

- a) independently investigate human rights violations, specifically in reference to allegations of slavery and slavery-like practices in Sudan, and
- b) to investigate and report on the alleged link between oil development and human rights violations, particularly in respect of the forced removal of populations around the oilfields and oil related development.

### **Human Rights and Slavery**

In May, 1996, Human Rights Watch published its comprehensive look at political repression in Sudan, Behind the Red Line. The title was drawn from a speech given in January 1996 by President Bashir, who said that "When we talk of handing power to the people, we mean the people will be within certain limits but no one will cross the red lines which are aimed at the interests of the nation."

Four years later, the same president, in his Independence Day address, which was carried on Sudan TV on December 31, 1999, called for a Sudan which "gives equality to the people without discrimination because of race, sex, creed, social status or economic capacity; a country that upholds justice on the basis of equality of citizenship on which all constitutional rights and duties are based, equality before the law and participation in all public affairs; a country which is guided by peace, reconciliation, consultation and democracy, the peaceful transfer of power and the guarantee of basic freedoms and all human rights laid down by divine faiths and enshrined in international conventions to which Sudan is a party."

Our Assessment Mission tried to build an understanding of the current human rights situation, keeping in mind that Sudan has voluntarily accepted obligations under international human rights and humanitarian law, and use this understanding as a lens through which the issues central to our mandate and important to the Canadian public can be viewed, and acted upon.

In 1993, the UN Commission on Human Rights established the post of Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Sudan, and Mr. Gáspár Bíró, of Hungary was appointed to the position. He served until 1998, when he resigned and was succeeded by Mr. Leonardo Franco of Argentina.

Mr. Franco, in his April, 1999 report to the UN Commission on Human Rights, made a point of stressing Sudan's obligations under international human rights and humanitarian law. Many of these are listed in an appendix to this current report. He mentioned the Geneva Conventions, appropriate since civil war has been a determining feature of life, and death, in Sudan for most of the years since the Independence referred to in President Bashir's recent speech. Also emphasized were a number of instruments to which Sudan has become a party, including the International Covenants on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, on Civil and Political Rights, on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination, and on the Rights of the Child.