

religious extremists, bent on imposing their ideology on the rest of the country, and eventually on the rest of Africa. It is a country where slavery is flourishing, with a wink and nod from the central government; where, according to some human rights groups, the rape of women is used for political and social ends; where groups such as the Nuba, Ingessena, and various southern ethnic groups are facing daily threats to their lives.

The government of Sudan is a sponsor of terrorist groups such as the Lord's Resistance Army in northern Uganda, known for its barbaric cruelty to the children it captures and enslaves. It has also supported groups such as Hamas, Hezbollah, and the infamous Osama Bin Laden.

Sudan is a country where civil war has claimed almost 2 million lives over the past 15 years alone, and has reaped untold havoc on a helpless civilian population for almost 40 years. In recent years, this war has turned even more nasty, with Sudan government planes bombing civilian sites such as hospitals, churches, and the feeding centers of NGOs, and has destroyed village after village in slash and burn raids, displacing millions. It is clearly NOT a war between the Sudan government, and the Sudanese rebels. It is a war between the Sudan government, and the PEOPLE of Southern Sudan - most of whom are Christians.

Religion has become a weapon of the state. Intense religious persecution of all who oppose its narrow ideology is one of the outcomes. The primary target of this persecution is the Christian population in the south, and Nuba mountains.

3.0 BACKGROUND

Historically, there has always been conflict between the people of northern and southern Sudan. There are a lot of factors which have caused this, including centuries of slave trading, religion, and control of land and resources. The base of power has always rested in the cities of the north, such as Khartoum. The lands of the south have always been seen by these centers of power, as sources of wealth to be extracted for their own benefit.

The colonial rule of the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium did little to alter this imbalance of power. At the time of independence, the south was annexed to the north in what can only be called a sell out of the African Sudanese, by the former British colonial administrators. Whatever the motivation of the colonialists, the deal sanctified a de facto "right" for the government in the north to continue to marginalize and exploit the people and resources of the African Sudanese.

Since then, the pattern of exploitation and oppression has continued. During the Anyanya wars of the 1960's and early 70's, missionaries reported that African Sudanese were slaughtered by the hundreds. Pastors and Christian leaders were tied up in sacks and thrown alive to the crocodiles. Others were buried up to their necks in the ground, with honey poured over them so that ants and other insects could devour them. In 30 years, little has changed, other than the intensity of persecution has increased, and the sophistication of methods has been refined.