

Human Rights and Slavery

Leonardo Franco expressed the view that "the war and the pernicious strategies employed had also revived and exacerbated the problems of slavery in the Sudan", and was concerned about the plight of internally displaced persons, evidence that the war was being conducted in disregard of the principles of human rights, and the GOS bore the largest share of responsibility for violations.

Mike Dottridge, Director of Anti-Slavery, the world's oldest international human rights campaign, said in an appeal to Sudanese President Bashir early in 1999 that "the reality is that people being abducted from communities in northern Bahr al-Ghazal by government-backed militias are being exploited as slaves in the households of militiamen and others."

From UNICEF, from the Save the Children Fund, and from the Dinka Committee which has been in the front-line of attack against this abhorrent situation, we learned that as many as 15,000 women and children, mainly from Bahr El Ghazal, and most of them Dinka, have been abducted and remain in captivity.

Oil and The Exacerbation of Conflict

The October 26 Policy Statement on Sudan stressed that Canada is deeply concerned about reports of intense fighting in the regions of oil development, and that oil extraction may be contributing to the forced relocation of civilian populations residing in the vicinity of the oil fields in the interest of a more secure environment for oil extraction by the GOS and its partners, which include Talisman Energy Inc.

Talisman operates in the Heglig--Pariang area of South Kordofan and Western Upper Nile or Unity State. There are allegations that people were being forcibly displaced from this area.

Violence, and the fear of it, impact immediately on the people's use of the land, and result in food insecurity, which in turn propels movement, or displacement.

The WFP is convinced that the insecurity in Western Upper Nile, also known as Unity State, owes everything to the initial fighting between militia factions over control of the oilfields and the fighting around GOS garrison towns now that the factions have united "to start a full-scale war against the export of the oil out of the South."

The October 26 Policy Statement declared that if it becomes evident that oil extraction is exacerbating the conflict in Sudan, or resulting in violations of human rights or humanitarian law, the Government of Canada may consider applying economic and trade restrictions. The Assessment Mission to Sudan would "help inform the Government of Canada in their examination of such options."