

Tuesday, 1st September 2009
Juba, Sudan

APPEAL
regarding the recent atrocities in
Jonglei and Western Equatoria States

On Saturday 29th August 2009 I received reports from Wernyol, Twic East County, Jonglei State, that there had been another attack on the peoples of the area in which over forty people – men, women and children – were killed. Amongst the dead were Ven. Joseph Mabior Garang, Archdeacon of Wernyol and Archbishop's Commissary in the new Diocese of Twic East, who was shot at the altar of the church in Wernyol during a service of Morning Prayer. Tens of others have been wounded, some very seriously with gun-shot wounds and broken limbs. Only a few of these have been taken to Juba Military Hospital, whilst the rest are still in Bor Hospital.

I have learnt from Episcopal Church sources on the ground that the attackers were well armed with new automatic weapons, dressed in army uniforms, and appeared well-organized and properly trained. Instead of attacking a cattle camp, this was an attack on a Payam headquarter town. Consequently in the view of the Church, this was not a tribal conflict as commonly reported, but a deliberately organized attack on civilians by those that are against the peace in Southern Sudan. These reports confirm the suspicions that I aired in my May 2009 appeal to the diplomatic and international community in Sudan.

Last week I received the news from Ezo, Ezo County, Western Equatoria State, that there had been another devastating attack by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) on Ezo town on 12th/13th August in which three people, including an Episcopal Church lay reader had been murdered. The attack included the abduction of children from the Episcopal church building in Ezo, and several thousand more people have been displaced into Ezo town – people that the local churches are struggling to care for. Ezo Hospital was also attacked, medicine stolen and equipment destroyed.

I hear from Bishop John Zawo of the Episcopal Diocese of Ezo that the attack could have been avoided if better military security had been given to the town.

I am therefore appealing to the government and the international community at large to act swiftly in order to prevent such atrocities from occurring in future. Continuing violence such as this is not only a crime against the innocent people killed and injured, it is a crime against the peace of the Sudan and if left unchecked will do great damage to the smooth implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA).

This is especially the case given the strained political situation whereby the two parties to the CPA – the National Congress Party (NCP) and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) – are still not coming to an agreement regarding the laws governing the elections and referendum. The time frame given for the elections and referendum is already too short for the democratic processes to be effectively organized, and by the provisional dates chosen for voting in the elections, much of the South will already be suffering from logistics problems caused by the onset of the wet season.

This is an indication to the citizens of the Sudan that the people on the ground are not being regarded or included in the politics of peace and that we are vulnerable to future violations of the CPA and an uncertain future for peace in the Sudan.

I refer the government and international community to my May 2009 appeal to the diplomatic community in Sudan, and now strongly reiterate my plea to urge your countries' governments to do more to guarantee the implementation of the CPA at all levels. As shown from the Twic East example, there is now accurate evidence to suggest that such violence is deliberately perpetrated as I implied in the May appeal. So long as all violence such as that in Jonglei and that perpetrated by the LRA continues – violence which is preventable by better use of security personnel – there is no hope of conducting free and fair elections in these areas in 2010 and no hope of a fair referendum on Southern secession in 2011.

In the mean time I am appealing for humanitarian assistance to those 24,000 displaced and wounded people in Twic East County and those 15,000 displaced and wounded people Ezo County. I would like to especially appeal for help for the widow and children of Ven. Joseph Mabior Garang, who now require food and education.

Unless the guarantor governments of the CPA act now the peace is in grave danger. As the Church, we look for the upholding of the rights of every Sudanese to a peaceful future.

His Grace the Most Rev. Dr. Daniel Deng Bul Yak

Archbishop and Primate of the Province of the Episcopal Church of the Sudan

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To co-ordinate with, or donate to, the Episcopal Church humanitarian relief efforts in these areas, contact the General Manager of ECS-SUDRA:

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