

# **SUDAN**

## **DESTROYING ETHNIC IDENTITY THE SECRET WAR AGAINST THE NUBA**

Over the last few years the peoples of the Nuba Mountains of southern Kordofan have been suffering the combined effects of the cruelties of the army, government-sponsored militias and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA). These groups all have different aims and methods, but the combined effect has been to turn the once peaceful and prosperous Nuba Mountains into a battlefield, where villages are destroyed, people driven from their land, community leaders rendered powerless or assassinated, and increasing numbers of civilians are killed. There is evidence that suggests that community leaders and the class of small educated Nuba are special targets of a government campaign of elimination. While large scale massacres are rare, the steady war of attrition is likely to lead to the destruction of the society and culture of Nuba, together with its economic and political vibrancy.

At the time of writing, no news is available from the Nuba Mountains. This is because the entire area has been sealed off for a large military operation undertaken by the army, ostensibly against the SPLA. Previous military actions have resulted in large numbers of civilian deaths, and there is no indication that the army has changed its methods. Before the Nuba Mountains area was closed in mid-October, there were frequent reports of disappearances and killings.

### **Recent Atrocities**

Africa Watch has learned of widespread arrests and suspected killings of civilians in the provincial capital, Kadugli, in late September and early October. The full details of the incident remain unclear, in part because of a systematic government effort to prevent news from the area reaching the outside world.

According to reports, the arrests were sparked by a military engagement on September 25. A convoy of the Popular Defence Forces (PDF; paramilitaries organized by the government, see below) had left Kadugli, when it was ambushed by a unit of the SPLA at al Sha'ir junction, about ten miles from the town. Several members of the PDF were killed, including the commander and two other officers. Eight members of the SPLA were reported dead. Following the engagement, about one hundred civilians in Kadugli were arrested by military intelligence and the PDF, on suspicion of being members of an SPLA "fifth column." One of those arrested was Mirghani Kafi, a senior male nurse. Previous detainees held by the PDF and military intelligence have been subjected to torture or execution, often they have simply "disappeared." Africa Watch fears that many of these detainees will have been tortured or killed.

This is only the most recent of a long line of such disappearances. In August, a previous round of disappearances culminated when it was reported that at least 44 Nuba men had been detained by military intelligence in Kadugli town and taken to Dilling. They were all educated, including ten teachers, and were detained on the suspicion of supporting the SPLA. They were reported to have been subjected to torture. Seven are known to have survived, but the remaining 37 "disappeared." A list of names is given at the end of this newsletter.

The citizens of Kadugli demanded to be told the whereabouts of the missing 37, and the then-Governor, Abdel Wahab Abdel Rahman, was asked by Brig. Ibrahim Nayal Idam, a Nuba military officer serving in the government, to account for them. He has failed to do so.<sup>1</sup>

In addition, there are reliable accounts of tens of people being taken by truck from villages including al Shatt, Katcha and Kurungu. In another incident, a wedding party was intercepted close to Kadugli town, and the men killed and the women abducted.

These abuses are occurring in the context of an almost complete lack of judicial, administrative or political safeguards for the rights of the Nuba people. In common with other Sudanese citizens, they are ruled by a military government which has imposed a nationwide state of emergency, has invested the army and security forces with a wide range of arbitrary powers, and which regularly flouts basic human rights. There is no independent judiciary, no right of protest, and no form of elected representation in government. The Nuba are particularly disadvantaged because the last few years have witnessed a systematic campaign aimed at removing ethnic Nuba from judicial, administrative and security posts in the Nuba Mountains and elsewhere. Consequently, all the major positions of authority in the Nuba Mountains are held by non-Nuba, including many representatives of the Sudanese Arab groups that are currently in conflict with the Nuba. The abuses against Nuba villagers are therefore committed with complete impunity. There is evidence that this is part of a wider campaign aimed at depriving the Nuba of its leadership, by

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<sup>1</sup> Abdel Wahab Abdel Rahman has since been promoted to be Minister for Services in the Kordofan State (previously Regional) Government.

removing educated people and denying educational opportunities to the younger generation of Nuba.

## **Background to the Nuba**

The Nuba number about one million. Their traditional home is in southern Kordofan, which is part of northern Sudan, and almost the exact geographic center of the country. Despite this central position, they are a marginal group.

"The Nuba" is a term which encompasses what the anthropologist Siegfried Nadel described as a "bewildering complexity" of ethnic groups.<sup>2</sup> The late Roland Stevenson, a noted linguist of the Nuba, identified more than fifty languages and dialect clusters, falling into ten groups.<sup>3</sup>

The traditional cultures of the Nuba include indigenous religions, many of which now survive only as vestiges. These traditional cultures involved a variety of forms of social organization. Well-known aspects of the cultures included music, dance, body-painting and ritual wrestling. Christian missions were successful in converting a small but influential number of Nuba; a larger number have become Moslems.

After British occupation in 1900, the Nuba attempted resistance, which proved futile. They remained peripheral to the main currents of Sudanese politics, following neither of the main Arab-dominated northern parties, and not belonging to the intermittently separatist South. In the 1960s, the Nuba Mountains Federation, headed by Father Philip Ghabbush, was briefly successful in winning seats to the Constituent Assembly on a regionalist platform.

The Nuba are mostly farmers, though they also own livestock as well. The mountains are fertile, and the area was little-affected by the drought-famine of 1983-5. Since the 1950s, increasing numbers of Nuba men have become migrant laborers in Khartoum and on the farming schemes of central and eastern Sudan, leading to processes of partial cultural and economic integration into the dominant Sudanese Arab identity.

However, Nuba identity is in part defined in opposition to the other main inhabitants of southern Kordofan, the Sudanese Arabs. These groups are traditionally cattle-herders, known as *Baggara*. While western parts of the province are solely inhabited by the Baggara, they have also moved and settled among the Nuba themselves. The Baggara have been more closely connected with the center of political power in Sudan; they were loyal supporters of the 19th century Mahdi, and during this century have remained an influential part of the neo-Mahdist Umma Party, of which

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<sup>2</sup> S. F. Nadel, *The Nuba*, London, 1947, p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> R. C. Stevenson, *The Nuba People of Kordofan Province*, Khartoum, 1984.

the former Prime Minister Sadiq el Mahdi was leader. Their combination of Arab identity, fervent Moslem faith, military prowess, and strategic location along the north-south internal boundary in Sudan has also made them prized allies of the fundamentalist Moslem Brothers, who now wield power in the present military government.

Nuba-Baggara conflict has been a feature of southern Kordofan for generations, involving competition over pastures, wells, markets and positions in the local administration. Traditionally, the extent of this conflict has been constrained by the low level of military technology, which was equally available to both parties, and by the economic inter-dependence of the two communities. The Baggara needed to buy grain from Nuba villages, while the Nuba relied upon livestock products and trade supplied by the Arabs. There was also limited intermarriage.

During the 1970s, the political atmosphere in Sudan was favorable to the Nuba. The 1972 Addis Ababa agreement which brought the first civil war to an end removed an important source of tension in the Nuba Mountains, and President Nimeiri's early promise of a secular, multi-cultural and economically developing Sudan appealed to the Nuba people. It was a decade of hope, in which social services were provided and development schemes were started. In 1978, the provincial capital, Kadugli, was selected to host the national Independence Day celebrations. The title of an anthropological study researched during this period, *National Integration and Local Integrity*,<sup>4</sup> captures the optimistic anticipation that the future of Sudan would see a fruitful combination of socio-economic development and the retention of traditional ways of life.

## **The Start of the War**

These hopes were to turn to tragedy: warfare, mass displacement and famine. The seeds for this disaster were sown in the early 1980s, with economic crisis and political confrontation. President Nimeiri turned increasingly towards political Islam, polarizing the country between his erstwhile secular supporters, particularly in the south, and the militant Islamists. The SPLA was formed in the south in 1983, but with a program aimed at maintaining a united but transformed Sudan. From the outset, the SPLA aimed to obtain support among radicals and marginalized peoples in the north, and began to recruit in the Nuba Mountains.

The SPLA made its first incursion into the Nuba Mountains in 1985. An SPLA unit attacked the Baggara village of Gardud in the eastern Nuba Mountains, reportedly killing over 100 armed and unarmed Arabs. This attack quickly became notorious and the subject of much rumor and speculation. The true details remain obscure, but in response the government (then the Transitional Military Council headed by Gen Suwar al Dahab) began to arm the Baggara tribes in a systematic manner. In the Nuba Mountains, the Misiriya Zurug and the Hawazma were the main

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<sup>4</sup> Gerd Bauman, *National Integration and Local Integrity: The Miri of the Nuba Mountains of Sudan*, Oxford, 1987.

beneficiaries of this policy. The Nuba were not given arms. This was a significant step in the creation of the Baggara militias, generally known as *Murahaliin*. The *Murahaliin* were primarily intended as a pro-government force against the SPLA in the south and its mainly Dinka sympathisers, but also had the aim of guarding the Nuba population, whose loyalty was considered suspect. Nuba community leaders consistently opposed the policy of arming the Baggara, insisting that security problems in the area should be solved by an increased police presence. Many community leaders also voiced their opposition to the SPLA, which they anticipated would bring only trouble to the area.

The newly-armed militia began small-scale raiding of Nuba communities immediately. From late 1985 there are reports of cattle-raiding and a few incidents of killing of Nuba farmers. The local police force, outgunned by the *Murahaliin*, were unwilling to intervene. In the April 1986 elections, there was a substantial Nuba vote for the Sudan National Party, headed by the veteran Rev. Philip Ghabbush, which underlined the political alienation between the Nuba and the dominant sectarian parties. Thereafter, the government began -- slowly at first -- to transfer Nuba magistrates, policemen and administrators away from the Nuba Mountains. Most of the judicial, administrative and security posts were taken by non-Nuba, mostly Arabs. By 1990, military intelligence, the most active element of the security forces, was reported to be staffed exclusively by Baggara and other Arabs.

There was a marked escalation of the war in July 1987, when an SPLA unit infiltrated the Nuba Mountains. This unit, known as the New Kush Battalion, was headed by a Nuba commander named Yousif Kowa Mekke, had a majority of Nuba members. Its intention was to stay in the eastern part of the Nuba Mountains and take the guerrilla war into Kordofan. The SPLA unit quickly occupied the area around Talodi, and began recruiting Nuba youths, sometimes by force, and by late 1988 it was estimated to number 3,000 men. It also systematically assassinated and kidnapped community leaders and government officials who refused to cooperate. Chief Hussein Karbus and Chief Ismail Ali Jiger of south Delami were among those killed, and *Mek* Hamid Nira and *Imam* Ali Abdalla of Abri were among those kidnapped. Some traders were also ambushed and killed. Thousands of farmers fled to the towns -- there were estimated to be 52,000 displaced in March 1988. Local people appealed to the police for assistance, but short of significant government or military intervention, there was little that could be done.

The government response was to continue the arming of the Baggara militias, who were able to intensify their raiding with impunity. During 1988, the Misiriya branch of the *Murahaliin* was re-organized into a paramilitary force, known as a Popular Defence Force. This occurred on the direct instructions of the ruling Umma Party, without authorization by the Constituent Assembly, which considered the creation of such forces to be highly controversial. Financial support, weaponry and training were provided to the militia by the provincial administration and security. In February 1988, the General Union of Nubas accused the militia of killing 13 civilians, and refusing requests to pay compensation. In July 1988, 88 were killed and 13 reported missing after another militia attack on the village of Om Dorein.

The army and military intelligence began to arrest and execute Nuba individuals suspected of sympathizing with the SPLA. In July 1987, Mohamed Toto Kowa, the chief of Lagori village was arrested, and later executed. Two youths from Abu Hashim village were arrested and executed by the army in August. At least 20 civilians are known to have been killed by the army in November 1987, and many more were detained without charge. Further killings occurred in 1988, including two men kept as captives by soldiers following an attack on the village of Tumbala, in the Otoro hills.

In 1988, some of those detained were members of a semi-clandestine Nuba organization known as "We, Kadugli." Thirty-nine alleged members of this group, including Haroun Kafi, a Member of Parliament, were arrested in July 1988. One detainee, Ramadan Ajabna, died in detention, reportedly from dehydration, though no doctor was permitted to perform an autopsy. The then-Governor of Kordofan, Abdel Rasoul el Nur, alleged that the organization's purpose was recruiting for the SPLA. Some of the detainees were released after three weeks and about 30 were detained until the June 1989 coup d'etat. Another target was members of Christian churches. In May 1988, six Christians were detained for allegedly opening a church at Tuleishi without having obtained an official licence.<sup>5</sup>

In some cases, Nuba policemen and lawyers asked questions and launched enquiries about the killings. None of these, however, met with any success, and on at least occasion, a magistrate was successfully prevented from acquiring evidence about the execution of eight civilians near al Gohan in December 1987.<sup>6</sup>

## **The 1989 Killings**

1989 was to prove the bloodiest year to date in the Nuba Mountains. Both before and after the coup d'etat of June 30, there were killings by the militias, army and SPLA, and a political crackdown.

In January, the SPLA began to advance close to Kadugli town, overrunning police posts. The militia and army suffered an important defeat at Korongo Abdalla, the first time the SPLA had been active that close to the provincial capital. In retaliation, the militia killed some civilian residents of the town in April. In April, SPLA units infiltrated Tuleishi, despite the officially-declared ceasefire, its first major incursion into the western hills. The SPLA regularly killed civilians throughout the year. For example, in an attack on el Melaha area on November 13, six

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<sup>5</sup> Obtaining such a licence is lengthy and expensive, and applications are usually turned down. No official permission is needed to open a mosque.

<sup>6</sup> Amnesty International, *Sudan: Human Rights Abuses in the Context of Civil War*, December 1989.

civilians were killed and three wounded.

Meanwhile, the remnants of the southern-based anti-SPLA militia, Anyanya 2, were transferred to Kadugli, where they soon acquired a reputation for ruthlessness in policing the town. In April, over 200 Nuba, including many members of the Sudan National Party were detained, and several summarily executed.

Attacks by the *Murahaliin* increased in frequency and savagery. Documented killings occurred in April and May, usually in the context of cattle raids. The Arab herders also became increasingly aggressive in their search for pasture, abandoning many of the rules which had previously informed their behavior. For example, there are reported incidents of herders taking their cattle onto Nuba farms to eat crops, and even slitting open sacks of grain to allow the animals to eat. Nuba villagers reported some of the more well-known robbers to the police, who repeatedly failed to take action. After about 100 cows were stolen in a raid on the village of Serif in June, some raiders were arrested, but soon released after the intervention of militia leaders.

The first actions of the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) of Gen Omer al Bashir were encouraging to the Nuba. In particular, the release of detainees in Kadugli, the promise to disarm tribal militias, and the appointment of an ethnic Nuba, Brig Ibrahim Nayal Idam, as security advisor to the RCC, were welcomed. However, the change in government soon turned sour. Despite the ceasefire then agreed between the government and the SPLA, fighting continued in the Nuba Mountains. The SPLA continued to attack small police and army posts, and in late July the army used heavy weapons to bombard SPLA positions. In October, there was a high level meeting between members of the RCC and militia leaders from Kordofan, leading to the promulgation of the Popular Defence Act, which in effect legitimized the *Murahaliin*.<sup>7</sup> Shortly afterwards, Brig Ibrahim Nayal was demoted to the portfolio of youth and sports, though he has remained in government since and has reportedly intervened on several occasions to protect Nuba interests.

During the parliamentary period, the Sudan Bar Association and the newspapers *The Sudan Times* and *al Medan* campaigned on behalf of the rights of the Nuba. Following the coup, the Bar Association was dissolved and the newspapers shut down.

The promulgation of the Popular Defence Act was immediately followed by a spate of militia raids, sometimes in conjunction with the regular army. Kadro and Koholyate villages were burned by a joint army-Anyanya 2 force, and one woman was killed. Nine southern farm laborers were killed at Kortalla by Arab militia.

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<sup>7</sup> Documents obtained by Africa Watch indicate, however, that an office with the name "Headquarters, Popular Defence Force" existed in Kadugli before the promulgation of the Popular Defence Act, and that the office was also used by Military Intelligence.

One of the worst incidents occurred at el Lagawa, which lies at the western extremity of the Nuba Mountains, at the end of October 1989. A large group of Misiriya Zurug militia were harassing local Nuba and Daju<sup>8</sup> villagers, on the pretext that the SPLA was in the area. Investigations by an army unit found no trace of the SPLA. There had, however, been intermittent fighting between the Arabs and Nuba since August in nearby areas, partly sparked by the SPLA infiltration into Tuleishi. Major Mohamed Ibrahim Kabbashi, in command of the unit, decided to convene a local peace conference in order to settle the local dispute that was undoubtedly the principal cause of the conflict. On October 27, the last day of the peace conference, as the army unit was about to withdraw, the militia attacked the village of Kamda Nuba, killing seven villagers. The army unit tried to intervene, but succeeded only in diverting the militia's attention to el Lagawa and neighboring villages. Over the following ten days, 20 villages were burned and looted, including Tima, Tamour, el Balool, Saada, al Troroug and al Daju. In total, 98 villagers were killed and 21 seriously injured. 3,000 people were left homeless. On November 6, the militia forces used mortars to attack the village of Nimr Shago. The destruction was halted only when Major Kabbashi -- quite exceptionally -- ordered his men to open fire on the *Murahaliin*.

On November 10, 1989, the militia killed 14 civilians at al Darangas and al Harazia villages. On November 12, another 14 were killed by the Hawazma militia at Sabori and Lagori villages. Other killings occurred at ed Doud (five killed), Walid Dajor (two girls killed), el Rousaris (four killed), Tedo (16 reported killed), Kawalib, Kalogi, Walli, Shatt el Safya, Korongo, Shatt el Damam, Miri, Om Dorein, Lima and Hiban. There were reliable reports of individuals being mutilated, either before or after being killed, an exceptional practice in Sudan. Thousands of villagers fled to Kadugli, where there were an estimated 60,000 displaced people by early 1990. There was a widespread belief in the Nuba Mountains that the *Murahaliin* were aiming to burn Nuba villages and drive the people away so as to settle the areas themselves.

Even in Kadugli, killings continued. There is a report that militia tied up seven Nuba people on the eastern outskirts of the town and then killed them.

For the most part, the army collaborated with the militia in the campaign against the Nuba. Areas where there was suspected SPLA activity were sealed off, and people travelling to and from were detained. A number of merchants disappeared after being held in custody, suspected of supplying goods to the SPLA. As a result of the harassment of traders and the deliberate cutting of official rations, basic commodities were becoming increasingly scarce in many Nuba areas. Goods such as tea and sugar became unavailable in shops, medicines became unavailable in clinics, and schools were closed down.

## **Elimination by Attrition**

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<sup>8</sup> The Daju are a small non-Arab ethnic group found in southern Kordofan and Darfur.



The pattern of violence has become well established. Throughout 1990 and 1991, a characteristic set of abuses has been committed by both sides. The SPLA has typically raided villages for food, kidnapped or forcibly conscripted youths for military service, killed civilians it suspects of lack of sympathy, and engaged in indiscriminate violence against civilians during raids and military engagements. The *Murahaliin* have continued to engage in raiding, particularly of peripheral villages. There are indications that some members of the *Murahaliin* covet the Nuba Mountains, and intend to see much or all of the indigenous population removed, to make way for Baggara settlement.

Since 1989, the main escalation of abuses has been associated with increased activity by the army and military intelligence. As described at the beginning of this newsletter, the middle of 1991 saw an upsurge in violence against Nuba civilians by the army and military intelligence. The main targets appear to have been young educated Nuba men. Some Nuba believe that the army has drawn up lists of all educated people, whom it plans to kill.

In early 1990, in Teimin el Saraf al Akhdar and Kallandi, the army and PDF detained at least 18 Nuba men, and killed at least six. Those killed included:

- \* al Sheikh Sayed Sharra
- \* al Sheikh Jibril Tabalo
- \* Soubahi Malkal

In April 1991, the PDF is reported to have detained two men, Jibril Salah and Jibril Sendica, imprisoned them without adequate food, severely beaten them and finally killed them.

In September 1990, military intelligence began detaining educated Nuba men. This crackdown intensified in early 1991, and many of the detainees subsequently "disappeared." A partial list of the disappeared includes:

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|----|---|----|---|
| 1  | Abdalla Alla el Jabou, a teacher;                                 | 12 | Bereir Khalifa Bakheit, a teacher;  |
| 2  | Abdalla Gado Mado;  | 13 | Hamdan Hassan Koury, from Lagori, a lawyer;                                       |
| 3  | Abdalla Kafi;   | 14 | Hassan Koury Bagari, a prison officer (father of the above);                      |
| 4  | Abdalla Khalil Hamid, a member of Kadugli town council;           | 15 | Ibrahim Gadir Bek, a hospital clerk;  |
| 5  | Abdel Rahim Jadalla;  | 16 | Ibrahim Marmatoum, an employee of the Water Corporation;                          |
| 6  | Abu Zeid Shalal Kow;  | 17 | Ibrahim Tiaa Ali;   |
| 7  | Ahmed Badawi, Kadugli public works employee;                      | 18 | Ismat Hassan Khair al Sid, from Miri, a teacher at Kadugli High Secondary School; |
| 8  | Ahmed Suleiman, Nuba Mountains Agricultural Corporation employee; | 19 | Issa Kannadow;  |
| 9  | Ahmed Yousif Mohamed Kowa;  | 20 | Kamal Kano Kafi Haloof, a radio technician;                                       |
| 10 | al Niel al Karama, transport agent;                               | 21 | Mohamed Abdalla Gornas, an agricultural   |
| 11 | Ballal Hamad Toutou, teacher;                                     |    |   |

- research department employee;
- 22 Mohamed Mekki Kuku, Kadugli public works employee;
- 23 Mohamed Nawar Aso, a dentist;
- 24 Mohamed Suleiman "Lagawa";
- 25 Mohamed Yahya Ismail, an intermediate school teacher;
- 26 Moheieldin Tiaa Abdel Gadir, driver;
- 27 Mouzamel Dabyo Zaid, a textile worker;
- 28 Musa Ismail Abdel Gadir;
- 29 el Nur Ismail, a teacher;
- 30 Osman Adam Ali, a farmer;
- 31 Rajab Adam Mohamed;
- 32 Ramadan Adam, a teacher;
- 33 Saboun, a teacher at Kadugli secondary school;
- 34 el Sayed Ismail Kano, a teacher;
- 35 al Sir Abdel Nabi Malik, an employee of the Soil Survey Department;
- 36 al Tijani Mohamed Shukralla;
- 37 Yousif Galdagoun, from Dilling, a teacher at Kadugli High Secondary School;
- 38 Yousif Kamdo;
- 39 Zakaria Mohamed, a trader;

Institutional discrimination against the Nuba has continued, as has de facto discrimination because of the running down of the service and economic infrastructure of the area. It is now more difficult than ever for Nuba villagers to obtain essential supplies, including medicines, and most of the schools in the area are closed. The main hospital at Kadugli is used principally for military casualties.

During 1990 and 1991, famine has been affecting the Nuba Mountains, on account of drought, the destruction of villages, cattle raiding, and disruptions caused to food production and marketing by the war. The Nuba Mountains does not lie high on the agenda for food distribution by the government, however. The food relief provided to date has not been adequate, and many Nuba villagers have been reduced to surviving on wild foods and the residue left after processing groundnuts for oil, known as *umbaz* (which has recently earned the local name "Saddam's biscuits").

Following the attempted coup d'etat in the SPLA by commanders Riak Mashar and Lam Akol, which succeeded in splitting the movement between their followers and the supporters of the previous leader Col John Garang, there was also dissension in the SPLA ranks in the Nuba Mountains. According to the Riak-Lam camp, Yusuf Kowa's deputy, Awad Abdel Karim Kuku, deposed Kowa and declared his support for the overthrow of Garang. This claim was disputed by Garang's camp, which said that both men had remained loyal. Whatever the truth, the split in the

SPLA leaves the New Kush forces in the Nuba Mountains in a very vulnerable position. Their supply route is through Upper Nile, which is controlled by the Riak-Lam group. However, that group favors secession for the south, which would leave the Nuba Mountains in northern Sudan. For that reason, it is unlikely that the Nuba supporters of the SPLA would favor secession.

## **The Future**

The future of the Nuba looks very bleak. The Nuba people have suffered from being in the front line of Sudan's civil war for more than four years, and face the prospect of losing on all sides.

Should the south secede, or implicitly abandon the Nuba Mountains, the fate of the Nuba would lie at the mercy of the government in Khartoum. The current government in Khartoum is committed to building an Islamic state, emphasizing Arab identity, and not tolerating any deviance from its political, cultural or religious agenda. This leaves no room for the heterogenous cultures of the Nuba, particularly those Nuba minorities who practice Christianity or traditional religions. As a social and cultural anomaly, especially one associated with an armed rebellion, the Nuba would be ripe for heavy-handed intervention. Any rebel forces in the area would be in a militarily hopeless position.

There is no prospect of the physical elimination of the Nuba. What is likely, if present policies continue, is their further marginalization. Most of the Nuba may end up as agricultural laborers or migrants in semi-urban shanty towns. The formerly rich and varied Nuba cultures may become eradicated, to be replaced, not with a "modern" culture of educated people integrated into a national Sudanese society and economy, but with a sub-class of displaced people, driven from their homes, deprived of their traditional way of life, and denied education or advancement unless they adopt the language, cultural traits, and political and religious norms of a dominant group which will never fully accept them as equals.

## **Recommendations**

While Africa Watch recognizes the legitimate right of the Sudan government to defend itself from armed insurrection by the SPLA in the Nuba Mountains, the actions of the army, military intelligence and the Popular Defence Forces against civilians in the area are a flagrant violation of the basic human rights of those civilians. Africa Watch calls upon the government to:

- \* Immediately cease all killings, disappearances and detentions without charge of civilians in the Nuba Mountains.
- \* Suspend the Popular Defence Act, and disarm or confine to barracks all members of the

Popular Defence Forces, until such time as it can be guaranteed that their operations are to be conducted without causing human rights abuses.

- \* Utilize the armed forces and the police to defend civilian communities from raids by militia forces.
- \* Launch a public investigation into the disappearances of the individuals named in this newsletter, the massacre near Kadugli, and other incidents. Allow independent journalists and human rights monitors to visit the area. Bring to trial any individuals against whom there is evidence that they have engaged in abuses of human rights.
- \* Restore to their posts ethnic Nuba members of the judiciary who have been removed.
- \* Strengthen the police force of the Nuba Mountains with personnel, training, equipment and political support, ensuring that it contains a fair representation at all levels of the various ethnic groups inhabiting the area, and enable it to carry out its full duties.
- \* Allow humanitarian organizations to conduct an independent assessment of the level of emergency food needs in the Nuba Mountains, and assist in the supply of relief.

In addition, while Africa Watch does not pass judgement on the decision of the SPLA to engage in armed struggle in the Nuba Mountains or in any other part of Sudan, the actions of the SPLA in the Nuba Mountains have involved numerous abuses of human rights. Africa Watch calls upon the SPLA to cease killings and kidnapping of civilians, stealing food and other goods, forcible recruitment, and other violations of the basic rights of civilians.

*Africa Watch is a non-governmental organization created in May 1988 to monitor human rights practices in Africa and to promote respect for internationally recognized standards. Its Chairman is William Carmichael and Alice Brown is Vice-Chair. Its Executive Director is Rakiya Omaar; its Associate Director is Alex de Waal; Janet Fleischman and Karen Sorensen are Research Associates; Barbara Baker, Ben Penglase and Urmi Shah are Associates.*

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