

the concern for people in prison was raised and is of grave concern. The difficulty for groups that attempt to work in prisons was described in detail. It is complicated work and frustrating, and there is little observable effect on conditions of prisoners, especially women and children. It was noted that the vast majority of people in jails in the north are people from the south.

The situations facing a variety of specific groups within Sudan was raised. Chief among them was that of the Nuba people, particularly the military activity being carried out by the Government of Sudan in the Nuba Mountains, the lack of relief and emergency support there and the severe displacement that has resulted from both military attacks and the lack of external assistance. This issue was examined in detail with reference to the activities of the Sudan military around the oil fields and the oil pipeline.

Great concern was expressed about the expansion of military operations into Block 5 to the south-west of the Unity and Heglig oil fields. This is understood as an expansion of the war for purposes of depopulating new oil territory for the expansion of oil drilling and potential new exploitation of further oil reserves.

The aid and relief situation is of great importance in southern Sudan due to the ongoing lack of civilian administration and provision of services in the areas of health, education, agriculture (e.g. seeds) and water.

The participants and speakers dealt with the dilemma of dependency on external assistance. Concern was expressed about the way in which aid affects, often skews, the situation in the country, especially with the cessation or slowdown of aid, and the unequal distribution of aid. As well, in comparison, there is an open mind to aid and external assistance, indeed a need to collaborate with external groups in many areas of work and provision of basic services. It is hoped that more areas of Sudan can be opened up for needed relief and development assistance.

The speakers also exposed many sensitive issues and experiences of how people understood the situation from their own perspective, which, if not handled properly, will remain in effect and affect relationships in the future. The participants grappled with the need for truth about the pain and suffering, healing and reconciliation, trust building between people, and hope for a way forward.

The People to People Peace Process being carried on in southern Sudan by the New Sudan Council of Churches is showing great promise, progress and vitality. In particular, the 1999 Wunlit Conference has brought reconciliation between several groups in the south. This process not only builds peace 'from below' but it fosters collaboration among groups as the overall situation in Sudan evolves.

The south-south dialogue, preparation for the cessation of hostilities and the Interim Period that would follow are important developments in the overall movement towards peace. The links between the People to People Peace Process, the south-south dialogue and the IGAD process, with its accompanying IPF process, were described by the speakers and were viewed as complementary processes.

The operations of the current regime in Khartoum, pose a continuing affront to the human rights of the people of Sudan. The great difficulties in daily life being faced by so many Sudanese are very real and deeply disturbing. The violations of human rights and abuses by the current regime are sufficiently documented to be of grave international concern. Yet the violations continue. The combined ability of Sudanese civil society and the international community must be raised to