

December 1993

## HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN THE SUDAN

### ISSUE

The human rights situation in Sudan continues to be of great concern to the Canadian Government. The Government is especially troubled by the plight of victims of abuses committed by all sides in the civil war.

### BACKGROUND

In the continuing civil war, the Government of Sudan (GOS) and factions of the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA) have used food as a weapon: the GOS and various SPLA factions have blocked relief efforts when it has suited their purposes. Canadian airlift support to UNICEF's Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS) for ten days in April 1993 was used to transport medicine, food and shelter supplies from Lokichokio, Kenya to famine and conflict-affected areas in southern Sudan. This followed a December 1992 agreement among the UN, the GOS and the three major SPLA factions to allow relief agencies expanded access to the most severely affected regions in southern Sudan. However, the recent deletion of Nimule, Maridi, Pariang, Kaya, Kajo-Keji and Boma by the GOS as points of destination for OLS relief assistance means access will be denied for large parts of southern Sudan. Assistance will thus be even more difficult in future. Civilian populations in both Thiet and Nimule have been bombarded by the GOS and further human rights offences are anticipated.

Peace talks brokered by the Carter Institute led to SPLA- Mainstream and SPLA-United signing the Washington Declaration on October 25. This has not yet produced substantial results despite sporadic further talks underway in Nairobi under the auspices of the Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD).

UN Special Rapporteur Gáspár Bíró's chilling human rights report (November 18) documented extensive human rights abuses, confirming those separately documented by Amnesty International in September. The GOS response has been inadequate. Abuse is widespread, notably in the Nuba mountains where the GOS has forcibly re-settled people to "peace villages" under the control of the army and the Popular Defence Force (PDF), a government created militia.

The October 1993 reconstitution of the GOS in fact changes little. The National Islamic Front, as a major ideological force behind the GOS, continues to exert pressure to extend Islam into civil society throughout the country.

8

9

10

11

12