

@A call to action

International human rights monitors

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Human rights continue to be abused on a massive scale by the Sudan Government and both factions of the armed opposition Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), despite repeated protests from the United Nations and other intergovernmental organizations.

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In March 1993 the UN Commission on Human Rights appointed a Special Rapporteur on human rights in Sudan. The government responded to his comprehensive and critical 1994 report by indicating it would no longer cooperate with him. The government asserts that human rights criticism is undue, unfair and the result of suspicion of its Islamic religious orientation.

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The lack of progress on ensuring respect for human rights must be ended if the cycle of suffering endured by the people of Sudan is to stop.

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Amnesty International is calling for the creation of a team of international civilian human rights monitors by an appropriate inter-governmental organization. The monitors should work with the authorities and the Sudanese public to build respect for human rights.

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Amnesty International is further calling on the Sudan Government and each faction of the SPLA to demonstrate commitment to honouring Sudan's human rights obligations by inviting such a team to operate in areas under their

respective control.

Human rights abuses take place in all parts of the Sudan, not just in the war zones. There is an urgent need for the active monitoring of human rights in all of Sudan's 26 states, in major towns and cities as well as rural areas, in areas less affected by war as well as those ravaged by conflict.

The role of human rights monitors should be:

- to bring information about human rights abuses to the attention of the relevant authorities in expectation of remedial action;
- to monitor and report on action taken by officials in relation to those responsible for the violations;
- to make public reports describing allegations of human rights abuse and recommendations made to the authorities;
- to encourage the authorities to establish independent, impartial and effective systems of investigation and remedial action;
- to work with the authorities to ensure the effective implementation of Sudan's commitments under the international human rights and



humanitarian treaties to which Sudan is a party.

The placement of international civilian monitors does not take away responsibility from the Sudan Government and each faction of the SPLA to prevent and remedy human rights abuses.

The full deployment of a human rights monitoring team would require the agreement of the Sudan Government and each faction of the SPLA. However, it is possible for any party to demonstrate unilaterally its commitment to human rights by accepting international scrutiny. This is true even in the war zones; large areas are militarily quiet and there is already extensive deployment of international personnel in relief and development programs.

The international community has recognised the need and accepted the burden of alleviating the disastrous humanitarian consequences of war in Sudan. Each year the UN transports tens of thousands of tonnes of food, seed and medical supplies to areas controlled by the

government and by both factions of the SPLA, while providing logistical support for scores of non-governmental agencies engaged in relief and development work.

However, this important and necessary work is merely a palliative. Respect for human rights is necessary in all places at all times. In Sudan, deep political divisions, those which have led to the war but also those which have led to repression in all parts of the country, will never be resolved unless respect for human rights is established.

The world has a duty to seek effective solutions aimed specifically at ending human rights violations.

A Sudan where human rights are respected will be a Sudan far less liable to humanitarian catastrophe. It is time to invest in preventing the human rights violations that create the need for international humanitarian intervention in the first place.

Sudan's future depends on it.

What can you do?

Urge your government to push for human rights monitors to be deployed in Sudan.

Join our campaign.

Contact the Amnesty International office in your country and ask how you can help.

For more information about Sudan, see Amnesty International's report, "Sudan: The tears of orphans - no future without human rights" (AI Index AFR 54/02/95), published in January 1995.