

All sides in the civil war have been guilty of obstructing international humanitarian assistance. For example, one WFP barge leaving Malakal in May was repeatedly looted by the SPLA. In the same period, a train carrying food aid from Kosti into southern Kordofan was looted both by the SPLA and GoS. Of equal concern are continuing abuses perpetrated by the GoS and allied militias in the Nuba mountains area of South Kordofan. The GoS has refused to cooperate with the UN Special Rapporteur. Nevertheless, chilling testimony gathered for his report details examples of torture, killings, forced displacement and slavery.

In Northern Sudan and Khartoum area, reports of harassment and "forced disappearances" of civilian opponents by security forces, including torture in notorious "ghost houses", are commonplace. Government control of the media, the security forces and the judicial system is total, with a ban on political parties and near-zero tolerance of dissent. Squatters on the outskirts of Khartoum, fleeing fighting in the South and drought in the North, have been forcibly relocated by authorities and denied access to basic services. Officially, religious pluralism in Sudan is tolerated, though accounts of harassment and abuse, particularly in the South, are widespread.

Independent NGOs and other elements of civil society are systematically stifled.

CANADIAN POSITION

The Government of Sudan fails to publicly recognize the seriousness of human rights violations in Sudan. This has made it impossible for Canada to have a constructive dialogue with the GoS on this issue. Canada has suspended bilateral aid to Sudan, and we continue to deny export permits for the sale of military goods and aircraft parts. Current two-way trade is minimal.

Canada has repeatedly called for an immediate ceasefire between the GoS and SPLA factions, stressing that only a negotiated political settlement can bring lasting peace. We strongly support IGADD's efforts at mediation, and have provided financial support for three resource persons to assist the negotiating parties. Canada vigorously supports Operation Lifeline Sudan efforts to distribute emergency humanitarian relief.

The Canadian government has repeatedly made its concerns known to Sudanese officials in Khartoum, Addis Ababa and to the Sudanese Chargé here in Ottawa. Canada regularly speaks out on the situation of human rights in the Sudan at the United Nations General Assembly, and we have annually co-sponsored resolutions at the Commission on Human Rights sharply critical of Sudan. Canada does not have an embassy in Khartoum.