

# The Darfur Conflict - The Sudan

By Fr. Bill Turnbull W.F.

The government of Sudan is responsible for “ethnic cleansing” and crimes against humanity in **Darfur**, one of the world’s poorest and most inaccessible regions, on Sudan’s western border with Chad. The Sudanese government and the Arab “**Janjaweed**” militias it arms and supports have committed numerous attacks on the civilian populations of the African **Fur**, **Masalit** and **Zaghawa** ethnic groups. Government forces oversaw and directly participated in massacres, summary executions of civilians - including women and children - burnings of towns and villages, and the forcible depopulation of wide swathes of land long inhabited by the **Fur**, **Masalit** and **Zaghawa**. The **Janjaweed** militias, Muslim like the African groups they attack, have destroyed mosques, killed Muslim religious leaders, and desecrated Qorans belonging to their enemies.

The government and its **Janjaweed** allies have killed thousands of **Fur**, **Masalit**, and **Zaghawa** - often in cold blood, raped women, and destroyed villages, food stocks and other supplies essential to the civilian population. They have driven more than one million civilians, mostly farmers, into camps and settlements in **Darfur** where they live on the very edge of survival, hostage to **Janjaweed** abuses. More than 110,000 others have fled to neighbouring Chad but the vast majority of war victims remain trapped in **Darfur**. [01]

The two paragraphs above summarise the horrific situation found in **Darfur**, Sudan. The atrocities committed have been graphically reported in the world’s media since the situation worsened in February, 2003. In the pages below we take a look at what is happening in **Darfur**, how it has developed, and the problems facing its inhabitants.

## DARFUR AND ITS PEOPLES

**Greater Darfur** is the largest region in Sudan. It is one-fifth of the country covering an area of 197,203 sq.mls. (510,888 sq.kms.) and with a population of about six million, roughly 20% of Sudan’s population (1993 census). Over one million people have been affected by the conflict, and it is estimated that between 600,000 and 700,000 alone have been internally displaced (**IDP**). **Darfur** lies in the northwest of the country bordering with Chad to the west, Libya to the

northwest, and the Central African Republic to the southwest. The whole area of **Darfur** is named after the land of the largest ethnic group, the **Fur** though it was divided into South, West, and North administrative divisions by the federal government in 1994. [02]

**Darfur** has three ecological areas: the north which is sparsely populated desert, the most ecologically fragile, and is subject to desertification; the centre which includes the rich agricultural land of the **Jebel Marra** mountains; and the south that is drier and is susceptible to drought.

Some of the ethnic groups found in **Darfur** are also present over the border in Chad and there has been migration and trade across the border. The people are ethnically, linguistically, and culturally diverse but the majority are Muslims. There are two broad ethnic descriptions given to the **Darfur** population according to their

background, they are of either ‘**African**’ or ‘**Arab**’ descent, but there is some overlap between the two.

The local African population is non-Arabic speaking and they originally came to Sudan from the area of Lake Chad, and they are agriculturalists. The African ethnic groups include the Bergid, Berti, **Fur**, **Masalit**, Tama, and Tunjur, who live and farm in the central zone. The **Fur** are to be found especially in the area around

the **Jebel Marra** Mountains. **Dar Masalit** is mainly in **West Darfur** - around El Geneina and Adré in eastern Chad - and **Dar Zaghawa** is in **North Darfur**.

Those of Arab descent are nomadic and semi-nomadic Arabic speaking pastoralists. They survive by camel herding and mainly live in the arid northern area. The Arab ethnic groups include the Beni Hussein, Irayqat, Mahariya, and the northern Rizeigat. The southern and eastern area is mainly inhabited by the cattle herding Arab tribes such as the Beni Halba, Habbaniya, and the southern Rizeigat (of the Baggara). [03]

## ETHNIC CONFLICTS

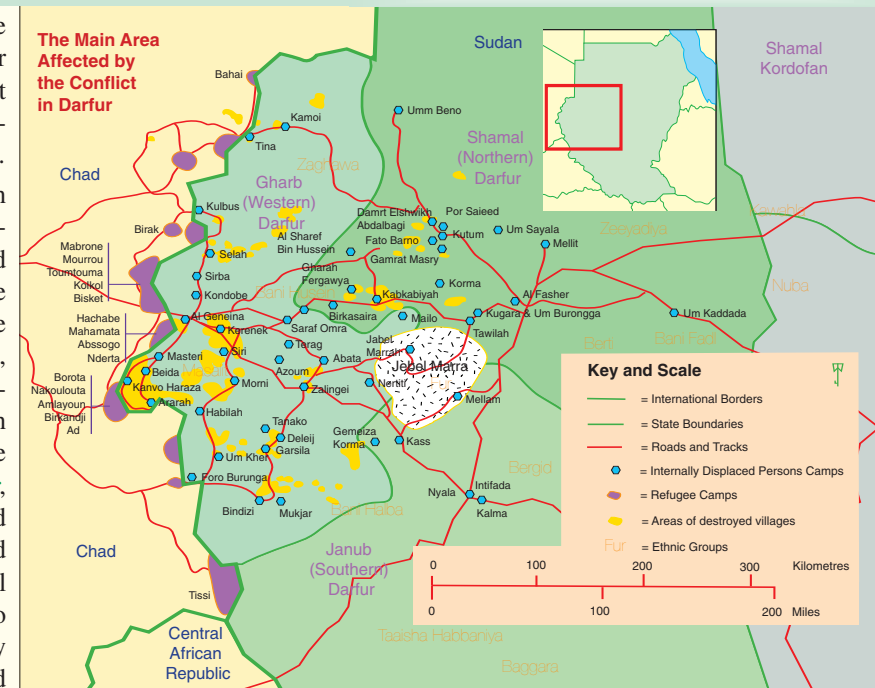
There have been clashes over land between the sedentary African farmers and Arab pastoralist tribes, including the northern Rizeigat, Mahariya,

and **Zaghawa**, in **Darfur** for many years. The disputes usually occur when the pastoralists migrate to the south during the dry season, from November to April, in search of water and grazing land. As a rule the disputes begin when the Arab’s camels and cattle trample the crops of the non-Arab farmers living in central and southern **Darfur**, or when they do not keep to the agreed times for migration in previous tribal reconciliation treaties.

Up until the 1970s these disputes were resolved through a traditional form of negotiations between the community leaders from both sides. Compensation for lost crops would be set and the route and times for the migration would be agreed. Since then the disputes and violence have escalated in **Darfur**, especially in the 1980s. During that decade the disputes were worsened

*Foot Note 03: West Darfur has a population of more than 1.7 million and is ethnically mixed though the majority are the **Masalit** and **Fur**. The divisions in the provinces are as follows: in Geneina and Habila provinces the **Masalit** are the majority (60%), followed by the Arabs and other Africans, namely, **Zaghawa**, **Erenga**, **Gimr**, **Dajo**, **Borgo** and **Fur**; in Zalingei, **Jebel Marra**, and **Wadi Salih** provinces the **Fur** are the majority; in Kulbus province there are the **Gimr** (50%), **Erenga** (30%), **Zaghawa** (15%), and Arab (5%).*

*White Fathers - White Sisters October-November 2004*



*Foot Note 01: page 1, 'Darfur Destroyed Ethnic Cleansing by Government and Militia Forces in Western Sudan', Human Rights Watch, May 2004, Vol. 16, No. 6(A).*

*02: 'Dar' means homeland, territory or country and each ethnic group has its own. Darfur, the 'Dar' of the Fur, was an independent kingdom that was absorbed into the Sudan in 1916.*

*White Fathers - White Sisters October-November 2004*

by desertification and long periods of drought; dwindling resources; the lack of good governance; and easy access to automatic weapons that have replaced the spear and sword.

Many pastoralists lost all their animals in the drought of 1984-1985 in Darfur and so carried out raids to restock their herds, thus increasing the armed banditry. Between 1985-1988 the Fur fought Arabs who attacked their villages on their way in and out of Chad and Darfur; there were incursions by the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group; and power plays by Sadeq al-Mahdi's Umma party, the main coalition partner in government. The fighting was a sign of things to come.

Politically the Arab tribes felt that they were not sufficiently represented in the Fur-dominated local administration. So in 1986 twenty-seven Arab tribes formed the Tujammo al Arabi (Arab Alliance or the Arab Gathering) in order to gain political supremacy over the region. Fur leaders were suspicious of the federal government favouring the Arabs - Arabs from the northern Nile Valley have controlled the government since independence. This fear of Arab dominance increased when the government armed the Arab Baggara 'murahleen' militias from Darfur and Kordofan.

There were further major disputes in 1987-1989 that developed into full-blown conflict and took on a more political character. They began between camel herding Arab tribes in Northern Darfur and sedentary Fur in the northern part of Jebel Marra. Instead of the disputes being settled in the traditional way or trying to resolve the reasons for the clashes - such as the lack of resources and development in the area - the disputes grew when politicians, from both sides, and the Khartoum media became involved.

On the Arab side the government began to arm the nomadic Arabs militia, who used to attack the Fur and other non-Arab tribes in the realm of the Fur. They were already known as the 'Janjaweed' and continue to carry out similar raids until the present day. The Fur formed self-defence militias that were trained by retired soldiers and deployed to defend their villages. These later developed an offensive role and some militia groups tried to establish an alliance with the Sudan People's Liberation Army /Movement (SPLA/M). [04]

During this time the Fur are believed to have lost 2,500 people and 40,000 cattle. 400 villages were burnt, fruit and vegetable farms and equipment destroyed, resulting in thousands of internally displaced people (IDP). The Arab groups reported losing 500 people and having hundreds of camps burnt.

Despite attempts to find peaceful solutions - conferences in May-July and November, 1989 - the situation continued to get worse. Things were not improved when the present military-Islamist government took over in the same year and seemed to favour the Arab tribes - several of their leaders held positions of power in the new regime. The Arab Rizegat in southern Sudan won confirmation of their own dar in the al-Duein region at this time.

The hostilities continued when the Arabs entered the Fur land. Views on why the conflict has grown differ according to a person's background. The Arabs claim that the Fur were widening the 'African Belt' around Jebel Marra by expelling all Arabs and denying them access to water and grazing lands. On the other hand the Fur claimed that the conflict was genocidal and racist with the purpose of wiping them out and settling the land with nomadic Arab

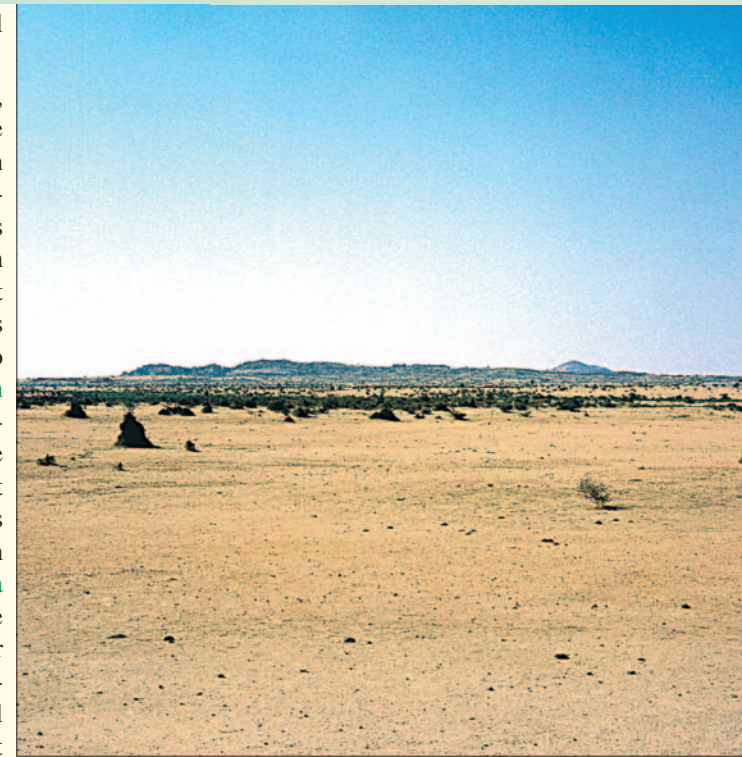
tribes groups on Fur traditional land.

Yahiya Ibrahim Bolad, ex-NIF, led an SPLA offensive into the Darfur in 1991-1993. The incursion was driven back and the government armed the local Arab tribes and deepened their alliance with them. The federal government redrew administrative boundaries in 1994, dividing the region into Northern, Southern and Western Darfur states. This split the traditional Dar of the Fur and the fertile plains of Jebel Marra. It also gave the Arab ethnic groups a new position of power, which the Fur, Masalit, and Zaghawa saw as an attempt to undermine their traditional authority in their homelands. Added to this, the division of the Masalit the traditional homeland into thirteen Amarat

(principalities) - on the 13th. March, 1995 - it prompted the 1996-1998 conflict. Hundreds of people were killed, thousands of villagers and Arab nomads lost livestock and possessions, and 100,000 refugees went to Chad. The government backed the Arab militias further. In 1998-1999 hostilities broke out once again in West Darfur when Arab nomads began moving their flocks south earlier than usual. The 1998 clashes resulted in many deaths on both sides, villages burned and more than 5,000 Masalit being displaced - they fled to Geneina town or to Chad. 1999 saw a bloodier conflict and the government reacted with military forces claiming that the Masalit were 'a fifth column' of the SPLA. The government supported the Arabs and many of the Masalit, especially their leaders, were arrested, imprisoned, and tortured.

Picture above: From the Chad/Sudan border the foothills of the Jebel Marra plateau are seen in the distance

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#### THE 'REBELS'

The Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) really became known in February 2003 - it was then called the Darfur Liberation Front (DLF) - having been founded the previous year and led by Abdel Wahid Muhammad Nur. The SLA triggered an uprising in the Jebel Marra on the 25th. February, 2003, that united nearly all the African tribes of Darfur drawing its first recruits from the Fur self-defence militias that were formed during the 1987-1989 conflict.

In 2001 a group of Fur and Masalit fighters had emerged in the Jebel Marra area of Southern and Western Darfur. At the same time young Zaghawa men rebelled against the government when the latter did not enforce the terms of a tribal peace agreement. Gradually the SLA developed through the inclusion of other ethnic groups, such as the Masalit, Zaghawa and Berti,

Foot Note 4: Later there appear to have been links between the SPLA and the SLA rebellion in providing arms, training, and strategy. The SPLA is believed to have trained 1,500 Darfurians near Raja, in western Bahr el-Ghazal, in March 2002, who joined the SLA. The SPLA support is thought to have been minimal since the peace talks with the government began. In early June 2004, the leader of the SPLA, John Garang, said that the Peace Treaty and the conflict of the southern Sudan and the conflict in Darfur are completely separate issues.

and so it changed its name from the **DLF** to the **SLA**.

The **SLA** military developed faster than its politics. The **SLA** military chief was Abdallah Abakkar who had been involved in bringing Idriss Déby to power in Chad. They took control of Golo, in the **Jebel Marra**, and made it their headquarters. See 'The Chadian Connection and Influence' below.

The early political platform of the **SLA/M** was similar to that of the **SPLA**. It condemned the political and economic marginalisation and under-development of **Darfur**, and demanded the separation of religion and state. They wanted further socio-economic development for the region; an end to the nomad militias and government protection from them; and power sharing with the central government. The government refused to negotiate with the 'bandits' as they call them. The **rebels** continued to have successes, especially with guerrilla units that use improvised battle vehicles to raid in government controlled areas, but while doing this their villages still came under attack.

The **rebels** see the real purpose of the conflict as a process of **Arabization** that has been carried out by previous and the present Sudanese governments. This is obvious enough in the **Darfur** conflict, but to them it is also reflected, and confirmed, in the treatment received by those Africans who fled to Khartoum from the **Darfur** droughts of the 1980s and were considered an uncontrollable and threatening presence, and second-class citizens in an Arab city.

The Justice and Equality Movement (**JEM**), dominated by **Zaghawa**, emerged later in 2003 than the **SLA**, and was reported to have a stronger political agenda, while the **SLA** was believed to have greater military force. The **JEM's** religious stance was questioned as it was rumoured

*Foot Note 5: Since 1993, the leaders of Eritrea, Ethiopia, Uganda, and Kenya have tried to find peaceful solutions for the conflicts in the Sudan under the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), with mixed success. The IGAD initiative pushed the 1994 Declaration of Principles (DOP) that tried to find elements that are necessary for a peace settlement. The Sudanese Government did not sign the DOP until 1997.*

that it had links with Turabi and Islamist circles.

#### GOVERNMENT RESPONSE AND STRATEGY

From the government's point of view much of what may be called the 'Darfur crisis' is rooted in the disputes that have plagued Sudan's Islamist movement since it took power in 1989. This is the case in both domestic and international politics. On the international stage the situation in **Darfur** cannot be divorced from the **IGAD** process. [05]

In many respects the civilian and military authorities in the Sudanese government considered **Darfur rebellion** as a **regime threat**. Here the **rebels** pose a greater threat than the **SPLA** rebellion mainly because the **SLA** and **JEM** groups are Muslim and they might be able to form a Darfurian coalition that could gain the support of other tribes in the west and in states such as Kordofan. This is different to the other 'rebellions' that are taking place within the country, especially when they are between the Islamist government and Christian or animist **rebels** such as in the south. So the situation in **Darfur** is complicated further by the fact that it is Muslim against Muslim, thus making it more than just an ethnic clash.

There is also the 'Turabi threat' to the government. Dr. Hassan al Turabi has connections with the **JEM rebels**, many of whom were members of the **Popular National Congress (PNC)**, formed by Turabi, and the government fears that he will find a way back into power by using the **Darfur** conflict. [06]

The **Zaghawa** are seen as a threat to the government as well. It not clear why the **Zaghawa** are involved in the **Darfur rebellion**. It is suggested that it could be to redress local grievances or to gain power in Khartoum, as they did in Chad.

Not all of them are anti-government and in 1987 some joined the Arab tribes and tried to claim land from **Fur** farmers. The **Zaghawa**, are transnational traders with only 1% of the population in both Chad and Sudan but they have proved to have pivotal power in the past. It is said by some that they want to revive a mythical 'Greater State of the Zaghawa' that would be both sides of the Chad-Sudan border. The **Zaghawa** have been the subject of propaganda from **Darfur** Arab activists and the government concerning their political and economic ambitions.

#### THE JANJAWEEED

In about the year 1989 a new word, **Janjaweed (Janjawid)**, was coined to describe the Arab militias in **Darfur**. There are various trans-

lations of **Janjaweed**, such as the 'devil's cavaliers armed with Kalashnikovs' or 'guns on horseback'.

The **Janjaweed** are nomadic and semi-nomadic fighters of Arab pastoralists background. Up until the late 1990s the **Janjaweed** were loosely affiliated Arab groups from areas such as **Darfur**, southern Kordofan and Chad. Some follow the **Hambati** tradition (social bandits) and are robbers rejected by their communities, while others are common criminals. They are armed with AK-47s and G-3 rifles and usually ride

*Foot Note 6: Dr. Hassan al Turabi is the leader of the Islamist movement in Sudan. Along with other Islamist followers he formed the Popular National Congress (PNC) party. They claim to represent the true Islamist movement. The PNC used strikes and other similar actions to challenge the government. Turabi is a former leader of the National Assembly. He was mentor to President El Bashir until they fell out in 1999, when Turabi attempted to take power from President El Bashir. El Bashir declared a state of emergency and adjourned the National Assembly. Turabi signed an agreement with Col. John Garang, leader of the SPLA, in February 2001, and his enemies in the government took this opportunity to put him in jail for 'treason'. The Constitutional Court ordered his release later in the year, but the government kept him in jail until late 2003. Other members of the PNC were in and out of jail at the same time. Turabi was rearrested on the 31st. March, 2004, for allegedly plotting a coup.*

*Picture above: The desert 'roads' and an old trusted Leyland lorry*



camels or horses, though some have specially adapted vehicles.

The **Janjaweed** have been badly affected by the desertification that has reduced water resources and grazing pasture in **Darfur**. Gradually their low level clashes have developed so that their main objective now appears to be to drive the African ethnic groups from their land so that their water sources and pasture can be taken over.

The **Janjaweed** organisational structure is not certain but it is thought that the government formed three divisions: the Strike Force, the

Border Guard, and the Hamina (traditional tribal leaders). According to **Masalit** leaders, in early 2004, some of the **Janjaweed** were being organized into six brigades (liwa) along similar lines to the Sudanese regular army. Most **Janjaweed** leaders are emirs (omdas) from Arab tribes such as: the Awlad Zeid, the Beni Halba, the Ma'alia, and the Misseriya. Several of them were appointed by the government in the mid-1990s when the local administration was reorganized. Over the years the government has combined the **Janjaweed** militia with the regular Sudanese army in suppressing the African population of **Darfur**. In spring 2003 the government began a scorched earth strategy giving the **Janjaweed** free range to attack civilians believed to be supporting the rebellion. Their tactics include looting, abduction, maiming, summary execution, and rape. The government even compensates the **Janjaweed** officers and militia members by supplying them with homes, cars (such as Land Cruisers), and Thuraya satellite phones as well as a monthly salary.

In the past the Sudanese government has used other ethnic militias who are traditional enemies to fight anti-government **rebels** in counterinsurgency operations. These include the Anya-Nya Nuer militias; the *murahleen*, Baggara (Arab) militias of the Rizeigat, from southern **Darfur**, who were incorporated into official government militias in 1989 to attack Dinka and Nuer civilians. This deteriorated into the mass slaughter of civilians, looting, burning, and slave-taking in northern Bahr El Ghazal; the Misseriya from southern Kordofan.

The **Janjaweed** mainly attack **Fur**, **Masalit** and **Zaghawa** villages rather than the rebel militia. The attacks are often supported by regular government troops, shelling, and the air force bombing the farming communities, thus inflicting heavy casualties. Many women and children have been abducted in **Darfur**, but it

is not clear if this has developed into slave taking.

Most of the attacks on villages are unrecorded but the result is that whole areas have been cleared of their population - **Masalit** and **Fur** farmers. Villages have been burnt and livestock, food stores, wells, and personal belongings have been looted or destroyed. The people have been driven into settlements outside the larger towns where they are subjected to further abuse by the **Janjaweed**.

#### THE CHADIAN CONNECTION AND INFLUENCE

There are external influences and involvements in the **Darfur** conflict. These include: the Chadian civilian communities which are aligned with both sides of the conflict; the Chadian authorities; some of the Chadian armed forces; and other armed border groups that take advantage of the situation to steal goods and livestock.

The ethnic groups that straddle the border include: the **Zaghawa** (north-east), the **Masalit** (around Adre); and sub-clans of the Iraygat, Rizeigat and Misseriya Arabs. They are a major factor in the cross-border politics. President Idriss Déby, of Chad and a **Zaghawa** of the Bideyat clan from northeastern Chad, came to power in 1990 through a **Darfur**-based insurgency that was supported by the Sudanese government, and overthrew ex-president Hissène Habré. At the start both the **SLA** and **JEM** were dominated by **Zaghawa**, and were supported by the Chadian **Zaghawa** community and many **Zaghawa** in the Chadian military.

The Abéché Peace Talks of September 2003, the first international negotiations held in the Chadian regional capital nearest to **Darfur**, took place in and were mediated by Chad. They produced an agreement between the **SLA** and the Sudanese government that provided for: a ceasefire; relocation of forces; control of the militias; and to increase social and economic

development in the region. It was signed in September, 2003, and led to a brief lull in fighting before the **Janjaweed** attacks began again in the Zalingei area of **West Darfur** and near Nyala, the capital of **South Darfur**, in early September and October 2003. Although the ceasefire was extended it was broken by militia activity. By early December 2003 thoughts of upholding the ceasefire had gone and new talks scheduled in N'djamena, the capital of Chad, collapsed.

The **Zaghawa** dominated **JEM** increased its forces by recruiting **SLA** members who were not happy with the concessions made by their leaders in the Abéché agreement. Some believe the difference between the **JEM** and the **SLA** may have been negotiating tactics rather than ideology. The two groups coordinate activities and possibly are in the process of merging.

#### THE PRESENT SITUATION (FEBRUARY 2003 -)

The present situation in **Darfur** is completely different to what had happened in the past. Through the last two decades what used to be annual local land disputes between the Arab nomads and the sedentary Africans have been politicized by the federal government. The government has intervened directly and indirectly to intensify the disputes so that they have covered the whole of the **Darfur** area. With the introduction of modern weapons, the government support for the **Janjaweed**, and the active deployment of the Sudanese regular army and air force, the African civilian population has been subjected to what may be considered 'ethnic cleansing'.



Picture above: Sheep grazing in a thorn bush area of the desert

When the **SLA** attacked El Fashir and Mellit, in April 2003, the capital and second largest town in **North Darfur** respectively, with some success the **Darfur rebellion** was seen as being well under way. The federal government was hard hit with even some soldiers born in **Darfur** deserting to join the **rebels**. The government transferred troops from southern Sudan in an attempt to seal the Chad and Libyan borders, but this did not stop the arms circulating.

In May, 2003, as a reaction to the **SLA**'s military success, the government sacked the governors of **North** and **West Darfur** and other officials and increased the military presence in **Darfur**. They set up a Crisis Committee that decided to officially enlist the Arab **Janjaweed** militias, to give them arms and training, even immunity from local criminal prosecution for the crimes they commit against ethnic groups that are

allegedly aligned with the **rebels**. The **rebels** continued to have successes but now their villages and civilians came under intense attack. In July, 2003, the conflict escalated with the fighting concentrated in **North Darfur**, and the government responded to the **SLA** attacks by launching an offensive in Um Barou, Tine, and Karnoi. This took the form of heavy bombing by Antonov aircraft and ground offensives of government troops with heavy equipment. The **Janjaweed** militias also took part. By August the bombing raids had caused thousands of civilians to flee **North Darfur** for Chad, which by then hosted over 65,000 Sudanese refugees - according to the UNHCR. The **Janjaweed** increased their attacks on villages and towns in **West Darfur** in December, 2003, and caused more displaced persons to flee their villages.

Omar El Beshir, the Sudanese president, vowed to annihilate the rebellion and in mid-January, 2004, the government launched a major offensive against rebel-held areas in **North Darfur**. By late February estimates of the human upheaval were as follows: displaced persons from **Darfur** were more than 750,000, the majority of whom continued to experience attacks and looting even after fleeing their homes; the refugees in Chad were more than 110,000, with nearly 30,000 refugees arriving in December 2003 alone, and over 18,000 in late January after the government offensive.

On 9 February, 2004, President El Bashir announced victory. He said that the war was over and refugees could be repatriated. The fighting between government forces and the rebel groups has continued, with clashes reported around Nyala, Kubum El Fashir and other areas in March, 2004. At the time of writing - July 2004 - the fighting and problems still go on.

#### DIFFERENCE WITH PRESENT CONFLICT

The main differences between clashes of the past and what is happening now, as has been

hinted at before, are as follows: new racial and ethnic implications have developed that could destroy the historic delicate coexistence between the ethnic groups; it is difficult to remain impartial and so some previously neutral ethnic groups have aligned themselves with the rebel **SLA/M** and **JEM**, such as the Jebel and Dorok, or with the government and **Janjaweed** militia. To complicate things further some African ethnic groups, such as the Gimr, have aligned themselves with the government and the **Janjaweed**, while some Arab groups are believed to support the **SLA**.

There has been substantial evidence gathered by many organizations - Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, the United Nations - to prove that the Sudanese government forces and **Janjaweed** have systematically attacked and destroyed villages, food stocks, schools, clinics, and water sources, all essential for the survival of **Fur** and **Masalit** civilians in large parts of **Darfur**. The raids carried out are not just one offs. Often the villages are attacked, sometimes by the government air force and then by land, across wide areas and the operations last for days until the local population is driven away.

The majority of attacks on villages are carried out by both **Janjaweed** and government forces, but witnesses say that the **Janjaweed** do most of the looting of the people's belongings and livestock. The victims, especially, see it as no longer the looting by Arab nomads, as in the past, but as a part of a deliberate policy to kill or displace the **Fur** and **Masalit** people. The **Janjaweed** are rewarded with the loot for services rendered to the government.

In the attacks there have been many human rights violations, the practice of rape is not the least. It is difficult to know the extent of rape by the **Janjaweed**, but incidents have been reported when they have attacked villages. The **Janjaweed** also rape girls and women who are

in the government controlled settlements for displaced people that are found around the major towns.

As well as targeting civilians the government and **Janjaweed** forces have deliberately attacked local Muslims, killed imams and systematically destroyed mosques and desecrated Islamic articles, such as prayer mats and copies of the Koran. The **Fur**, **Masalit**, and **Zaghawa**, like the **Janjaweed**, are Muslims. Almost all the population of **Darfur** belong to the Tijaniya sect of Sufi Islam that extends from Senegal to Sudan.

The intent of the **Janjaweed** and the government forces in such attacks, and in the whole of the current conflict, appears to be to permanently displace the inhabitants of African ethnic origin. The **Janjaweed** have set up camp in

some of the villages they have destroyed in **Dar Masalit**. This deters the **Masalit** from returning and from there the **Janjaweed** mount raids into the mountains after the **SLA**, and over the border into Chad to stop the refugees returning to collect their grain and other belongings. There have also been reports that some of the **Janjaweed** have brought their families, and related Arab ethnic groups, from the north, which hints at a further development in the government's **Arabization** policy. If such actions continue the ethnic make-up of the region will be permanently altered leaving a large displacement African population in **IDP** and refugee settlements that will be reliant on outside aid for their survival.

#### THE FUTURE

This article has relied heavily on reports from human rights organisations that have reported



Picture above: Cattle grazing in the desert near the Chad/Sudan border

on the **Darfur** area over many years. They tell the plight of the ordinary African Darfurians who have been forced to flee their homes often leaving dead family and friends behind. They now rely upon the hospitality of related ethnic groups and refugee camps in Chad, or on the **IDP** facilities around the main towns of **Darfur**.

The **Darfur Conflict** has been known to the Sudanese government and the international community for a number of years. The problems of **Darfur** are vast and it may be said that they will not be resolved by the Sudanese government. This does not mean that the international community should continue the **silence** under the guise that there are other pressing situations. If they do, then charges of complicity in genocide may be brought again ten years after the atrocities in Rwanda were ignored and world leaders said they would not let it happen again.

# Notes on the Catholic Church in The Sudan

Compiled by Fr. Bill Turnbull W.F. \*

## ARCHDIOCESE OF KHARTOUM

**ARCHBISHOP:** M. Rev. Gabriel Zubeir Wako, born in Mboro (Wau) 27.2.1941; ordained priest 27.7.1963; consecrated Bishop of Wau 6.4.1975; promoted coadjutor of Khartoum 10.10.1981. Rt. Rev. Daniel Adwok Kur (Auxiliary), born in Ater (Upper Nile) in 1952, ordained priest 29.5.1977; consecrated Bishop 19.02.1993.

**THE ARCHDIOCESE:** Pope Gregory XVI established the Apostolic Vicariate of Central Africa with See at Khartoum (3.4.1846). The Archdiocese, Metropolitan See, was erected on the 12.12.1974. It comprises of the administrative provinces of the following States: Khartoum, Northern, Red Sea, Nahr el Neel, Kassala, Gezira, Gedaref, White Nile, Sennar, Blue Nile; it also serves two parishes, Renk and Bunj, of Malakal Diocese, in Upper Nile State. The Archdiocese is divided into Pastoral Areas: Kosti Pastoral Area erected in 1985; Vicariate for the displaced erected in 1992 to care for the population evicted from the urban areas of the capital and forcibly resettled in Jebel Awlia, As-Salam (Jabarona), Dar es-Salam, and Wad ramlly; and Khartoum Pastoral Area, established in 1993, which covers the rest. **Area** 377,238 sq.ml. (977,300 sq.km.); **Population** 18,100,000; **Catholics** 901,500.

## DIOCESE OF EL OBEID

**BISHOP:** Rt. Rev. Macram Max Gassis. Rt. Rev. Antonio Menegazzo MCCJ (Apostolic Administrator), born at Cittadella (PD - Italy) on 13.09.1931; ordained priest on 15.06.1957; appointed Apostolic Administrator of el Obeid on 05.06.1992; consecrated titular Bishop of Mesarfelta on 03.03.1996.

**THE DIOCESE:** El Obeid is the capital of the North Kordofan State and the HQ of Sheikan Province. The Vicariate Apostolic of el Obeid, detached

from the Vicariate Ap. of Khartoum (10.05.1960) and became a suffragan Diocese of Khartoum on 12.12.1974. The Diocese comprises of six States: North, South and West Kordofan, North, South and West Darfur. Because of the civil war, the Diocese is split into two. Part of the Southern area can not be reached from El Obeid. By delegation of the Apostolic Administrator, Bishop Macram Max Gassis is to care for the pastoral assistance of this area. **Area** 343,352 sq.ml. (888,939 sq.km.); **Population** 8,900,000; **Catholics** 137,000. \*\*

## ARCHDIOCESE OF JUBA

**ARCHBISHOP:** M. Rev. Paolino Lukudu Loro, MCCJ, born at Kuda Lodimi (Juba) 23.08.1940; ordained priest in Verona (Italy) on 12.04.1970; appointed Ap. Administrator of El Obeid on 12.12.1974; consecrated bishop of El Obeid 27.05.1979; promoted Archbishop of Juba on 12.02.1983.

**THE ARCHDIOCESE:** Juba is the capital of Bahr el Gebel State and HQ of the Bahr el Jebel Province; it is the historic capital of Southern Sudan. The area of Juba was detached from the Ap. Vicariate of Wau and attached to the Ap. Prefecture of Equatoria Nile with See at Gulu (Uganda) in 1923. It was elevated to an Archdiocese and Metropolitan See on 12.12.1974. The Archdiocese comprises of the Province of Bhar el Jebel of the same State. **Area** 9,703 sq.ml. (25,137 sq.km.); **Population** 692,000; **Catholics** 480,000.

## DIOCESE OF MALAKAL

**BISHOP:** Rt. Rev. Vincent Moywok Nyiker, born in Atigo-Tonga (Malakal) 25.1.1933; ordained Priest 21.7.1963; appointed Ap. Administrator of Malakal in 1977; consecrated Bishop 27.5.1979.

**THE DIOCESE:** Malakal is the capital of Upper Nile State. 'Missio-sui-juris' of Kodok erected and detached from the Ap. Vicariate of Khartoum (10.01.1933). Elevated to the Diocese of Malakal, suffragan of Juba on 12.12.1974.

The Diocese of Malakal comprises of six provinces (North Upper Nile, Sobat, Fashoda, Maban, Tonga, Renk, Mellut) of Upper Nile State; four provinces (Rubkona, Pariang, Leer, Mayom) of Wihda State; and four provinces (Bor, Nahr Pibor, Akobo, Fam el Szaraf) of Jongley State. **Area** 91,868 sq.ml. (238,000 sq.km.); **Population** 2,750,000; **Catholics** 45,000.

## DIOCESE OF RUMBOK

**BISHOP:** Rt. Rev. Caesar Mazzolari, MCCJ, born at Brescia (Italy) 9.7.1937; ordained Priest 17.3.1962; appointed Apostolic Administrator of Rumbek in 1990, appointed Bishop on 21.11.1998, consecrated on 6.1.1999.

**THE DIOCESE:** Rumbek is the capital of Buhirat (Lakes) State and HQ of the Rumbek Province. Under colonial rule the territory of Rumbek Diocese was reserved as a zones of religious influence, to the Episcopalian Church, Catholic missionaries were not allowed in. The Apostolic Vicariate of Rumbek (03.07.1955) was elevated to Diocese of Rumbek, suffragan of Juba, on 12.12.1974. The Diocese comprises of three provinces (Rumbek, Yirol, Chuoibet) of Buhairat State, and two provinces (Warap, Tonj) of the Warap State. **Area** 21,739 sq.ml. (56,318 sq.km.); **Population** 1,500,000; **Catholics** 125,000.

## DIOCESE OF TOMBURA-YAMBIO

**BISHOP:** Rt. Rev. Joseph Gasi Abangite, born in Mupoi 1928; ordained Priest 21.12.1957; consecrated Bishop 6.4.1975.



**THE DIOCESE:** Apostolic Prefecture of Mupoi, detached from the Ap. Vicariate of Bahr-el-Ghazal (03.03.1949). Diocese of Tombora elevated, suffragan of Juba (12.12.1974) and the name changed to Diocese of Tombura-Yambio on 21.2.1986. The Diocese comprises of the districts of Tombura, Yambio and Meridi of the Western Equatoria State, bordering with D.R. Congo and Central African Republic. **Area** 31,390 sq.ml. (81,321 sq.km.); **Population** 454,000; **Catholics** 250,000.

## DIOCESE OF TORIT

**BISHOP:** Rt. Rev. Paride Taban, born in Opari (Juba) in 1936; ordained Priest 24.5.1964; consecrated Bishop, auxiliary of Juba, 4.05.1980; transferred to Torit 2.7.1983.

Rt. Rev. Akio Muttek Johnson (Auxiliary) **THE DIOCESE:** Torit is the HQ of Imatong province of East Equatoria State. It is a suffragan

Picture above: A 'desert boy' who just turned up from nowhere

\* Edited information from the Sudan Catholic Church web site at <http://www.eglisesoudan.org/>  
 \*\* Figures from the Catholic Hierarchy at <http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/diocese/delob.html>



## Republic Of The Sudan

Egypt

Libya

Chad

Central African Republic

Democratic Republic of Congo

Bahr al Jabal, Gharb al Istiwa'iyah (West Equatoria), Gharb (West) Bahr al Ghazal, Gharb (West) Darfur, Gharb (West) Kordofan, Janub (South) Darfur, Janub (South) Kordofan, Junqali, Kassala, Nahr an Nil (River Nile), Shamal (North) Bahr al Ghazal, Shamal (North) Darfur, Shamal (North) Kordofan, Sharq al Istiwa'iyah (East Equatoria), Sinnar, Warab.

of Juba and was detached on 02.03.1983. Torit Diocese comprises of the three Eastern provinces of the East Equatoria State: Kapoeta, Imatong, Magwi; and the eastern end of the province of Yei of Bahr el Gebel State. Due to the civil war, the See of the Diocese is at Narus, 30 miles. from the Kenyan border. The greater part of the Diocese is controlled by the SPLA. Torit and some other larger villages are controlled by the Central Government and cannot be served from Narus. By an agreement with the Bishop of Malakal, the Bishop of Torit takes pastoral care of the parish and area of Boma, of the Diocese of Malakal. **Area** 30,494 sq.km. (79,000 sq.km.); **Population** 550,000; **Catholics** 410,000.

### DIocese OF WAU

**BISHOP:** Mgr Rudolph Deng Majak, born at Akwac (Wau) 01.11.1946; ordained Priest 20.11.1970; appointed Ap. Administrator of Wau 12.04.1991; consecrated Bishop on 11.02.1996.

**THE DIOCESE:** Wau is the capital of the Western Bahr el Ghazal State and the headquarters of Wau province of the same State. Apostolic Prefecture of Bahr el Ghazal detached from the Ap. Vicariate of Central Africa (20.05.1913). Apostolic Vicariate of Bahr el Ghazal (13.06.1917); Apostolic Vicariate of Wau (26.05.1961); and elevated to the Diocese of Wau, suffragan of Juba, on 12.12.1974. The Diocese of Wau comprises of two States: West Bahr el Ghazal (two provinces Wau and Raja) and North Bahr-el-Ghazal (two provinces Aweil and Ariath) and two provinces (Grogrial and Turalei) of Warap State. The following areas are under the care of Rumbek Ordinary: North Bahr et Ghazal State (except for Aweil Town and along the railway); the provinces of Grogrial,

Turalei and Apuk of Warap State; all communities living 15-20 miles from Wau. **Area** 57,900 sq.ml. (150,000 sq.km.); **Population** 2,700,000; **Catholics** 900,000.

### DIocese OF YEI

**BISHOP:** Rt. Rev. Erkolano Lodu Yombe (Tombe), born at Bilinyang (Juba) 25.04.1943; ordained Priest 17.05.1970; consecrated Bishop of Yei 28.11.1986.

**THE DIOCESE:** Yei is the HQ of Yei River province of the Bahr el Gebel State. Yei Diocese, suffragan of Juba and detached from the Diocese of Rumbek, was erected on 21.03.1986. It comprises of the Yei River province and Kajokaji province of the Bahr el Gebel State, and Mundri province of the Western Equatoria State. **Area** 15,504 sq.ml. (40,165 sq.km.); **Population** 450,000; **Catholics** 214,000.



Sources: Vigilance Soudan at <http://www.vigilsd.org>; various articles from Le Monde Diplomatic at <http://MondeDiplo.com/>; various International Crisis Group reports at <http://www.crisisweb.org/home/index.cfm?id=1230&l=1>; various BBC reports; Amnesty International at <http://web.amnesty.org/library/eng-sdn/index>; various United Nations documents <http://www.irinnews.org>; Human Rights Watch at <http://hrw.org/doc?t=africa&c=sudan>; Sudan Catholic Church: The Sudan Catholic Bishops' Conference at <http://www.eglisesoudan.org/> and Catholic Hierarchy at <http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/country/sd.html>.