

significant suffering of the people of Sudan can end, urging all parties to act in a way that will ensure significant development in the direction of peace.

### **3.4 The Role of Oil**

The Sudanese participants felt strongly that the exploitation and flow of oil is exacerbating the war and has raised the stakes, with the clear prospects that war atrocities will increase. Speakers underlined that they had seen and felt the negative effects of oil on the people of the south. They expressed how deeply disturbed they were at the atrocities carried out by the military units of the Sudanese Army to protect the oil fields and installations, including the pipeline to Port Sudan, and the international investments that have been made. The Sudanese participants are particularly concerned by the role of the Canadian company, Talisman Energy, in oil development in Sudan. Civil society organizations in Sudan and Canadian NGOs have called for Talisman to acknowledge that its activities are exacerbating the war and enabling the war atrocities to continue, if not expand. They have called upon Talisman Energy to acknowledge the atrocities committed by its partner in the project, the Government of Sudan (GOS), and to withdraw from Sudan.

The participants felt strongly that Talisman is not dealing with the realities of the situation on the ground, or with the evidence of ongoing atrocities committed by the GOS. The participants endorsed the view that considerable pressure must continue to be applied on Talisman so that it acts appropriately and stops its support to one side in the conflict.

Talisman defended its investment and its operational involvement in Sudan and claimed that it is party to a development process for the economic good of all Sudanese. Talisman representatives admitted that Talisman "eats from the same cake as the GOS" and benefits financially from its Sudan operations. They explained Talisman's recent decisions to adopt a new approach to 'corporate responsibility'. While there were signs of dialogue and 'learning moments' between Talisman representatives and other conference participants in Calgary, a lack of trust in Talisman was expressed by many of the assembled participants. As well, the view was expressed that if Talisman were to fully adopt the current International Code of Conduct for Corporations, it would logically conclude that it must withdraw from Sudan. Many participants felt that Talisman Energy was not committed to full social and corporate accountability involving real transparency.

### **3.5 The Conclusions of the Harker Mission Report**

The Forum heard from a member of the Harker Mission about the conclusions of the Harker Mission Report. Many participants felt that the statements of the Mission on the issue of atrocities and violations of human rights represent a clear indictment of the GOS and its partners in the oil production.

Participants were referred to the Report's reference to abductions, forced displacement and slavery in Sudan by military forces of the GOS, and those sponsored by the GOS to engage in such activities. The Mission corroborated findings of the UN Special Rapporteur. These findings conclude that all forced abductions into slavery and confined work without compensation are illegal. In today's context of the Sudan conflict, there is no difference between slavery and abductions, and all practices that result in wrongful treatment of one human being by another are illegal under international law. Specific mention was made of continuing reports of slavery among Sudanese women and the continuation of repressive laws that condone or encourage excessive brutality.