

community. Reports of slavery and genocide have been around for years, yet it was only recently (last month) that a UN agency (UNICEF) finally acknowledged it publicly - and only then to slam the activities of Christian agencies who were redeeming slaves.

The former UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights, Gaspar Biro, reported extensively on the human rights abuses in the Sudan, but quit in frustration when after years of hard work, absolutely no action was taken to stop the carnage. When the famine hit its peak in the beginning of 1998, Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS), the UN agency which had the mandate to co-ordinate relief activities in Sudan, had less than 40% of the funding needed to maintain even the most basic emergency programs.

CIDA's own response to the growing number of accounts of internally displaced people, famine, ethnic cleansing, slavery and genocide that was taking place was to suspend all funding to OLS for two years (from 1996 to 1997) for emergency programs in the famine area over administrative issues. It was not until images of starving children once again filled our TV screens that emergency assistance was finally resumed in 1998.

4.2.2 Allowing Canadian Commercial Enterprises to Assist the Khartoum Government

One of the most tragic responses of the international community has been the failure to curb the activities of foreign transnational corporations, especially Canadian oil companies, from aiding and abetting the Khartoum government.

For several years, the Calgary based oil company, Arakis Energy Corp, had been partnering with the Sudanese government, in a business consortium which also includes the governments of China and Malaysia. By Arakis own admission, they were providing, over 10,000 barrels of oil per day to the Sudan government refinery in El Obeid, a city in the middle of Sudan which has very few civilian vehicles. El Obeid is, however, a major air force base and center for military operations against the Sudanese people in southern Sudan and the Nuba mountains.

In August of 1998, Talisman Energy Inc., another Calgary based oil company, took over the shares of Arakis and pumped in some badly needed capital to the whole enterprise. At a meeting at the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade in September, 1998, Jim Buckee, Talisman Energy's CEO acknowledged that approximately 250 million dollars from this initial oil investment would directly benefit the Sudan government.

These oil executives have become a major source of misinformation to the international community. In a form letter which was sent out to Canadians who had written in to Talisman Energy's head office in Calgary citing their concerns about human rights abuses in Sudan, Jim Buckee stated upon his return from Sudan: "...certainly, I did not see anything that would lead me to believe that we are propping up a malign regime."

At a recent rally in Port Sudan, Sudanese Vice President, Ali Osman Mohamed Taha stated that "with the start of the oil exportation, (scheduled to begin the end of June,