

We were also told there are CEAWC members who see their role as being to show that there is no problem, and though we cannot judge whether this is so, some of the views expressed to us by committee members seemed more related to denial than demonstrative commitment. A case in point must be the argument that Dinka children willingly travel by train in Bahr El Ghazal to make tea for Arab guards. But the fact that the CEAWC framework now exists surely means that international pressure matters in Sudan today, and this reality is heartening the UN workers in the field.

These workers do not see abductions as the result of "tribal fights", and since 1986, there have been no "tribal fights" as such between the Dinka and the Rizegat. Nor do they have evidence that the Dinka are engaged in this practice of abduction into slave-like status. UNICEF has asked for lists of abducted Rizegat children, but have never received them.

Here it is appropriate to acknowledge that abduction has certainly figured in relations between Dinka and Nuer, to the point where the GOS, and groups such as the Sudan Foundation, have asked why, in the Wunlit Accords fostered by Christian church groups, is the practice termed "Abduction" but these same groups use "Slavery" when talking of Arab/Dinka abductions?

It should be said that this Dinka-Nuer abduction is done by both sides, which not only impacts on how victims are treated, but gives an impetus to efforts aimed at ending the practice. Both sides have a stake in the success of such efforts. However, there is no pattern of Dinka abduction of Arab women and children, and only the GOS can make the murahleen see the need to eradicate their practice of abductions.

Yes, for consistency's sake, it is perhaps more appropriate to refer to Abductions wherever they occur in Sudan, and whoever they involve, which in no way lessens the moral and legal obligation on the GOS to eradicate, not condone, the practice.

Aweil and the infamous train lie at the root of this problem, according to UNICEF. The GOS does clearly have a responsibility. It is essentially a Government train, taking supplies to the garrison maintained by the GOS, and the murahleen are there on behalf of the GOS, and should be controlled by the GOS. One former political figure had only this to say about CEAWC: if there is no change to the policy of engaging the murahleen to guard the train but not paying them, then how will the practice be stopped? If you want to be serious about this problem, pay the murahleen and warn that if anything happens, by way of looting and abduction, they will be responsible.

Redemptions

The UNICEF workers said there is no evidence that "redemption" is actually fuelling the abduction problem, whether the redemption was real or "staged". Several informants reported various scenarios involving staged redemptions. In some cases, SPLM officials are allegedly involved in arranging these exchanges, dressing up as Arab slave traders.