this distinction when they used it to justify their "Southern Policy of 1930" stating that:

1. The Negroid Africans of the South were culturally and racially distinct from the Northern Arab Sudanese;
- 2 The three southern provinces (Bahr-el-Ghazal, Upper Nile and Equatorial) would either develop eventually as a separate territorial and political entity or be integrated into what was then the British East Africa.

However, this policy was later on reversed in 1946-7 allowing for the South to be annexed to the North without any consultations with the South. The south later on called this move by the British as a sell-out to the North and therefore, one of the major causes of the conflict.

2.2 The Historical Contact

The historical contact between the North and the South incidentally happened to be a racial contact between Arabs and the Africans. It also happened to be a bitter and bloody contact for the southerners.

In 1821-81, the Arab North was conquered and ruled by Egypt until it was overthrown by Mahdi (Muslim Messiah). Mahdi's rule over Northern Sudan lasted seventeen years (1881-98). It was during this era (1821-98) that the North came into direct contact with the South. The North was in search of ivory and

slaves. It turned out to be a soar historical contact that has not been forgotten by the Southerners until todate. There was no government to control law and order. Every slave trade agent from the North was free to do whatever he wanted. They raided villages for slaves, plundered property, stole and raided cattle and goats, burnt down dwellings, occupied the land and imposed their customs, language, religion and other ways of life on the Southern tribes². The Southerners reacted against this foreign invasion by putting up unremitting resistance that continued until todate. It was during this most unfortunate period of chaos, wars and slave trade that the British administration was established in the Sudan (1898-1952) with its seat of Government in Khartoum.

The British managed to arrest the slavery and slave trade to a certain extent during its rule in the Sudan. Nevertheless, slave trade continued to linger on in the Sudan until todate, particularly in Western Sudan Reports about slave trade keep coming up here and there. For example, as late as July, 1997 it was reported that:

A former Sudanese minister has said that Islamic Militias allied with the Sudanese government are capturing children and selling them as slaves in the South (Daily Nation, Monday, July 21, 1997).

Other stories are reported in the Nuba mountains, people of Negroid origin. Reporting for a newsletter, the author said:

The regular government forces, the Arab militia and the popular defence forces regularly attack, loot and burn villages. The human damage of the ongoing devastation has numbered 50,000 persons Women are being raped, children are being taken into slavery . . . (NAFIR - The Newsletter of the Nuba Mountains, Sudan Vol. 2 No 1 April, 1996).

Ever since the historical contact between North and South,

slavery and slave trade have been practised on racial lines, always the Arab North raiding the African South and not vice versa. Such a practice has heightened the racial tension. Racism in the Sudan is also manifested in social interaction particularly in the institutions of marriage and work. In the Sudan the Arabs marry the Southern girls regardless of race and religion. But the Arabs will not allow their daughters to be married to the Southerners regardless of race and religion. In fact in the 1960s there were cases where Arab parents slaughtered their daughters and dumped them in the river because they were found pregnant by Southern young men.

In the places of work today in the North one would hardly find Southerners as Chairmen, Directors or heads of departments. The reason is simple racial and religious discrimination. Such practices among people of one nation tend to widen the gap between the citizens and therefore harden the struggle for freedom from the North.

2.3 The Political Conflict of Interest

Again it can be firmly stated here that the question of political conflict in the Sudan centres on the question of "self-determination" denied the South by the North assisted by the British colonial administration. The political events that took place in the Sudan during the British colonial rule (1898-1952) and led to the independence of Sudan (1956), were pure manoeuvres against the political interest of the South to satisfy the North and the British. The South was annexed to the North in 1946-7, and the British facilitated the way to independence without involving the South in the decision-making. Such a move has never been taken lightly by the Southerners until to date. The southerners strongly felt betrayed and sold-out by the British. Below are a few examples of how it happened.

2.4 The Anglo-Egyptian Rule (1898-1952).

In this period (1898-1952) the Egyptians and like British had a joint colonial rule over the Sudan, known as Condominium Rule. In deed they were joint partners each serving its own interests. Lord Cromer, the British representative in Cairo expressed this position very well when he wrote:

Although I somewhat regret to say so, we cannot on purely humanitarian ground afford to lose sight of the main British and Egyptian interest..... that interest as I have frequently stated, appears to me to be that both banks of the Nile from the Lake Albert, Nyanza to the Sea, should be in British or Anglo-Egyptian hands. The good government of the wild tribes in the interior, even the possession of districts which may be commercially productive are relatively speaking of minor importance.

Egypt's interest was the annexation of the North Sudan and later on the Sudan as a whole. The British interest was the control of the Nile water plus the Suez Canal. For some reasons better known to them, the two partners decided to develop the North Socio-economically and politically but left the South backward. In fact the same Cromer condemned South Sudan as "large tracts of useless territory which would be difficult and costly to administer", (ibid). More will be said on this point in the socio-economic conflict section.

The Anglo-Egyptian colonial rule nevertheless managed to some extent, to curb the slave trade in the South; brought law and order to most parts of the South; declared the South a closed district to the outside world including the North (Southern Sudan Policy, 1930) . Travellers into and out of the three Southern provinces (Bahr-el-Gbaza, Equatorial and Upper Nile) had to carry travelling documents with up to date visas from the colonial Governor's office in Khartoum. To the Southerners, this policy was truly a recognition of the separate nations of the North

and South states. In 1946, the British colonial authority cancelled this policy to give way for the annexation of the South to the North without consultation with the South. The Southerners definitely considered such an act by the colonial authority as a sell-out of the South therefore, a betrayal of the South by the British.

As if this act of betrayal was not enough, the British and the Northerners continued to conspire against the political interests of the South. They continued to exclude the Southerners while working for the independence of the Sudan. The following events took place as the North wooed the British to pave the way to their political kingdom of domination of the Sudan.

It happened that in 1946, Egypt had wanted to annex the Sudan into its kingdom in Cairo. The North Sudanese resisted this call from Egypt and instead suggested self determination for the Sudan. The colonial administration accepted the desire of the North Sudanese for self determination. In the same year, 1946, the "Sudan Administrative Conference" was convened in Khartoum to discuss the future administration of the country - the Sudan. In this conference, the Northerners decided to consider their deliberations binding on the Southerners despite the absence of the Southern representation resulting from their exclusion policy.

In 1947, the Juba Conference was held to break the news to the South being annexed to the North. The Southerners protested against such a unilateral decision and presented two demands at the conference which were both rejected by the colonial and the North representatives. The Southerners were told in clear terms that the South had already been annexed and there was nothing to be done about it. One of the demands from the South representatives was to be given time to "develop on their own lines and call for independence when they felt ready." The second alternative was to be given the "opportunity to set up Southern Executive and Legislative Councils similar to what had been set up in the North Sudan since 1944, before the South

could make a mature consideration of the whole question of association with the North".

With this intransigent attitude of the Northerners and the British representatives, the arrangement towards the independence of the Sudan continued unabated. In 1953, the talks and the decisions for self-government for the Sudan were held in Cairo without Southern participation. The conference attended only by the North and the colonial representatives finalized the self-rule arrangements and further locked out the South from deciding its own destiny. Is this not already unfair enough to warrant a conflict of political interest?

In 1955, with the arrival of the Northerners in the South to replace the British and the Egyptian officials, the South realized that it had indeed been unwittingly handed over to the North as a colony since they had no say in their own destiny. The South rose up in arms in August 1955 against this betrayal. This popular uprising was brutally crashed with the help of the British and the South remained occupied by the North to this day, still being denied the right to self determination by the North governments in Khartoum. But the South never gave up the struggle for self determination until today.

2.5 The Independent Sudan (1956-1997)

Politically nothing much has changed in the Independent Sudan (1956-1997). Since independence (1956), the unity of the Sudan has been based on the dominance of the people of the North over the South in all aspects, resulting in the denial of equality, justice, political freedom and economic development.

Sudan is now 41 years independent with 31 years of bitter wars, leaving only ten years of relative peace (1972-82). Two long and bitter wars have been fought in these 31 years and the political conflict of "Self-determination" is nowhere closer to be solved peacefully through negotiation. The Khartoum governments still are intransigent in their attitude, making it very

difficult for any peace initiatives to be realized. The tendency of the Khartoum government to treat the South like a colony can be demonstrated in the following political events after independence.

In 1958, although underrepresented and humiliated, South Sudan went to the second Sudan parliament in Khartoum⁴. The Southern representatives pressed hard for the question of self determination for the South. This time the Southerners asked for a Federal System of Government between North and South. The question of separation of the South from the North was now being compromised by the Southern representatives for the sake of the unity of the country. After all, the Southerners would have expected such a good gesture to be reciprocated by change of attitude of the northerners to replace the negative policies toward the south with positive ones. For example, had the North accepted the Federal system with all its fair and proper implementation, the South would have been disarmed completely and would not have found any cause for political struggle. In fact one of the leading representatives of the South in that parliament expressed their position for the unity of the Sudan by saying:

*"The South will only separate from the North" if and when the North so desired through social, political, economic and religious subjugation of the Sudan"*⁵

The reaction to the Southerner's pressure for federal system was negative. The Northerners wondered why Southerners did not accept northern Arab domination just as they accepted British imperialism. In November, 1958, the political leaders of the North decided to hand over power to a military junta. It was intended and hoped that the military brutality would silence the South. This did not work out very well, for the army brutality meted over the South did not silence the South until today. Instead, it hardened the determination of the South to fight tooth and nail for their self determination.

Since 1958 todate most of the political activities between north and south become dominated by wars, negotiated settlements, and back to wars and agreements again as it will appear below. What follows now are the other causes of conflict in the North-South relation. Socio-economic exploitation of the south by the north; cultural domination and assimilation or attempts to do that; and racial and religious discrimination have always been practised against the south by the north in addition to the already tense political relation.

Socio-Economic Exploitation

As it has been pointed out above, Mr. Cromer, the Official Representative of the British administration in the Sudan, had already clearly stated the British policy toward Southern Sudan as follows:

The good government of the wild tribes in the interior, even the possession of districts which may be commercially productive, are relatively speaking of minor importance.

The same Cromer went on to condemn South Sudan as "large tracts of useless territory which would be difficult and costly to administer".

Definitely. Cromer was wrong to think that the Southern Sudan was a useless territory given the natural resources abound today in addition to the vast agricultural potential compared to the sprawling desert in the North which the British were so keen to develop. Nevertheless, Cromer meant every word that he uttered as far as the South was concerned. The colonial rule in the Sudan. not only isolated the south politically but socio-economically as well. The Anglo-Egyptian rulers deliberately decided to develop the North but left the south backward. They built schools, hospitals, roads and other social institutions in the North. The Gezira Agricultural Scheme for the production of cotton, siseme, peanuts and wheat was established. Port

Sudan harbours were built and a railway was constructed to connect it to the Gezira Scheme at Medeni through Khartoum. The railway and harbours became the economic lifeline of the North Sudan, facilitating exportation of cotton to Europe and importation of European goods to the North. Such policy led to the creation of jobs and therefore, creation of income to the northerners. Nothing equivalent was happening in the South. Local government administrators, medical assistants and nurses, teachers, police, army, etc. were recruited among the northern people. These were the officials to form the bulk of those sent to the South to replace the British and the Egyptians in 1955. In addition, the Anglo-Egyptian rulers allowed the northern Sudanese representatives to join the colonial administrative council known as the "Sudan Political Service" developed later on into the Legislative Council in the North. Such development activities gave the North great leverage over the South ever since.

In the South there was little or nothing done in terms of development. The Anglo-Egyptian rulers were pre-occupied with the establishment of law and order imposed on the southerners by ruthless force. To serve their interest in imposing law and order in the South, mud roads were built to link major towns, and health care dispensaries were also built in those towns.

Education was left in the hands of the few missionaries whose meagre means could not allow for education beyond primary level. There was no any army and police recruitment except for a few native police and army locally trained, known as the Equatorial Corps, who revolted in 1955, just before independence.

In the pre-independence period (1954-55) of Sudanization (nationalization of jobs), the northerners continued to isolate the southerners from sharing the cake. The northerners took all the senior administrative posts in local government, the public service, the police, the army and even removed the only two southern ministers in the cabinet. In 1955, the influx of the

northern administrators in every field began to be felt all over the southern towns. Together with the *jallaba* (Northern traders) the northerners began to assume the arrogant air of rulers in the south. The northern army flooded the southern town after crashing the Southern Equatorial Corps who dared to revolt against the Sudanization process in the South. The army became the symbol of power and domination over the South by the Arab North. The failure of the Khartoum government to pay special attention to the South interests, increased the fears and suspicions of the Southerners against the unity of the country. The southerners felt, correctly, that they had only exchanged masters of colonial foreigners who have invaded their land with the intention to colonize the south. The reaction of the southerners was far and wide.

The southern intelligentsia, political groups, the students, etc., started to voice their grievances against Khartoum loud and clear. In 1954, the Liberal Party Conference in Juba condemned the way Sudanization was conducted and so demanded a federal state for the South. The Juba Training Centre organized a boycott of the Prime Minister in the Southern Club in Juba. Students went on strike and the southern members of parliament were requested to leave the parliament. Following the footsteps of the southern intelligentsia, the Equatorial Corps revolted against Khartoum in August 1955, just a few months to independence. Thus the seeds of the 17-year civil war (1955-72) and the present 14-year civil war (1983-todate) were sowed, grew and spread all over the country.

The Cultural And Religious Assimilation

Following the Independence of the Sudan (1956) the North wasted no time to embark on the policy of Arabicization and Islamization programme of the South. Sudan became identified with Arab instead of African nationalism. In 1965, for example, Sayed Saddiq el-Mahdi, the leader of Umma party, characterized

the Sudanese national image as follows:

*The dominant feature of our nation is an Islamic one and its overpowering expression is Arab, and this nation will have entity identified and its prestige and pride preserved under an Islamic revival.*⁶

Other northerners such as Dr. Hassan Turabi (Wai, 1973), leader of the Present National Islamic Front (NIF), argued that the south had no culture and so this vacuum would necessarily be filled by Arab culture under an Islamic revival. This view dominated the discussion of the first and second constitution commissions of 1967 and 1968. In one of his proclamations, Mr. Sadiq el-Mahdi asserted that "The South is a stepboard for Arab entry and Islamic influence into the heart of Africa", (Vigilant, 16/111966, P3).

Between 1960-64, the Arabicization and Islamization programme took shape in the South. Over thirty missionaries were expelled from the South and their centres turned into government schools where Arabic became the medium of instruction. Arab history, Arab story books and religious books were introduced into the schools. Arab teachers from the North were brought to the southern schools to teach Arabic and other subjects including Islamic religion. Many more Islamic schools known as "Khalwas", were built in the south to arabize and islamize the southern children. The children were given Muslim names and forced to wear *jallabia* gown worn by the Arab North. They were taught Koran and sang the prayers in Islam, etc. All this was being done without consultation with the parents. Similarly, the southern workers in the government institutions were forced to become Muslims otherwise lose their jobs. They were given Islamic names and *jallabia* gowns. Mosques built by government sprang up here and there throughout the southern towns for Islamic prayers and conversion of southerners into Islam. Friday was declared the public holiday of the week instead of Sunday. Christians had to work on Sunday and rest

on Friday, the Islamic holiday. To assure the success of the programme of Arabicization and Islamization the army were let loose in the southern towns. Since this programme was backed up by emergency act and decreed by the military government, the southerners who dared to protest against were exposed to detention, torture and even shot dead.

As late as 1983, Sharia law (Islamic Law) was introduced to be the law of the country to replace any secular laws. Sudan is therefore, declared a Muslim state to be governed by Islamic laws. The consequence of this is that the citizens of the country are categorized into subclasses. The Muslims form the first class, the Christians are of the second and the infidel, the third class, respectively. This means that the Muslims always enjoy certain privileges over the non-Muslims, politically and socio-economically. All these military repression, tortures, massive massacres, religious and cultural harassment etc., are calculated to make the southerners surrender their right to self-determination. Unfortunately for the north, the reaction of the southerners has always been contrary. The southerners become more hardened and more determined in their resistance against the Arabicization and Islamization program .

3.0 The Armed Resistance of the Southern People

The Sudan is now 41 years into independence with 31 years of bitter wars and ten years of relative peace (1972-82) The first war (1955-72) followed the 1955 revolt against the sell-out of the South to the North.⁴ Southern liberation army known as Anyanya movement fought Khartoum Government for seventeen years. Muhammad Gaafar al-Numeri who came to power by bloodless military "coup d'etat" in 1969, ended the war by granting the South a measure of local autonomy. In February 1972, "Addis Ababa Agreement" was signed between the North

and the South after Numei had declared openly on the first political rally after taking over government that the South is indeed different from the North geographically, historically, socio-culturally and economically. He sought to solve the problem by granting regional self-government for the South Sudan. The Southerners applauded this gesture from Numei as a positive step toward the right of southerners to self-determination denied to them by the British and other Northern politicians. This arrangement lasted only for ten years (1972-82) before things broke loose again.

The second major war broke out in March 1983 and is still being fought until today (1997). Fourteen years have gone by and probably many more are to come. The Sudan People's Liberation Army and Sudan People's Liberation Movement are spearheading this war against the Khartoum government. Ironically enough it is Numei himself, the mastermind of the Addis Ababa Agreement, who turned out to betray the Southern people in 1983, to the surprise of most Southerners. Numei decreed the country to be an Islamic country to be ruled by the Islamic Sharia Law. He suspended the Southern Executive Council (HEC); divided the Southern provinces into separate regions, tampered with the political boundaries to annex the oil rich Bentil southern country to the North; transferred the Southern military command to the North without prior consultation with the Southern Sudanese Government and the senior officers. Such actions from a Northern leader like Numei meant a lot to the southerners. They took it as a betrayal and violation of the Addis Ababa Agreement of 1972. The second war then broke out again (1983) to continue with the resistance against the Northern denial of the right to self determination of the South.

4.0 Impact of the Wars

The impact of these wars, which are usually fought in the south, has reached devastating effects on the people of the South. Over a million lives have been lost; about five million innocent people have been displaced inside and outside the Sudan; over two million of the displaced have crossed to the neighbouring countries of Uganda, Congo, Kenya and Central African Republic; of those displaced in the neighbouring countries, thousands have already left and more are leaving for resettlement areas in countries such as U.S.A, Canada, Australia and the Scandinavian countries.

In the course of all these sufferings Human Rights abuses committed by the warring groups on the innocent defenceless civilians have been rampant throughout the South. Ever since the NIF government in Khartoum declared "Jihad" (Islamic religious war) in the South (1991), the war has changed its priorities from rebel hunting to genocide operations meted on the civilian population in the garrison towns, villages and settlement camps. Islamic religious zealots known as "Nujahidin" were flown from Khartoum to Juba, the capital of South Sudan, in large numbers. Their mission is specifically to torture, kill and subdue the population in the South in general and Juba in particular. A report known as "Juba situation - An Eye Witness Report, 4th August, 1992," summarizes the situation as follows:

What is happening in Juba since the first incursion of the SPLA in June, 1992, is a systematic killing of civilians by the security organs and the army. Civilians in Juba are living in fear. They are arrested daily, tortured, raped, killed and then either damped into the river Nile or buried in mass graves dug by graders.

Throughout the war and particularly in 1994, the government of Khartoum has been engaged in systematic bombardment of the villages and displaced camps in most areas of South Sudan

such as Ame, Atepi Aswa, Kaya camps, Mundri, Meridi, Amadi and Nimule in Equatorial region. Others include settlement camps of Akot and Akon in Bahr-el-Ghazal Region. Human rights Watch/Africa For Release July 7, 1994, reported that:

Other abuses committed by the Government include abduction of women and children; severe restrictions on relief efforts by Non-governmental and U.N. agencies, impunity given to army officers and others (the security organs in the South) who profiteer on relief food in garrison towns; and a vast array of human rights abuses such as torture, disappearance and summary executions, and cruel and inhuman prison conditions.

In Khartoum, Southerners are rounded up and damped in the sprawling desert in such places as Jebel-Aulia, forty kilometres south of Khartoum. They live in miserable conditions with no basic requirements of life such as shelter, water, toilets and simple sanitation services. Children are abducted and damped in hidden centres where they are forcefully circumcised, made to recite the Koran and given Muslim names. The Southern women who are forced by conditions to brew local beers for survival are rounded up, whipped forty issues, fined heavily and imprisoned for 3, 5 or 6 months. Most of the women lose their children since they are cramped in small crowded places in the hot weather. The Southern politicians are under continuous harassment, arrested and tortured sometimes to death. Mr. Eliaba James Surur, the Chairman of the United Sudanese African Parties (USAP) is a living example of these tortures. He was arrested (1994) by the security officers in Khartoum who tortured him until he developed extradural haemorrhage. He had to escape to Nairobi where he was operated upon. Under the NIF government, southerners have suffered all kinds of inhuman treatment, loss of lives and property and all kinds of Human Rights abuses have been inflicted on them. These activities are still going on today one after the other.

On the other hand several publications have accused the SPLM/A and SSIM/A of serious human rights violations on the southerners. They have been accused of arbitrary arrests and imprisonment; summary executions of civilians and officers; mass killings of certain ethnic groups; rampant sexual violation of women; looting of cattle and other kinds of property; forced recruitment of civilians and minors into the movement; inter-tribal wars, etc. (Human Rights Watch/Africa July 1994; Amnesty International, January 1995; Nanjur Nhial Makol report, May 1994; Ubuch Ujwok Letter to C-in-C Dr. Riek Machar, August 1994 etc.) However, today the record shows that the SPLM/A has improved tremendously in its dealings with the civilians. There are now administrative structures to deal with civilians in the liberated areas unlike before when the soldiers took the law into their hands.

5.0 How Can the Conflict in the Sudan Be Resolved?

There are several options that may be exploited to reach a truly genuine settlement or resolution of the conflict in the Sudan.

Communication (reporting, educating enlightening and sensitizing) plays an important role in the conflict resolution. Other options involve the conflict management actors (the official and non-official conflict management actors); and the protagonists themselves; otherwise the military victory option can not be ruled out either. Let us examine these options briefly.

In the case of the Sudan no significant exposure of the conflict to the world has been done. International and the local media sector has not been able to travel to the Sudan, particularly to Southern Sudan where the war is being concentrated. Today people in Juba are starving to death because the Khartoum Government would not allow NGOs to fly food to Juba. No reporting of such news is carried out so that the world may put

pressure on Khartoum to allow relief food to be taken to Juba, which is a besieged town. Human Rights Watch/Africa and Amnesty International have recognized the importance of communicating (reporting) to the world the atrocities, for example, of the Human Rights abuses in Southern Sudan and even the North. They have also offered detailed recommendations to improve the current situation in the South Sudan to the world community including the UN Security Council to institute an arms embargo on the warring parties in Sudan. In December 1994, the UN General Assembly - Social Humanitarian and Cultural Committee, condemned Sudan Human Rights Violations. Following that, the European Union (EU) parliament passed a resolution on Sudan calling for an extension and reinforcement of the arms embargo on Sudan. The ARE parliament also re-emphasized its support for the IGAD initiative for peace in the Sudan. This is what communication can do in such conflicts so that the world knows what is going on in those dark parts of Africa. When they know the problem then they will act accordingly. Communication can in fact play a more significant role than this. For example, programmes involving educating and enlightening the victims of war about their Human Rights, so that they know what those rights are and how important it is to respect them. Such programmes could be extended to the soldiers themselves to know how dangerous the Human Rights abuses can be since they have seen that the abuses can also apply to themselves anytime by the hand of the bad leadership.

The management of conflict actors have been doing their best in trying to bring resolutions to the Sudan conflict for years. Both the Church and the state organs have been involved one way or another in finding lasting solutions to the conflict in the Sudan. The World Council of Churches, for example mediated peace talks between the Numeric Government and the Lagu Anyanya movement which resulted in the signing of Addis Ababa Agreement (1972). This agreement lived for 10 years before it was abrogated by Numeri himself and therefore, the new conflict

started in 1983. It was a successful role played by the Church in settling the then conflict in the Sudan.

As for the present war (1983-97) several futile attempts to resolve the conflict have been made. The conflict in management actors, both the official and non-official ones, have tried and are still trying to resolve or settle the conflict. There is a long list of such attempts of peace talks, some of which are characterized by agreements while others only exist in terms of communiqués. These talks include the Koka Dam in 1985; Addis Ababa Talks in 1989; Nairobi I and Nairobi II Talks in 1992 and 1993; IGAD Peace Mediation 1993-95; Sudan Peace Agreement April, 1997; and NDA Final Communiqué June, 1995. One of the reasons why this conflict is taking too long to resolve is because the Sudan conflict is complex in nature as it was stated above. Such a situation demands multi-level undertakings which call for serious commitment and consistency of the negotiators. The other main reason for this unnecessary long time is the attitudes of the protagonists themselves. Each of the parties Khartoum or SPLM/A, is engaged in the game of buying time but not serious to settle the war through peace negotiations.

Khartoum in particular was never serious in their approach to peace negotiations with the SPLM/A. For several times it has walked away from the negotiation table; always sending southerners to such meetings instead of sending senior Arab officials of the Khartoum government. Khartoum also entertain another peace creation front to which NIF and Bashir pay more attention than the peace outside. Thus the agreement between Khartoum and Dr. Machar, which is a deliberate attempt to undermine the IGAD Peace Talks. The recent attempt by Bashir to involve Nelson Mandela to be the mediator between him and Garang instead of the IGAD Chairman, Mr. Daniel Arap Moi, is yet another evidence that Khartoum is not serious to negotiate peace with Garang.

6.0 Suggestions/Recommendations

One of the suggestions to make is that Bashir should be pressurized by the neighbouring countries and the United States to come back to IGAD Talks of 1994, where he left. He should accept and implement the Declaration of Principles of IGAD, namely:

- i. Self determination for the South through referendum after an Interim period of 2-4 years. The terms of reference for the vote will be two: unity with the North or separation and only Southerners will be entitled to vote. During the interim period all the government army shall move to the North to ensure security, free and fair atmosphere for the referendum.
- ii. The question of the relationship between state and religion must be dealt with. Thus Sudan should be a secular state since it is multiracial, multi-cultural, multi-religious and multi-linguistic.

The second suggestion is that the SPLM/A and the NDA remove Bashir militarily. After that the South will carry out referendum in the given interim period while the NDA heads the government in Khartoum.

Notes

1. Bashir, M. O. (1968) "The Southern Sudan Background to Conflict." 1930 memorandum of Southern policy (appendix 1:115).
2. Muddathir 'Abdi Al-Rahim, "Fourteen Documents on the Problems of the, Southern Sudan," Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Khartoum 1965.
3. Wai, Dunstan M. (1973:11). The Southern Sudan: The Problem of National Integration.
4. The first Sudan parliament was in 1954. Although the Southerners are the majority, their voice for self determination was ignored, rendering them powerless. The North wondered why Southerners did not accept Northern domination, just as they had accepted British imperialism.
5. Abel Alier in Dunstan N. Wai (1973:18-19): The Southern Sudan Question.
6. Education in the Sudan, Eleventh Annual Conference of the Philosophical Societies of the Sudan (1963) Khartoum.