

Province of the Episcopal Church of the Sudan

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14.06.2011

Statement from the Episcopal Church of the Sudan on the violence in Southern Kordofan

On behalf of all the Christians of Southern Kordofan and the Nuba people, I wish to condemn the violence and bombardment of civilian settlements since June 5, which has resulted in widespread suffering and destruction. From the time the initial fighting began, it has been reported that the number of civilians requiring immediate relief has increased to over 53,000 and is set to rise, bombing and looting has continued, 75,000 people have been displaced, and houses and other buildings have been torched and deliberately destroyed.

The Episcopal Church of the Sudan has not escaped the effects of violence and destruction. Some of our pastors have been arrested and tortured without reason or charge. The windows and doors of the ECS Guest House and All Saints Cathedral Kadugli have been broken. The altar, vestments, church documents in the cathedral and the official residence of the Bishop have been destroyed by fire. Our solar panels, gifted to us by generous partners and three motorcycles have been stolen. Secular buildings have also been damaged and indeed all people, both Christian and Muslim have been impacted by the fighting. However, the church and its personnel have clearly been a target for the Northern army since the fighting began. The calculated damage to our church buildings and the threats to, and arrest and torture of, pastors and known Christians because of their faith is indisputable.

Without a doubt then, the most worrying aspect of this recent conflict is the way in which fighting that originated between the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and the Sudan Peoples Liberation Army (SPLA) has now transformed into what can only be described as a deliberate strategy to rid Kadugli of its indigenous African and Christian population by the SAF, in short a policy of ethnic cleansing. This is not the first time a government policy of ethnic cleansing has been applied in Sudan; the genocide in Western Darfur is very well known. Moreover, activities of a similar nature occurred just a few weeks ago when the Dinka Ngok, indigenous to Abyei, were slaughtered and displaced from their homes within Abyei Town in mass numbers.

We categorically condemn the use of force by the Government of Sudan towards its own people. We condemn the use of aerial bombardments on civilians and the arbitrary arrest of citizens in Southern Kordofan. No one is willing to return to war, therefore, we insist that the Government of Sudan releases those who have been arbitrarily arrested and return to the negotiating table with the Government of South Sudan on its consultation framework.

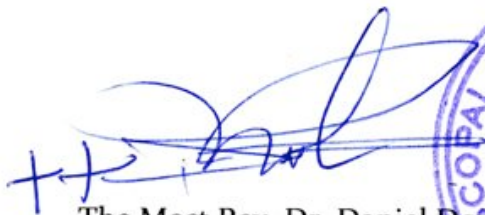
We appeal to the international community, particularly the signatories of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, to unite and do everything in their power to intervene quickly to stop the fighting and the killing of innocent people, and to protect those residents of Southern Kordofan and Abyei who are Christian and African and, as a result, are suffering persecution. Genocide is highly likely without international mediation. Therefore, we implore you all, especially the Troika (the United States of America, The United Kingdom and Norway), the African Union and the United Nations to endeavour to prevent genocide and the deliberate killing of certain groups by others before it is too late.

We appeal to both indigenous and international Non-Government Organisations who can assist with aid and relief to coordinate their efforts and work together with local and trusted organisations such as the churches, to address the physical needs of the sick and needy in Southern Kordofan. The ECS is ready to facilitate in the distribution of medicines, food and non-food items using our extensive network in Southern Kordofan and Abyei. We request for food and non-items as well as donations to support their purchase. We strongly urge the United Nations Mission In Sudan and NGOs within Sudan to make use of the ECS as a well-placed partner to help with efficient distribution of relief items.

Finally, we appeal to members of the Anglican Communion around the world and those of other denominations to intercede on our behalf to Almighty God so that the people of Southern Kordofan and Abyei may be delivered from this trauma and distress.

As the Archbishop for all of Sudan, I write this statement with great sorrow and commiseration for my brothers and sisters in Southern Kordofan. Despite the country's divide, the clergy and laity of the Episcopal Church of the Sudan believe they serve a living God unimpeded by political boundaries. We strive to remain one church, united in the Body of Christ and steadfast in the midst of this current tribulation.

In this season of Pentecost and beyond, may those who mourn and suffer take respite in the Holy Spirit our Comforter. May He also touch the hearts and minds of the compassionate and the able and guide them in their defence of the oppressed.



The Most Rev. Dr. Daniel Deng Bul Yak
Archbishop, Primate and Metropolitan of the
Province of the Episcopal Church of the Sudan and
Bishop of the Diocese of Juba