

dressing or are effective instruments for the protection of human rights.

In 1996, for the first time in almost three years, the Government allowed the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Sudan and the Special Rapporteur on Religious Intolerance to enter Sudan to carry out their investigations. While the framework may have been established, and Special Rapporteurs allowed entry into the country, improvement in the human rights situation in Sudan is not yet evident. At the 52nd session of the Commission on Human Rights, the resolution on Sudan was adopted by consensus. However, at the UN General Assembly Third Committee, the resolution on Sudan was put to a vote, because of Sudanese demands for significant and unjustified softening of the text. The Third Committee resolution passed by a vote of 93 for (Canada), 16 against and 45 abstentions.

In the South, the Sudan Peoples Liberation Movement, the major rebel faction, held a conference in April 1996 on building civil society and organizing civil authority in the regions under its control. Various factions also introduced human rights courses. The effect of these efforts on the respect for human rights in the South has still to be seen.

There are numerous indications that slavery persists as a traditional practice in the Sudan, particularly, but not exclusively, in the "transition zone" between the North and South. The social disintegration caused by civil war, economic deterioration, and government indifference continue to frustrate the eradication of this practice. Reports continue to be received regarding restrictions on political activities, slavery, religious intolerance, and forced religious conversions. There have been complaints regarding secret trials of military personnel alleged to have been implicated in acts of dissent or treason. As well, problems persist relating to the forceful eviction through demolition of shelters on the outskirts of Khartoum belonging to squatters displaced by war and drought. There also continue to be reports of special camps for the forcible conversion or military training of the children of these displaced groups.

### CANADIAN POSITION

Canada regularly speaks out at the United Nations General Assembly on the Sudanese human rights situation and has annually co-sponsored resolutions at the Commission on Human Rights sharply critical of Sudan. The Government of Canada also tries to maintain a constructive dialogue with the Sudanese authorities and rebel factions on questions of peace and security as well as human rights and good governance issues. During such discussions Canadian officials have raised general human rights issues and specific cases. Canada has also repeatedly called for a negotiated political settlement to the chronic civil war in the Sudan.

Canada's bilateral aid to Sudan remains suspended. However, Sudan continues to be one of the largest recipients of Canadian humanitarian assistance in Africa. Since 1990, CIDA has provided over \$100 million in emergency humanitarian assistance and food aid, through NGOs, UN agencies and the Red Cross. Such funding supports Operation Lifeline Sudan efforts to distribute emergency humanitarian relief to needy groups in both government and rebel held areas.