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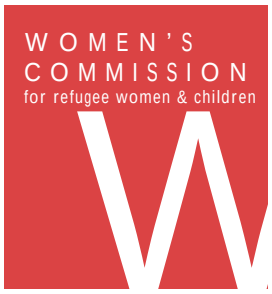
ISBN: 1-58030-001-4



WOMEN'S COMMISSION
for refugee women & children

ONLY THROUGH PEACE:

Hope for Breaking The Cycle of Famine and War in Sudan

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Printed in the United States of America

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MISSION STATEMENT

The Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children seeks to improve the lives of refugee women and children through a vigorous program of public education and advocacy, and by acting as a technical resource. The Commission, founded in 1989 under the auspices of the International Rescue Committee, is the only organization in the United States dedicated solely to speaking out on behalf of women and children uprooted by armed conflict or persecution.

In February 1999, the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children sent a delegation to Sudan to document and assess the conditions facing women and children affected by the long-running civil war.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children would like to extend a very special thanks to the International Rescue Committee and Norwegian People's Aid staff in Sudan, Uganda and Kenya for their generous assistance in facilitating the delegation visit. Country Directors Patty Swahn and Steve Redding, and Program Coordinator for Southern Sudan, Adele Sowinska, as well as staff at all levels, provided valuable insights on the complex and long-neglected war in Sudan.

The delegation also pays tribute to the heroes among local and international humanitarian NGO staff and women leaders working on behalf of peace in Sudan.

The delegation thanks Janet Torsney, Torsney Communications, for editing and Corinne Connor for designing, this report and Mary Diaz, Maha Muna, and Diana Quick for their editorial contributions.

Delegation members: Beverlee Bruce (Women's Commission board chair), Faye Richardson, Jennifer Allen and Mary Anne Schwalbe (Women's Commission board member).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In February 1999, the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children sent a delegation to Sudan to document and assess the conditions facing women and children affected by the conflict. Both of the delegation's teams were hosted by the International Rescue Committee. The first team visited Khartoum, where more than two million displaced Sudanese live, and the government-controlled southern garrison town of Wau, where most of the displaced were recent arrivals. The second team visited the Sudan People's Liberation Army-controlled towns of Yei and Kajo Keji in southern Sudan and Sudanese refugees in Koboko, Uganda.

The delegation had three primary objectives:

- Assess the extent to which the needs of internally displaced women and children are being met by existing relief activities and encourage strategies to address the unique concerns of women and children.
- Support efforts by women and women's organizations to promote peace and reconciliation.
- Review the impact of war on children, particularly regarding their access to health care and education.

Delegates met with a cross-section of Sudanese women to assess their situations and gain a better understanding of the conflict from the perspective of internally displaced people and refugees. The teams met with representatives from women's groups, Sudanese and international nongovernmental organizations, United Nations agencies, and national and local officials.

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With the exception of a cease-fire that lasted from 1972 to 1983, civil war has plagued Sudan since its independence in 1956. Over the past 43 years, the armed conflict has been fought mainly between the government in Khartoum and opposition movements based in the south. Within a very complex picture of political, economic, and cultural factors, the introduction of Islamic law (*shari'a*) over the past two decades has become a major point of contention and continues to be a complicating factor in the conflict.

The current fighting, now in its 16th year, has created the largest population of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the world. In 1996, an estimated four million Sudanese, mostly from the south, were displaced — the number is presumed to have increased since then. An additional 400,000 have sought refuge in neighboring countries. Although exact numbers are not available, it is clear that the majority of the displaced are women and children. Millions of civilians, particularly in the south, have died because of the conflict. The US Committee for Refugees estimates that "while military casualties can be numbered in the tens of thousands, civilian losses during the Sudan's second civil war now approach two million persons."[1]

The brunt of the war is measured not only in lives lost, injuries sustained, and families torn apart but in potential left unrealized. While basic education is regarded as a constitutional right of every child in Sudan, the reality is that whole generations of children in both the north and south have been cut off from even the most basic education. According to UNICEF staff in one village in eastern Sudan, no child under the age of 15 had ever been to school. In a district near the Chad border, only 17 of 158 schools are open. In Wau, the second largest town in the whole of southern Sudan, the Save the Children Fund estimates that only 2 to 15 percent of eligible children have access to school. The vast majority linger in the market area, looking for ways to earn a little food or money. Outside of Khartoum, opportunities for secondary school are even more limited. In Wau, where high schools do exist, the quality of education provided is so poor that very few graduates qualify for higher education. Pressure is great to join the military, where boys are given a gun and promised 100,000 Sudanese pounds per month.

MAP of SUDAN

The international community has responded generously to humanitarian needs in the Sudan, contributing $1 million a day to assist the displaced and war-affected population. However, the war is fueled by at least the same amount of spending. Most of the aid provided has been in the form of emergency relief, which has frequently been diverted or withheld from the civilian population of southern Sudan by all parties to the conflict. While emergency relief is essential, in the context of Sudan's protracted conflict, international assistance must include long-term development and capacity-building initiatives.

The current food and nutrition situation in southern Sudan is precarious. Military conflict often disrupts relief operations and inhibits access to the people most in need. Security concerns often force humanitarian organizations to temporarily evacuate or reduce staff from relief sites. Even if Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS) receives the remaining funds required for emergency relief operations in 1999[2], Sudan still faces the threat of famine. Disrup-tion of supply lines, the inability of farmers to reach their fields, and the loss of cattle exacerbate the precarious food situation.

War has profoundly changed the lives of the women of southern Sudan. It is estimated that more than half of the households in the south are headed by women who have, of necessity, assumed all economic and domestic responsibilities for their families. Many women do not have secure sources for even the most basic requirements of clean water and cooking wood. With little or no access to land and few opportunities to earn income, women struggle to provide for their families. They are often unaware of services available to them, and gender-based discrimination may prevent them from taking advantage of these services. In any case, there are few programs that focus on women's rights as refugees or as citizens of Sudan.

Efforts to help end the conflict have only produced short-term cease-fires in some areas, among some of the warring parties. Conflicting regional agendas and the absence of a sustained commitment by the international community have hindered the development of a strong initiative to end the war. Without committed international involvement, the people of Sudan will continue to be victims trapped in a cruel landscape that shifts between famine and violence.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Women's Commission calls on the US Government to **strengthen and support the Inter-Government Authority on Development (IGAD) process and the IGAD Partners Forum.** Funding and technical support, through the State Department, should include specific requirements to involve women's groups in peacemaking.

- The Women's Commission encourages IGAD to give due priority to the **development of a protocol on the rights of war-affected beneficiary populations** which would guarantee the rights of populations in armed conflict based on international humanitarian law, international customary law, and international human rights law. This protocol should support previous Operation Lifeline Sudan agreements, including the March 1994 Tripartite Agreement on Humanitarian Assistance and Relief Corridors and the GR Agreement.[3]

- Strategic changes must be made to ensure that **relief is provided in a sustained manner.** A major constraint to addressing the impact of war and displacement on women is the international community's ongoing focus on emergency services rather than on local capacity building. The Women's Commission calls on international aid organizations and donors to work with local organizations whenever possible, and to ensure that women are integrated into planning and decision-making prior to and during program implementation.

- The Women's Commission calls on **Operation Lifeline Sudan to strengthen its response on gender** and to give priority attention to the needs of women and children in Sudan.

- The government of Sudan, the leaders of southern opposition movements, UNICEF, nongovernmental organizations, and international donors should **establish education as a top priority** in Sudan, even during times of emergency. Education should be supported through teacher training and should be available to all children equally, regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, gender, family economics, or location.

BACKGROUND

Sudan is a country of exceptional religious, ethnic, and linguistic diversity. "The labels Arab and African, Muslim and Christian, even northerner and southerner, have become intensely politicized during the struggle to forge a national identity. Ethnic and religious identities are important factors in the deep political cleavages running through Sudanese society. They are used to mobilize political support, to assert differences, to claim superiority, to determine access to power, and to define enemies."[4]

The largest country in Africa, Sudan is roughly the size of the eastern third of the United States. Historically, its northern and southern regions have been culturally and economically separated and unequally developed. For the most part, resources for economic, educational, and political development provided in the north have not been available in the south. In 1946, the joint colonial administration of Britain and Egypt determined that Sudan should be administered as one country. Northern domination over the south was established when colonial officials were replaced with northern administrators, trade restrictions were eliminated, and Arabic was introduced as the official language of administration. In August 1955, southern army units mutinied to protest their transfer to garrisons under northern officers.[5] Britain withdrew from Sudan in January 1956 without resolving the disparities of development between the north and south.

Since independence, a series of civilian and military governments has been unable – or unwilling – to address Sudan's diversity, cultural isolation, and the political under-representation of the south. The National Islamic Front (NIF), the Arab Islamic fundamentalist party, has been a strong political force in its support of the current government headed by General Omar Bashir, which assumed power through a military coup in 1989, days before a promising peace conference was scheduled to take place. The Bashir government's narrowly defined policies have aroused antagonism in the north and south and have contributed to political and economic instability in Sudan and throughout the region.

The Sudanese People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) and its military arm, the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA), were formed in 1983. For nearly a decade, SPLM/SPLA were the main southern opposition groups. In 1991, the SPLA split along ethnic lines. The south's largest ethnic group, the Dinka, maintains control over the SPLM/SPLA. The region's second largest ethnic group, the Nuer, formed a new opposition group, the Southern Sudanese Independence Movement (SSIM). This split led to "deadly inter-ethnic fighting among southerners"[6] and opened the door for alliances between the government and southern groups. These alliances further inflamed ethnic warfare and eventually led to military cooperation between the SSIM and the government against the SPLA. That same year, the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) was formed. NDA is a northern umbrella organization that represents seven political groups opposed to the NIF government, including Islamic Sudanese nationalists and the SPLA. "The military alliance between the SPLA and the NDA solidified in 1996 when both forces collaborated [militarily] in northeast Sudan for the first time, seizing several towns."[7]

The war – between forces of the government of Sudan (GOS) and its government-sponsored militias in the south, and the SPLA and other groups opposing the Bashir government – is complex. The NDA and some southern opposition groups demand greater political representation and economic development in the south, while other groups demand the complete secession of the south. Repeated attempts by the Khartoum regime to assimilate the non-Islamic southerners through "Islamization" has fueled the conflict.

In addition, the "struggle for control of valuable natural resources has been a critical element in Sudan's civil war."[8] The south has become an important part of the national economy because of its rich natural resources: water from the upper Nile to irrigate the deserts of northern Sudan and Egypt, extensive oil reserves, and rich agricultural and grazing lands. Since 1983, the SPLA has blocked work on construction of the Jonglei canal which would divert water that is "vital to southern nomadic pastoralists [to create] new farming areas that would be reserved for northern farmers as settlers."[9]

Despite opposition by southerners, a multinational consortium has completed construction of a 1,610 kilometer pipeline that links the Hajlij oil field in southern Kordofan with a refinery north of Khartoum. The pipeline project is important to the government of Sudan because of its potential to generate hard currency to fund its war in the south. Opposition forces are expected to target the pipeline before it becomes operational in December 1999.[10]

The Displaced

"Of the estimated 4 million Sudanese displaced in mid-1996, some 1.8 million were living in and around Khartoum in the north, several hundred thousand were located in South Kordofan and South Darfur, and 1.5 million remained within the southern Sudan. Some 600,000 were in areas under SPLA and SSIM control in southern Sudan, including 235,000 in the Bar al-Ghazal region, 125,000 in the Upper Nile region, 110,000 in Equatoria west of the Nile, and 120,000 in Equatoria east of the Nile. An estimated 250,000 displaced persons were living in the southern Sudan's largest city, Juba, which was held by the government but surrounded by the SPLA."[11] Refugees have also fled to neighboring countries such as Uganda, where 165,000 live in Arua, Adjumani, and Moyo districts.

Cycles of famine, disease, and forced migration have become routine for the people in southern Sudan. There were approximately five million Sudanese living in the south in 1983.[12] Of these citizens, 80 percent – four million people – have been displaced at least once during the past 15 years. Civilians are directly and repeatedly forced to move to escape the fighting, which includes aerial bombing.

All parties to the conflict have utilized a strategy of "asset-stripping" raids.[13] This plunder has caused economic collapse in the south by destroying the subsistence base of the economy. Farmers have lost access to their land and cattle herds have been destroyed. In addition, all sides have restricted or diverted humanitarian aid intended for civilians. As a result, when famine hit Bahr el Ghazal, Upper Nile, and other regions in the late 1980s and early 1990s, southerners were forced to move north in search of food.

Those who made it to Khartoum are not able to resume their children's cultural, religious, and linguistic training. Through the government's policy of demolition and relocation, supportive communities that have been rebuilt at great effort are destroyed and families are forced to start over in new and isolated locations, often with strangers they neither know nor understand. Massive and prolonged displacement has resulted in near-complete dependence on humanitarian aid. Rural southerners have no means or the requisite skills to earn income in the cities where they have sought refuge. Yet, ongoing conflict prevents the displaced from going home. The Women's Commission delegates met and discussed issues of concern with hundreds of IDP and refugee women. This report amplifies their voices outside their communities, IDP and refugee camps and makeshift shelters. In Khartoum, they explained that access to health care is compromised and school fees make education unattainable for most families. In southern Sudan and Equatoria, women spoke of chronic food shortages, few opportunities for education, and threats to basic protection and their personal safety. In Uganda, Sudanese women have become refugees, fleeing from warfare and conflict with the hope that they might find schools for their children and opportunities to organize ways of supporting their families.

THE INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

From 1983 to 1989, attempts by the United Nations and international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to assist the displaced population in the south were met with resistance from the government of Sudan (GOS). Some agencies – especially the Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) and the Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Association (SRRA) – provided limited emergency relief in Equatoria. However, "a large number of those who died [250,000 in 1988] could have been saved if the international community had been more willing to help civilians in a rebel-held zone."[14] The resultant "international frustration with the inadequate response to the Sudan's massive suffering resulted in a UN-sponsored conference on relief operations [and] to avoid a recurrence of the tragedy of 1988, the UN created Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS)"[15] in 1989.

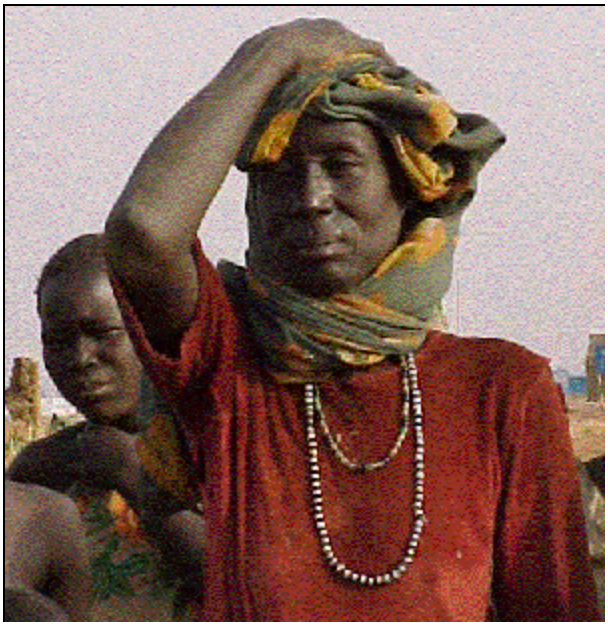
OLS is unique in its efforts to assist civilian populations on both sides of the conflict, based solely on need, by negotiating access with the warring parties. Programs in the northern sector are coordinated from Khartoum by the United Nations Development Program in cooperation with the Sudanese government, and southern sector operations in opposition-held areas are coordinated from Kenya by UNICEF.[16]

Since 1989, the World Food Program (WFP) and a consortium of more than 40 international and national agencies and NGOs have been responsible for implementing OLS. WFP delivers food to war-affected regions of southern Sudan, the transitional zone between north and south, camps for the displaced around Khartoum, and several drought-affected areas not covered by OLS.[17] Members of the OLS consortium provide a variety of humanitarian interventions, including health, nutrition, household food security, water and sanitation, veterinary services, and education.

A Focus on Women

The loss of family, community, and sources of income has forced women to assume roles that were traditionally held by men; however, their participation in planning and decision-making remains limited. While changing gender roles can have positive long-term results, coming to terms with new responsibilities in the face of rapid and often violent displacement is extremely difficult. Without gender-sensitive programming, there is a danger of causing a mismatch between the needs of women and the limited programs available to them. Some examples of this mismatch were clear to the Women's Commission delegates:

- In Kajo Keji county, few of the 75 women who signed up for adult literacy classes were able to complete the course because of competing demands on their time.



- At Kakuma Refugee Camp in northern Kenya, women have difficulty attending English classes because of the need to work and take care of children during the hours classes are scheduled. In January, a female-only English class was opened to men because, out of a camp population of 72,000, not enough women registered to fill the class.

- An agricultural program in Equatoria includes a plan to train 500 farmers in the use of appropriate technology and improved seeds. Despite the fact that women in the area have access to land and would eagerly participate if short-term family support could be provided, only 30 percent of the selected trainees are women.

An example of a program that successfully involves women is operated by the International Rescue Committee (IRC). At two locations outside Khartoum, these three-month Women in Development programs encourage women to re-examine traditional male/female roles that can no longer be carried out in exile. Classes build confidence by teaching basic literacy and numeracy skills, and promote self-sufficiency by helping women conduct market surveys and develop plans to operate their own small businesses. Camp-wide "Fathers Day" celebrations give women a chance to rest while children play games and men learn about family planning, how to help at home, and how to support women in their new business ventures.

The post-secondary education and skill-building programs provided by three British organizations (The Hugh Pilkington Charitable Trust, Skills for Sudan and the Windle Charitable Trust) in southern Sudan are further examples of successful programming. Graduates are placed with nongovernmental organizations to get on-the-job experience to complement their academic training.

UNICEF'S 1996 report on Sudan confirms that "In spite of many sub-cultural differences, women and girls bear a major burden of economic and domestic responsibilities. Service delivery structures need to be sensitive to their needs. Gender differences and direct and opportunity costs prevent women from taking advantage of basic services. To remedy the situation, strategies to promote the active involvement of women in the planning, decision making, and monitoring of services need to be developed, giving priority to the assessment of the gender impact of differing approaches."[18]

According to the Secretary for Relief, Rehabilitation, Humanitarian Affairs, and Health of the SRRA, the effects of war have created massive problems for women in southern Sudan. Nongovernmen-tal organizations would benefit from examining these problems from a women's perspective in order to determine where the heaviest burdens lie. After determining where women are most constrained, organizations can make specific interventions that will "take the load off of women's heads."

SECTOR FINDINGS

Education

In the midst of their daily struggle to survive, the women of Sudan place the need for education second only to an end to the war. With half of the government's resources devoted to war, the education system in Sudan has collapsed. The overall literacy rate in Sudan is estimated at 47 percent; an estimated 10 percent of southern women and 20 percent of southern men are literate. These rates will decline drastically as whole generations of children in both the north and the south have not been learned the most basic elements of reading, writing and mathematics.

Perhaps one-third of the children in the displaced camps around Khartoum have access to basic education. Ironically, most southern children have a greater chance for education while they are displaced in the north than they would have had in the midst of war at home. It is a harsh benefit, however, because the children can only attend "Islamicized" schools where their identities as southerners are denied.

VOLUNTEERS ORGANIZE SCHOOL

Sister Grace arrived in Wau in the summer of 1998, during the worst days of the Bahr el Ghazal famine. In a compound owned by the Catholic Church, she organized an emergency feeding center for thousands of starving people and inspired volunteers by working round the clock to feed those who were too weak to lift spoons to their own mouths. When the worst was over, Sister Grace asked the best volunteers to help organize a school for the poorest children in Wau. Six months later, 1,400 children – many newly displaced by the summer's violence and all from families too poor to afford the fees of town schools – were busy studying reading, writing, arithmetic, and history in English, Arabic, and Dinka.

A joyful atmosphere, along with free breakfasts and medical care, encourages children to walk several kilometers each way to school. Teachers, none who have degrees or previous experience, spend each Saturday at training classes organized by Sister Grace. The determination of one petite woman, working against overwhelming odds and with scarce resources, has brightened the future for children living in the midst of war.

In all government-run schools, families must pay fees and provide uniforms for each child. Virtually all internally displaced families and many rural families do not have the resources to cover school expenses. Families often have to choose between sending a child to school or sending him or her out to find the day's food. The dropout rate for enrolled children rises dramatically when free breakfasts are cut.

There is a severe scarcity of trained teachers throughout Sudan. In the south, the constant disruption and dislocation of war has scattered the limited number of teachers. In the north, salaries are not paid or are so low that some teachers are forced to abandon their jobs to look for a living wage elsewhere. Teachers who do stay on the job are often not qualified. Where schools do exist, class sizes are large, often as many as 80 children per teacher.

Given the high costs and questionable value of an inferior education, many families decide that their children are better off without school, learning practical skills such as tending animals or farming. Girls, in particular, lose out on educational opportunities when family resources are scarce. When choices must be made, boys are more often sent to school than girls. When mothers must earn money to support the family, girls are kept at home to take care of younger children or sent out to earn money themselves.

Health

Despite constitutionally mandated rights to universal healthcare in Sudan, the diversion of resources to fund the war has resulted in a near complete breakdown of Sudan's healthcare system and a critical shortage of trained medical personnel and pharmaceutical supplies. At the same time, widespread malnutrition has made people more vulnerable to such debilitating and fatal diseases as malaria, various forms of dysentery and other intestinal diseases, and tuberculosis. The loss of access to potable water and sanitation has created an additional public health crisis.

Most people living in displaced camps have limited access to basic primary health care services, including the treatment of disease, health education, and nutritional assistance. Some NGOs are attempting to provide primary health services, including reproductive health programs, but the health situation in some areas has become extremely poor. In many areas health service addresses only medical emergencies like severe malnutrition, diarrhea, and injury.

In addition to restrictions imposed while attempting to provide services to an extremely large displaced population, there are disruptions in attempts to provide health care caused by the warring parties, the most egregious of which are the targeted bombings of hospitals and medical facilities by the government of Sudan.

Reproductive Health

Sudanese law prohibits female genital mutilation (FGM), but in reality complaints are never issued and no effort is made to prevent its practice. FGM is most common among uneducated families in the north and east. Some estimate that the rate of FGM is as high as 90 percent in these areas. However, even displaced southerners who have not traditionally practiced FGM are giving in to pressures to "fit in" and have their daughters circumcised.

With the deterioration of the health care system in Sudan, complications from FGM are increasing. Most educated women have been successful in stopping the practice in their immediate families. However, changing tradition among the uneducated majority will be a slow and delicate process. Mothers and grandmothers want their daughters circumcised so they can attract a good husband. Young girls look forward to the celebration and gifts they receive after circumcision, and there is great pressure from the midwives and traditional birth attendants who earn their livelihood by performing female circumcision. Finally, some men who publicly oppose FGM quietly choose to marry circumcised girls.

CHANGING TRADITIONAL PRACTICES

The Sudanese National Committee on Traditional Practices (SNCTP), a women's group in Khartoum, is crusading against FGM, the source of more health problems for women and girls in Sudan than famine or war. It has developed a training curriculum for schools on the dangers of FGM which, after 10 years of effort, has been approved by the Sudanese Ministry of Education. The course will also be incorporated in agricultural extension schools.

Under a program funded by the Australian government, SNCTP has developed graphic videos to drive home the dangers of FGM in adult education classes and a "story book" to distribute to non-literate people who practice FGM. SNCTP has enlisted respected doctors, religious leaders, and politicians to add credibility to its teams. These teams are carefully presenting their case against FGM to leaders in the government, the judiciary, and law enforcement.

Food Security

It is ironic that the women of Sudan are so often hungry since they are the main producers, gatherers, cooks, and servers of food. Yet WFP predicts that women and their children will continue to struggle for this most basic of all rights. During 1999, 2,360,0000 war-affected people in southern Sudan, in the transitional zone between south and north, in the northern camps around Khartoum, and in the eastern region near Kassala will need 173,000 metric tons of food assistance. The total cost for the 1999 emergency food delivery is expected to be US $219.7 million.[19]

The shortage of food is compounded by the fact that the few Sudanese who do have access to land or seeds are afraid to plant because they fear their crops will be targets for raids by armed forces. In secure areas, access to high quality of seeds has been limited in the past. In 1998, very poor quality seeds were delivered. Although farmers made heroic efforts to plant the seeds, nothing came up.[20]

Food diversion is a significant problem. On one hand, the military forces "tax" relief food to feed troops in the field. On the other hand, in the Dinka tradition, all resources flow through the chief, who then dispenses them, based on his own criteria. Soldiers, rather than women and children, may be a higher priority for the chiefs. The problem is further compounded with massive displacement; chiefs feel a sense of communal responsibility for their own people, but no sense of obligation or allegiance to strangers. Operation Lifeline Sudan has extracted a promise from the SPLM/SPLA to work with chiefs on a more equitable distribution, but change is not yet apparent.

WOMEN IN FOOD DISTRIBUTION

The World Food Program (WFP) has designed several programs to give women a greater role in the allocation and distribution of food. Statistics on gender will be collected and used to determine food needs, and ration cards will generally be issued to women rather than men in an effort to ensure that food stays in the household. A new WFP program, Women Knocking on Women's Doors, will offer training in family health, nutrition, and the effective use of rations to women who will then educate other women in their communities.

In March, WFP began a series of initiatives aimed at promoting women's participation in its field operations. Through this program, local leaders who give women key roles in food distribution are awarded certificates of commendation. These initiatives are providing many women with their first opportunity to participate in decision-making.[21]

Protection

All participants in the conflict, both government and opposition groups, have committed grave human rights abuses against civilians. These abuses include killing, kidnapping, burning homes, disrupting relief efforts, looting food supplies, and forcing hundreds of thousands of Sudanese, mostly women and children, to flee for their lives. In 1996, the UN Security Council voted to impose diplomatic sanctions and flight restrictions against Sudan because of its support of international terrorism and reported human rights violations carried out by the government.

One of the most tragic consequences of the long civil war has been the kidnapping of women and children during the raiding of southern villages by government-supported armed militia. Although the last verified kidnapping took place in May 1998, there are ongoing reports that groups of 10 to 1,000 armed Arab men from Darfur and Kordofan travel to Bahr El Ghazal to raid Dinka villages. While some raiders claim to be on a *jihad*, or holy war, most participate for their own enrichment. Villages are surrounded, men escape or are killed, houses and surrounding crops are destroyed, and cattle, women, and children are taken north. Surplus "slaves" and cattle are sold. Children old enough to attempt to escape are separated from their mothers, while younger children are held hostage so mothers will not flee.

Most of the captives are forced to give up their own culture and convert to Islam, but still are never fully accepted in their new community. Young children herd goats and older boys travel with cattle, often for great distances and under harsh conditions. Women are assigned labor-intensive housework, water fetching, and food preparation and are often forced to "marry" their owners. Some escape and try to make their way to Khartoum, and sometimes relatives arrive in Arab villages looking for lost family members. Not many find their way back.[22]

Even those survivors who made it to Khartoum do not find it possible to resume their children's cultural, religious, and linguistic training. Through the government's policy of demolition and relocation, supportive communities that have been rebuilt at great effort are destroyed and families are forced to start over in new and isolated locations, often with strangers they neither know nor understand.

Children and Security

The breakdown of traditional cultural responsibilities and the lack of educational opportunities have contributed to an ever-increasing number of displaced children and adolescents ending up on the streets or becoming soldiers in the civil war. Pressure is great to join the military. In the north and in government-held parts of the south, male high school graduates must complete a

HELP FOR THE UNPROTECTED

A group of women lawyers in Khartoum has formed an association called the Mutawinat Benevolent Company. Mutawinat offers legal services free of charge to women and children, 95 percent of whom are displaced and living in extreme poverty. Particular attention is paid to women and children in prison, who seldom know their rights or have access to legal representation.

Mutawinat's goals are to provide grassroots legal training for all Sudanese women and to ensure that people in authority understand and carry out laws that define the rights of women and children. Mutawinat works within the juvenile justice system to educate judges and police on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and trains leaders of the Boy and Girl Scouts in Khartoum. Volunteer lawyers meet with women to learn their problems, collect data, and design paralegal training programs for NGO staff and female leaders who work with communities in need.

Another group providing legal services is the New Sudan Women's Federation (NSWF). NSWF activities include a legal rights clinic program, which has trained women as paralegal officers to administer three legal clinics located in Mapele, Maridi, and Bor, in southern Sudan. They are also conducting research on customary law and its impact on women, and plan to open education classes. Their workshops include: youth seminars on rape and other forms of sexual violence, women with civil authority – how to stop violence, awareness raising, and conflict resolution. The group also publishes a monthly Newsletter, The Women Today, designed to address women's issues, such as domestic violence.

year of military service before they are awarded the certificate that allows them to apply for universities. Male college graduates must serve two years in the military before they receive their diploma. There are many reports of 17-year-old boys who have gone into hiding rather than go to war in the south.

Building Local Capacity

Obstacles to successful capacity-building for women in Sudan are huge, at the individual, organizational, and community levels: the loss of homes and sources of income during displacement; the separation from family and community support that might have freed women for new endeavors; the daily struggle to find food and other necessities in new locations; the long distances that often must be traveled to reach health care and other services; the absence, particularly among southerners, of even the most basic literacy and numeracy skills; the cultural traditions that limit opportunities because of gender; and the constant fear of new rounds of violence and displacement as the war continues.

Many local women's organizations in Sudan are well organized and determined to move women in their communities toward a more stable and less dependent future. They struggle with scant resources to provide literacy, skills-training, and income-generating classes. When fighting intensifies, these classes experience inevitable setbacks. Furthermore, in the midst of the international community's emergency-driven agenda, few have received the management training and financial assistance that would enable them to work more effectively.

In the midst of war, setbacks inevitably occur. Local efforts to launch skills-training classes by the refugee women in Koboko, and the internally displaced women in Mangalatore, Keriwa, and Yei have had limited success. The Keriwa tea shop had some measure of success before government bombing destroyed the resources the women had accumulated. Although the women's group at Koboko is organized and has managed to collect funds, they have been rejected in their attempts to obtain development assistance. At Yei, reduced funding resulted in erratic outcomes, but a newly assigned staff member to the women's development center has created new possibilities for coordinating capacity-building efforts.

Local organizations note a donor bias in favor of international NGOs and a corresponding lack of trust in national agencies. More effective capacity-building initiatives would result from increased cooperation that would take advantage of the greater experience and resources of international agencies and the greater credibility and local knowledge of national agencies.

EFFECTIVE LOCAL PROGRAMS

Local women's groups have developed some interesting initiatives.

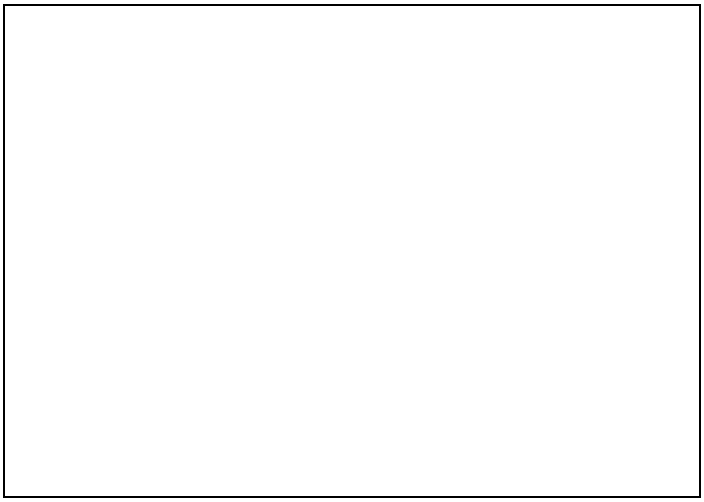
- The Widows, Orphans and Disabled Rehabilitation Association of New Sudan (WODRANS) targets women (specifically widows), girls, and the disabled (men and women). Its projects, located in southern Sudan, include income-generating activities, capacity building, a seeds/fishing project and education. WODRANS has received funding to establish a school that will serve 500 students (at least 180 of them girls). Located in southern Sudan, the project includes a two-year tailoring program as an income-generating activity that graduated its first class of 20 widows and 15 disabled men in December 1998. They have also planned a year-long training program for 30 students in blacksmithing and carpentry, and a project to distribute seeds, tools, food, and fishing equipment.

- Another group works with church and other community groups to promote adult education projects, agricultural training, and gender awareness. The group organizes and encourages rehabilitation and development. Their major concern is the training of local women to enhance the capacity of local nongovernmental organizations.

These programs would be further enhanced with training to ensure effective program planning, implementation, and resource management. Additional funding is also required to ensure the long-term support for projects once they have been launched.

COMMUNITY PROFILES

Northern Sudan



FAO '97

Khartoum State

The displaced population in Khartoum – currently estimated at 2.2 million – continues to grow. Approximately 339,000 of the displaced reside in four "official" camps; the remainder live in "squatter" and "settlement" areas.

The official camps, all several miles outside the city, are designated by the government as areas where internally displaced persons (IDPs) are allowed to reside, although they have no property rights. The displaced in official camps tend to have better access to services because of the comparative willingness of the GOS to allow access to international agencies and the traditional targeting of international donor funds to "defined" populations. The health situation in many squatter areas and settlements, where international access is limited and funding is difficult to obtain, has become extremely poor.

In squatter areas, the displaced build houses on unauthorized plots owned by the government or by private individuals, hoping to take advantage of economic opportunities in the city. Throughout the 1990s, government officials have frequently forced relocations from squatter areas. "Approximately three-quarters of a million persons have been forcibly removed from the Khartoum area since 1992, often at gunpoint."[23] With each relocation, established communities are scattered, homes destroyed, and jobs lost, all without compensation to victims.

The settlements where the displaced people from squatter areas are moved are far from Khartoum in areas devoid of services. IDPs are allotted a plot of land and are entitled to purchase a leasehold title from the GOS which gives them limited rights of ownership, including the right to sell the land. The GOS, however, retains discretionary privileges on the land. Residents must rebuild homes at their own expense.

Around Khartoum, where the government provides some resources to schools, classes are taught in Arabic and a Muslim curriculum is required in all schools. The southern parents who can afford fees are deeply concerned about efforts to "Islamicize" children at school. One displaced mother reported hearing her child singing "songs against his brothers in the south" in his kindergarten class. "Women look into the future," she said, and "see only an Islamic education for their children. We do not like it, but we are helpless."

Tens of thousands – maybe 100,000 – street children have appeared in Khartoum since the war began. Most are from the south and the Nuba mountains. The Government, insisting that orphans are the state's responsibility, has not allowed UNICEF to address the problem. Street children are picked up and transported to camps outside Khartoum. They are not trained for the military, but are required to convert to Islam following a period of religious education. Conditions are harsh and treatment is poor. In a culture of war and violence, the isolation of these homeless children is accepted as "just the way it is."[24]

Earning income to support families is a struggle for displaced women in and around Khartoum. Traditional southern skills in farming and animal husbandry cannot be put to use without land and animals. There is little economic life in the camps and settlements and women who might find work as housekeepers live far from where those jobs are available. Many women have found that brewing alcohol is the only reliable source of income. However, under Islamic law, brewing is punishable by fines, lashings, and prison terms from one month to one year. Police aggressively search for and arrest violators. In prison, women live in filthy conditions, must buy their own food, and are often forced to work as maids in the homes of prison guards, where rapes have been reported. Pressure to convert to Islam is great and jail terms are suspended for those who convert.

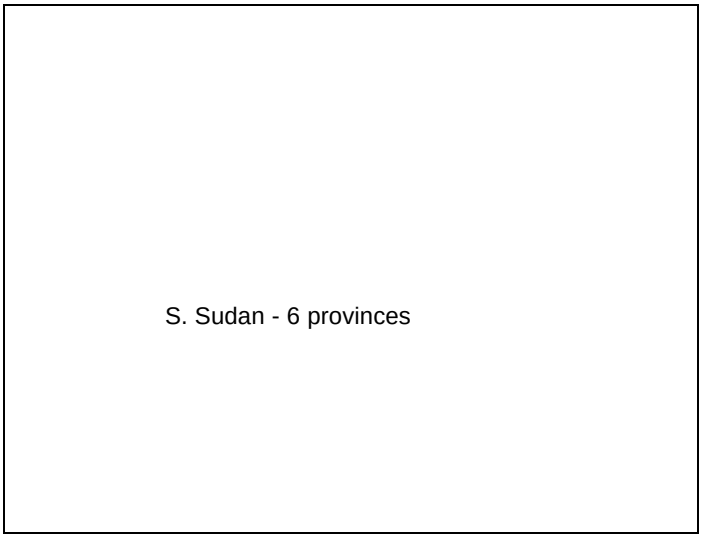
EDUCATION THAT WORKS

Fr. Kamal Saman Tadros may not have a computer or a fax in his tiny office in the Catholic Archdiocese compound in Khartoum, but he has enough energy and determination to run a multinational corporation. The small education program he opened in 1984 has grown to 90 schools, where 1,000 teachers hold classes for 44,000 of the poorest children in Khartoum. There are no fees or uniform costs. Free breakfasts, cooked by 400 needy women who receive a small salary for their work, and free medical care encourage children to stay in school through the sixth grade. Father Kamal is particularly proud of the 2,000 students who received the 8th grade certificate that allows them to enroll in secondary school.

With funding from the St. Vincent de Paul Society, Father Kamal has another miracle under his belt: 737 homeless children from the streets of Khartoum are living on four farms outside the city. They all attend school in the morning and spend afternoons learning practical skills in animal husbandry and agriculture. Each child also specializes in a marketable trade – carpentry, tailoring, electrical wiring, or leather work – and practices by making the shoes, clothing, and furniture needed on the farms. This year, 100 of these children have moved up to secondary school and 11 are attending college.

Father Kamal points out that these former street children will be among the few displaced southern children who have had the opportunity to live in an environment of stability and respect, enjoy good food, play sports, sleep in clean beds, learn a trade, and pursue an education. They may play an important role in shaping the future of their country.

Southern Sudan



Map provided by ReliefWeb, Source: USAID/FEWS

Bahr El Ghazal

Both the 1988 and the 1998 famine centered in Bahr El Ghazal. Even taking into account periods of drought in preceding years, neither famine was inevitable. Instead, they were the result of deliberate decisions made by the Sudanese government, militias, and southern opposition factions to further military objectives by blocking delivery of emergency food, diverting food that did arrive, and forcing civilians from the land and cattle that sustained them in the harsh environment of southern Sudan.

Since the mid1980s, government-armed militias have traveled south to Bahr El Ghazal to raid cattle, burn crops and villages, and kidnap women and children. The SPLA has contributed equally to death and dislocation in the south by stealing relief food to feed troops and calling on local chiefs to support soldiers at the expense of their most vulnerable civilians.

The government-controlled garrison town of Wau, in the heart of Bahr El Ghazal, was the site of repeated violence during the summer of 1998. Tens of thousands of Dinka and Nuer fled Wau in January to escape reprisals by government forces and militia following an SPLA assault. From May to August, more than 70,000 displaced people, traumatized by ongoing violence and severely weakened from disease and hunger, filled the town in search of food. Although there are no accurate statistics, NGOs report that in the early stages of the emergency, mortality rates were among the highest ever witnessed.

Providing protection and even the most basic humanitarian assistance to the displaced in Wau is difficult. Distances are great and roads are few and impassable during much of the year, leaving costly air transport as the only reliable means to deliver relief supplies and NGO staff. The government of Sudan has denied flight clearances at critical junctures in the past. The United Nations Humanitarian Unit reported repeated security incidents and ongoing looting in 1998. However, the presence of government soldiers, several armed militias, troops from Western Sudan, and the personal armies of powerful Sudanese made it impossible to determine responsibility. Reports of the kidnapping of women and children continue.

While conditions in town are now relatively calm, raiding *murahaleen* still guard government military supply trains as they travel south, burning crops and villages, and stealing cattle as they go. (The *murahaleen* are Baggara tribal militias from western Sudan that fight against the Dinka in Bahr El Ghazal under GOS army jurisdiction.) They are also responsible for kidnapping women and children for the revived slave trade.

Relief agencies have established a large tent camp on the east bank of the Jur River, which runs through Wau. The displaced population continues to be dependent on humanitarian assistance for food, shelter, and medical care. Families, primarily Dinka, have lost their cattle herds and farms and have few prospects in a garrison town devoid of economic activity. While temporary buildings now house a school, there are teachers and classrooms for only 600 of the 6,000 children in the camp.

Still, the east bank residents are far better off than the displaced living in Wau's market area at the time of the Women's Commission visit. Thousands of men, women, and children slept on bare concrete slabs under the "verandahs" built during the colonial period to shade local shopkeepers. There are no clean water or sanitary facilities for these displaced people. Six latrines built by an international NGO were torn down by town officials to "discourage permanent settlement." The fear of cholera outbreaks during the rainy season is great. Grain is ground on the same places where people walk and sleep, and cooking is done over small fires in the dusty street. Women and children have few articles of clothing. Although blankets have been distributed, there is little protection from the elements. Women have reported abuse by storekeepers and violence at the

hands of other displaced people as tensions increase.

Local officials have attempted to clear the Wau market area through forced movement of the displaced to the east bank of the Jur River. The international community is attempting to provide shelter, medical, and educational services for these displaced people. The WFP will provide food until the first harvest of crops are planted by the displaced on land provided by the government. Serious security issues have been raised. The designated land is eight kilometers away, accessible only by foot along a road that travels through a Government military base. Women, who provide most of the farm labor, would be extremely vulnerable along the road, as would their crops on the long journey back to the east bank camps.

EDUCATING WOMEN AND CHILDREN

WOTAP, the only Sudanese women's organization in Wau, runs a preschool for 233 town and displaced children, offers skills-training in tailoring and tie-dying to 87 women, and adult education classes for 39 women. The women are frustrated by the uncertainty of life in the east bank camp and worried about being dependent on humanitarian assistance. They also want education for themselves and their children. Unfortunately, responding to the ongoing crisis of war has left little time or money to devote to programs that would bring long-term benefit to the people of Sudan.

A number of international agencies have received permission from the government of Sudan to implement programs for the displaced in Wau. Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)-Holland has rehabilitated the town hospital and the IRC manages an emergency public health program, building latrines, and training community health and nutrition educators to work in the east bank camps and the verandah area. The IRC is also seeking permission to initiate reproductive health services in Wau and two additional garrison towns in Bahr El Ghazal. Save the Children-UK supports basic education by providing books and school sanitation, training competent teachers, and encouraging young girls to stay in school. Action Contre La Faim operates the primary feeding center for children, nursing mothers, and the elderly.

Equatoria

(West and East Equatoria and Bahr Al Jebel States)

> "Although the overall humanitarian situation in the region is not as severe as in other areas, pockets of acute need exist in all three States as a result of both natural and man-made factors including insecurity, access restrictions and flooding. ... Even given a static military situation, the overall food security for the region is poor in terms of food availability. 1998 ranked as the second worst in the last five years. Twelve percent of the population, 267,500 persons, will require food relief to meet food deficits of between 20 and 50 percent.
>
> "Supplementary and therapeutic feeding programs should be extended to areas with high concentrations of child malnutrition, including the Labone-Nimule corridor and to Mangala, Liggi, Sirimon, and Kuda. Support is also required to continue programmes for the large number of malnourished children in Juba. Although the health sector is more developed in this region than elsewhere, better supplies of essential drugs and expanded EPI coverage would significantly improve the health of at-risk populations. Access to safe drinking water is restricted in rural areas and health and hygiene awareness poor in urban areas. Interventions aimed at improving these conditions would strengthen the resiliency of local populations and provide a buffer against future food deficits or asset-depleting insecurity. Increased provision of educational materials and the expansion of teacher training programmes will help strengthen the education sector which, although functioning, is weak."
>
> *UN Inter-Agency Appeal for Sudan, January-December, 1999*

Nongovernmental organizations providing assistance to IDPs in Western Equatoria include Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), the American Refugee Committee (ARC), MSF/Holland, and IRC. NPA has worked in southern Sudan since 1986, providing emergency relief and long-term development cooperation. The NPA operates outside of OLS, giving them access tp crisis situations, without sanctions imposed by the GOS. NPA assistance includes food distribution, seed and tool distribution specifically for women, and community development projects. NPA hospitals have been established in Labone, Nimbule, Chukudum, and Yei.

Kajo Keji Area

The displaced population of approximately 110,000 currently living in the Kajo Keji area is primarily Kuku, Bari, and Dinka. The Women's Commission delegation visited the Mangalatore, Keriwa, and Bamurye camps in this area. Health services in Kajo Keji county are provided by three agencies primarily. In the eastern section of the county, a local organization trains traditional birth attendants. In Kajo Keji the hospital is run by MSF-Switzerland. In the remainder of the county, ARC provides primary health care services and training to the residents and displaced population, with programs that focus on women and children.

Mangalatore

In 1991, following a massacre of the Dinka by the Nuer in Bor, members of the Dinka population fled and resettled at Mangalatore. At present, approximately 15,000 people live in the camp. Mangalatore currently has a school with 92 pupils. The Women's Commission delegation met with women at Mangalatore who reported that both boys and girls are enrolled in the school, but during the visit only male students were seen and delegates were told that girls were at home grinding (a labor-intensive food preparation). There are no uniforms, exercise books, or text books, and teachers do not receive training. The displaced women who met with the Women's Commission expressed an interest in skills-training and literacy classes to help them work toward a better future for themselves and their children.

Health and nutrition supplementation is limited although there are significant levels of malnutrition and related health problems. A clinic has recently been opened by ARC, and NPA provides services in the area. Médecins Sans Frontières has recently phased out a feeding center.

Keriwa

Due to its obscure location, the 7,000 displaced people living in Keriwa receive very few services. Many of the basics are lacking; health is precarious because there is no source of potable water. Recent bombing by the GOS destroyed mattresses, food, and clothing that had been painstakingly collected by the displaced women.

According to a report submitted to the delegation by the Education Officer at Keriwa, for the month of December 1998, a total of 684 students (273 girls and 411 boys) was enrolled in grades one through seven. Of the 15 teachers, one is female and nine have attended in-service training courses. Concerns about education include material support (classroom supplies and textbooks) and incentives for teachers, in the form of food or other materials in exchange for work.

Bamurye

There are minimal educational and economic opportunities, and medical supplies are limited. The schools at this camp are small with few trained teachers and no support for teacher training. The funds available are used to fi-nance the Arabic curriculum, leaving no resources for the English curriculum. NPA and ARC provide women's tailoring, training, agriculture, and feeding centers in the area.

The delegates met with the reproductive health coordinator for the Reproductive Health for Refugees Consortium[25] project, who is in the process of implementing a program in the Kajo Keji area. The Consortium is working to provide access to a full range of reproductive health services, including safe motherhood, family planning, emergency obstetrics, treatment and prevention of sexually transmitted diseases (including HIV/AIDS), as well as services and protection against sexual and gender violence.

Yei

Yei is a garrison town, controlled by rebel groups and surrounded by the government of Sudan. Since March 1997, when the SPLA took the garrison town of Yei, the SPLM, SRRA, and other organizations have worked to establish a civil administration capable of providing services to its residents. Access to land is available to some of the displaced and returnees, on which they have built housing.

The Women's Commission delegation met women at a community development project training center. The Sudanese talked about their frustration over the lack of training materials at the center. They signed up for classes in tailoring, handicrafts, kitchen gardening, and adult literacy but the required resources were not always available. In addition, they felt that planning for future use of these new skills had not been sufficiently considered. They are now faced with problems they thought skills training would help them to address. They have no help caring for their children for whom they provide food, school fees, and health care. Although discour-

aged, the women are committed to developing the skills necessary to become self-sufficient and provide for their families. They have built their own houses on land provided by the county and do not have to pay rent. To earn money they brew, set up tea shops, sell firewood, and cut grass to sell.

The regional hospital at Yei is administered by NPA with funding from the US Agency for International Development. The delegates toured the facilities, and were shown where the surgery theater, pharmacy, and storeroom for medical supplies had been bombed. Although repairs have been made, medicines, supplies, and equipment had yet to be replaced. Hospital patients are malnourished children whose mothers have walked long distances to have them admitted, pregnant women expecting difficult deliveries, and men and women requiring and recovering from surgery.

Koboko, Uganda

Most of the approximately 165,000 Sudanese who have sought refuge in Uganda reside in the Arua, Adjumani, and Moyo districts. Most of the women and children in the Koboko area fled heavy bombing and fighting in the areas of Yei and Kajo Keji in 1993 and 1994. Many refugees have died and property has been destroyed during regular rebel insurgencies. In February 1997, a Ugandan group (reportedly supported by the GOS) attacked refugee camps in the Aura district of Uganda, killing many and displacing about 30,000.[26]

In addition to the fear of Ugandan rebel attacks, the refugee women and their families are prone to forced, arbitrary displacement by the local police. Delegates discussed this issue with a group of women who admitted that they were unaware of their rights as refugees. No UNHCR or NGO programs that address this issue were available to them. Outside the camps, services are limited: no midwife is available despite the high occurrence of death during labor. When help is available, there are fees for medication and treatment, which many women cannot afford. While there are some trained nurses, most training is inadequate and traditional birth attendants lack proper medical equipment.

Some women stay in the area despite the security problems in order to obtain an education for the children in their care. The women have a difficult time paying school fees and would prefer that the curriculum include English. They work in a variety of jobs – selling firewood, collecting water, assisting in construction, and trading in the market – to earn money. The women often cut grasses to sell but, because refugees cannot own land, they can be abruptly stopped by the Ugandan landowner.

The women want education for themselves and their children, as well as vocational training for those who are disabled. They want to learn how to generate income so they can afford a work permit, school fees, and materials for their children's education. There have been some skills training programs offered to refugee women. According to the women themselves, the two-week income-generating workshop they enrolled in did not offer loans at the end of the sessions, so they were unable to use the tailoring skills they had learned. Furthermore, the short duration of the class did not offer adequate opportunity to master the skills that were introduced.

Refugee women who met with the Women's Commission delegation have had mixed experiences in developing local capacity. While they were able to organize block leaders for food distribution, for example, the Ugandan Red Cross elected to distribute the food directly. The local women's association, on the other hand, is very well organized and structured, with an estimated 400 women registered. They have been very resourceful in raising funds and initiating small businesses. By collecting a fee from each member of the association who could afford to pay, the women's group has developed capital, which they hope to increase through revolving loans and increased membership. Some of their businesses include tea shops and restaurants. The women emphasized that with some business skills, they could greatly improve this program and their individual skills for survival in Uganda, as well as independence and productivity upon return to their homes inside Sudan. Over the course of three years, the women have written to several international organizations to request funding, without success.

AN END TO THE CONFLICT

Regional attempts by the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), a consortium of the neighboring states of Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia, Kenya, Uganda, and Sudan, have met with little success. Conflicting agendas, a shortage of financial resources and experienced staff, and a perceived lack of will by both the government and southern opposition groups have prevented progress toward a negotiated settlement.

According to one expert, the question is: "Who really wants peace in Sudan? The answer to this question is quite complex, and superficially it might be concluded that no one has a vested interest in a peaceful outcome to the current conflict. No one, that is, besides the southern Sudanese civilians themselves, who are usually not factored into anyone's geopolitical calculations anyway."[27]

The IGAD Partners Forum, a donor-nations group in which Norway and Italy are key players, is frustrated with IGAD's lack of progress. The focus has been lost as IGAD members become involved in regional conflicts in Eritrea, Ethiopia, Uganda, and the Congo. Two-day working sessions are separated by six months of inactivity and the shuttle diplomacy needed to keep the process moving forward between meetings has lagged. Still, there is a consensus that the IGAD peace initiative can be saved if the United Nations and major international powers become engaged. The participation of Egypt and Saudi Arabia is considered particularly important because of their economic and cultural links with the government of Sudan.

The ability of the United States to play an instrumental role in the peace process has been severely limited by its decision in 1996 to withdraw diplomatic staff and declare Sudan a terrorist state. Relations between the two countries deteriorated further after the August 1998 bombing of a pharmaceutical factory in Khartoum and the subsequent decision by the Sudanese government to sever diplomatic relations with the US. Reaction to the bombing has been surprisingly mild, however, and may indicate an opportunity for new discussions between the two countries. The US could explore the possibility of reopening its embassy in Khartoum as a first step toward becoming fully engaged the peace process. The recent appointment of a US Special Envoy to Sudan, Harry Johnston, provides an opportunity for progress in this area.

> *"There is a distinction between the international response to Bosnia and its response to Sudan. We would like to see the US leverage in terms of fielding observers and mediators in affecting an end to the war. There is a need for a genuine, lasting, and just peace."*
>
> Local women's group director

Women in the Peace Process

Civilians, particularly women, have had few opportunities to shape or participate in peace talks. The Government of the Netherlands has been a leader in recognizing the critical role Sudanese women have played in attempting to maintain a normal life in the midst of war as well as the important perspective they would lend to the peace process. Its Women in Development officer has organized workshops in both the north and south to educate women on methods to promote nonviolent forms of conflict resolution and actively promotes the participation of women in the IGAD and other peace initiatives

On a local level, a series of meetings in the spring of 1999, including the recent Dinka-Nuer West Bank peace and reconciliation conference were attended by women delegates, who called for an end to the conflict. The conference, held in March 1999, resulted in a signed regional peace covenant with accompanying resolutions. Other efforts include the organization of prayers for peace by women from the Sudan Council of Churches in Khartoum. Through the New Sudan Council of Churches, women are also seeking observer status to the IGAD peacemaking process.

"We are crying and requesting the International Community to exert pressure and tough conditions on the Sudan government to end the war in Sudan. This war is about justice and human rights. The government of Sudan is bombing civilians, primarily women and children, yet no safe haven is created for us.

"We, as women are appealing to the international community to stop the bombardment of innocent people in Southern Sudan who are defenseless women and children and the laying of landmines, the source of untold human suffering. We feel we have had enough of the refugee life. We want to go home and revive our dignity and culture and to produce food for our families."

Statement by Sudan Refugees Women Association in Koboko, Uganda

While these positive steps taken by courageous civilians are important, a strong international involvement and sustained regional efforts to move the peace process forward has not materialized. The international community must seize every opportunity to work with various groups committed to finding a peaceful resolution.

Once negotiations are successful and the conflict ends, massive repair and development will be necessary to build a civil society and an economic basis for establishing lasting peace. The country is now fragmented and lacks a comprehensive infrastructure. "War has raged in Sudan for three out of the last four decades. It will not be reversed overnight. All of our aid, trade, and diplomacy should be coordinated towards helping the Sudanese themselves rebuild a culture of peace in that country beyond the political/military outcome of the current civil conflict."[28]

"We have yet to see a sustained interest on the part of the government or the people of the United States. This war is the longest, and the bloodiest. ... The U.S. should place pressure on the warring groups to come to the negotiating table to have peace talks, and put an end to the war in a just manner. There should also be an embargo placed on all weapons into all of Sudan. While the peace talks are going on, safe havens should be established where the population can exist with some level of stability. Also, the UN should be supported and encouraged to intervene to ensure that these things are upheld."

Statement by Chairperson of the Sudanese Women's Association in Nairobi (SWAN)

CONCLUSION

With the largest population of internally displaced people in the world, ravaged by cycles of famine, and mired in civil war, Sudan remains in crisis. To be effective, strategies to address the ongoing conflict must be consistent, insistent, and comprehensive. Bringing an end to the conflict is the imperative expressed with resolute consistency by Sudanese women, who, along with their children, form the majority of the four million people currently displaced inside Sudan, and comprise the majority of Sudanese refugees.

Only through a concerted effort to bring an end to the conflict, permanent relief from famine, broadened economic and political participation, and local capacity-building can Sudan hope to escape the turmoil that has crippled its development for more than four decades, cost the lives of at least two million people, and created the largest internally displaced population in the world.

RESOURCE PEOPLE

The following people met with the Women's Commission delegates. We are grateful for their participation.

Father Albert, Catholic Services
Iliana Nadi Albino-Osodo, UNICEF/OLS
Anne Grace Asser, SRRA, Women's Affairs
Elizabeth Arek Arop, Help Yourself Society
Babiker Ahmed Babiker, ASHAD
Fr. Paul Boyle, Catholic Archdiocese
Mary Broderick, Reproductive Health for Refugees Consortium
David Butcher, Windle Charitable Trust
Marian Casey, GOAL
Lola Castro, WFP
John Cunleffee, ACF
Asha Elkarib, ACORD
Representative Faisal, UNHCU
Robert Ffolkes, SCF-UK
Baptiste Sibit Francis, Commissioner of Wau Province
Benjamin Gimba, Skills for Sudan
Sister Grace, Catholic Services
Manal Mohamed A/Haliem, MUTAWINAT
Belghees Hammour, Al Manar
Nasra Rejoice Hillary, Yei Women's Development Center
Mary Hippe, SRRA
Moses Ikwell, Norwegian People's Aid
Suzanne Samson Jambo, Consultant
Dr. Priscilla Joseph, Sudanese Council of Churches
Joy Kawadji, Sudanese Council of Churches
Angela Kearny, UNICEF
Mary Khimulu, Windle Charitable Trust
HE Charles Julu Kpoyo, Wali of Bahr El Ghazal
Kuel Aguer Kuel, SCF-UK
Juliana Lindsey, UNICEF
Christine Lino, Relief Association for Southern Sudan
Mary Saidia Lino, Mobile Primary Health Care
Lorna Lowilla, UNICEF/OLS
Rebecca de Mabior, Widows, Orphans and Disabled Rehabilitation Association of New Sudan
Dr. Ushari Mahmud, UNICEF
Kosti Manibe, SRRA
Margaret Mano, UNHCU
Arelo Maout, UNICEF
Mary Rose Mariano, WOTAP
Ann McClinton, Mobile Primary Health Care
Colin McIlreavy, MSF-Holland
Ken Miller, Norwegian People's Aid
Hayat A/Magid Mohamed, GOAL
Ann Morris, CARE International
Caesar Semangi Ndogo, HAC Commissioner
Kezia Layinwa Nicodemus, SPLM/Women and Children's Affairs
Mary Nyaulang, Relief Association for Southern Sudan
Dr. El Obeid, Government of Sudan
Jim O'Neill, UNICEF
Brenda Opperman, WFP
Mary O'Reilley, UNICEF/OLS Consultant
Dr. Al Amin Mohammed Osman, Global Health Foundation
Dr. Sitouna Osman, Chair, New Sudan Women's Federation
Rose Paulino, Sudanese Council of Churches
Susan Purdin, Reproductive Health for Refugees Consortium
Louie Raymond, New Sudan Council of Churches
Amna Abdel Rhiem, SNCTP
Dr. Pauline Riak, Sudanese Women's Association in Nairobi
Heike Riedke, DED
Teresa Samuel, WOTAP
Robin Shawyer, The Hugh Pilkington Charitable Trust
David Taban Lasu, Norwegian People's Aid
Fr. Kamal Saman Tadros, Catholic Archdiocese
Carla Juan Tongun, Sudanese Women's Association in Nairobi
Roman Urasa, UNHCR
Joust Vandergeest, UNFPA
Erna Vongoor, Family Planning International
Margaret Verwijk, Royal Netherlands Embassy
Gordon Wagner, Consultant
Luc Zandvliet, MSF-Holland

In addition, delegates met with representatives of the American Refugee Committee staff at Kajo Keji, the Keriwa Women's Union Association, NPA Agriculture Center, and the Manglatore New Sudan Women's Association; and the SRRA representative for Mangalatore camp, the Yei County SPLA Commander, the Yei Garrison Commander, the Director of Yei Regional Hospital, and the District Commissioner of Yei. Women at Bamurye, the Yei Women's Development Center, Koboko's South Sudan Women in Development, and Sudan Refugee Women's Association also met with our teams.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ARC	American Refugee Committee
GOS	Government of Sudan
IDP	Internally displaced person
IGAD	Inter-Governmental Authority on Development
IRC	International Rescue Committee
NIF	National Islamic Front
NDA	National Democratic Alliance
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
NPA	Norwegian People's Aid
OLS	Operation Lifeline Sudan
SCF	Save the Children Fund
SNCTP	Sudanese National Committee on Traditional Practices
SPLA	Sudanese People's Liberation Army
SPLM	Sudanese People's Liberation Movement
SRRA	Sudanese Relief and Rehabilitation Association
SSIM	Southern Sudanese Independence Movement
WFP	World Food Program

NOTES

[1] US Committee for Refugees, Working Document II: *Quantifying Genocide in Southern Sudan and the Nuba Mountains* 1983-1998. December 1998, Millard Burr (p. 8).

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[3] UN, 1999 *Mid-Term Review and Revision of United Nations Consolidated Inter-Agency* Appeal for Sudan, January - June 1999, (p.3).

[4] Amnesty International, *The Tears of Orphans: No Future Without Human Rights*. January 1995.

[5] Library of Congress, *Sudan: A Country Study*, Federal Directory Studies Area Handbook Series.

[6] "The Sudan: Cradle of Displacement", Hiram A. Ruiz, in *The Forsaken People: Case Studies of the Internally Displaced*. 1998 (p. 140).

[7] US Committee for Refugees, *World Refugee Survey, 1998*, (p. 95).

[8] John Prendergast, *Crisis Response: Humanitarian Band-Aids in Sudan and Somalia*, Pluto Press, 1997, (p. 5).

[9] Ibid.

[10] "Rebels Strike First Blow in Sudan's Search for Oil", *Africa News Online*. April 5, 1999.

[11] "The Sudan: Cradle of Displacement", (p. 155).

[12] *Quantifying Genocide in Southern Sudan and the Nuba Mountains*, (p. 6).

[13] *Crisis Response*

[14] "The Sudan: Cradle of Displacement", (p. 146).

[15] Ibid.

[16] UNHCR, *The State of the World's Refugees:1997*.

[17] WFP, Project Document for WFP Sudan EMOP 5826.02. January 12, 1999.

[18] UNICEF, *Report on Sudan 1996*..

[19] Project Document for WFP Sudan.

[20] Meeting with Jeff Drumstra, Senior Analyst for Africa United in January 1999.

[21] WFP, Rome, *Sudan Bulletin* , March 28 - April 3, 1999.

[22] Information from UNICEF's coordinator for the rights of the child.

[23] *World Refugee Survey 1998*, (p.96).

[24] Information from UNICEF's coordinator for the rights of the child.

[25] The Reproductive Health for Refugees Consortium comprises the American Refugee Committee, Columbia University Center for Population and Family Health, CARE, the International Rescue Committee, John Snow Institute for Research and Training, Marie Stopes International, and the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children.

[26] UNHCR, *Uganda Country Report 1999.*

[27] *Crisis Response*, (p. 63).

[28] Ibid. (p. 21).