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SUDAN HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATION - CAIRO

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EDITORIAL

New Features of the Women's Movement

The Editor-in-Chief

Resisting dictatorships, building democracies, struggling against wars and armed conflicts, working for peace, and now installing a post-war society, the Sudanese woman has certainly shown that she is a bulwark of the nation's political and economic development.

These activities, however, bear new features for the career of women in the Sudan. Hence, the notion that women are created only to fulfill domestic functions is definitely redundant. Moreover, the implications of these new features are intriguing since the women acquired them with dear casualties in lives, as well as painful deprivations in the living standards, in addition to dear sacrifices to improve the social, familial, and cultural norms.

The careers of the Sudanese women ceased to be confined to the satisfaction of gender discrimination since women realized their own progression in pursuing gender equalitarian relations via education, political awareness, and the thousands of jobs they competently do in the modern markets and industrial bureaucracies.

With these enormous strides in the financial and administrative aspects of the modern life, women have been moving steadily in the ladder of political power. The advancement of women, nonetheless, in the social and cultural arenas is incarcerated in the stronghold of gender discrimination in gross violation of the religious teachings that guarantee together with international agreements the women's rights.

This situation demands a great effort to empower all believers in gender equalities and a greater effort to enable the women to play an effective role in the vital agenda of democratic transition and economic success. Major problems of the women's advancement include unfulfilled political representation in leadership positions and party committees.

In the economic, social, and cultural fields, however, women are still the largest minority group as a direct consequence of the thought and the application of gender discrimination on them. Most political parties, for instance, restrict women's representation to a quarter or one third of the total number of the party leadership committees or electoral candidacy, irrespective of the women's political potentialities and their large population and activity.

The oft disproportional representation of women in the formal sector entrepreneurship, production, and services, and the modern bureaucracies, state managements and/or private businesses, is expanded to the family spheres.

The women's rights to choosing a spouse, maintenance, and child custody are subjected to men's consent in the first place by enforceable family laws, as well as customary norms and prevailing cultures, despite clear orientations by both Islamic values and international norms, especially CEDAW, to enable the women to exercise their rights without harassment or compulsion.

The Sudanese women suffer job discrimination in the judiciary, high ranking military positions, and many civilian executive posts. Since the early 1970s of the 20th century, the Sudanese Women's Union pushed the women's progression in these important locations.

This blessed movement, however, was speedily regressed by the National Islamic Front/National Congress Party (NIF/NCP) destructive indoctrination and reactionary laws that re-instated the women into the gender-discrimination mentality, multiple wives, and collective marriages by orders of the ruling regime.

The gender-specific legal and bureaucratic obstacles of the government played a negative role to validate the non-equalitarian relations that crippled the struggles of women to enjoy full human rights by CEDAW and the other women's empowering instruments. In the war-affected areas, the government never ceased to harass relief employees, civil society groups, legal aid and the other forms of popular support to a large population of the needy women and children.

The SHRO-Cairo Secretary General's report on the situation of human rights between May and October 2008 documents the grievous practices

inhibiting the progression of democracy in the transition of the country to democratic rule. Violence was and still is the only language of the government to communicate with people.

Gross violations against humanity, voluminous extra-judicial killings even by judicial authorities, persistent repression of the freedom of expression and the press, arbitrary arrests, and non-existent observance of the rights of displaced people and refugees made up the policies and daily practices of the ruling junta. The immediate effect of these violations is meant to curb the march of people to democratic rule.

Most importantly, the violent environment and the escalated culture of repression will continue to depress the women's movement to exercise the full enjoyment of human rights and public freedoms. The women are recklessly forced by the government's violence, which amounted to collective rapes in Darfur, to linger behind as the largest powerless minority in our society.

Cultural obstacles are strongly related to the male-domination phenomenon in our society; but the potential for equalitarian relations is made available in the shared economic and social activities of the Sudanese in almost every corner of the country. Direct teachings on the sisterly or complimentary gender relations are certainly readable in religious texts that need to be correctly interpreted and applied, instead of the politicized orders of the ruling elite.

Millions of people exercise these equalitarian activities normally in the daily life. These positive aspects, however, are handicapped by the poor earnings of women in the informal sector (outside the modern labor markets) and the male-dominated mentality in the urban setting.

The Sudanese women have been patiently fighting for human rights and public freedoms through the roles they played in the family, informal economy, and the modern labor markets in and outside the country. Comprising more than 50 percent of the population in spite of the civil wars and forced migration and emigration, the women exemplified a high quality of moral perseverance, political resistance, and economic persistence against all odds and exceptional hardships.

New organizations, particularly in the war zones, were set up to cater for the bulk women, elderly, and children victims in the country and the

urban centers and to help with logistics and services, as well national and international contacts to ensure relief and moral support to the displaced peoples and the refugee population.

What is to be done to further the women's progression in the remaining period of the transition, the few months before national elections? The upcoming elections carry with them great expectations to the women of Sudan. In this Quarterly, which is dedicated to the Sudanese women's longstanding battling for a free society and a responsible democratic government, we will know about significant women's contemporary concerns by women's writers.

Interestingly, many women activists criticized politicians, executives, and judges as key leading professionals in the society today. These criticisms signify the potential power of women to share all leadership competencies with men. What is more is that, a new voice is calling on women to make their own political party and trades unions to compete independently with men independently.

The message is crystal clear: the men candidates in the next elections might find the women voters quite ready to decide for themselves their preferred candidates. It is the new elections' law that excluded the women vote from participation in the parties' slates since the government's law maker stipulated a unified list of women candidates. It is the women's responsibility, however, to be well-prepared to get the men to value the women's weighty political and economic status.

Quarterly 28 editorial board and writers wish you all the season's greetings: Best wishes for our generous readers in the Eid al-Fitr (Ramadan) and the Eid al-'Adha... Merry Christmas... and a Happy New Year!

THE SITUATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

May-October 2008

SHRO-Cairo Secretary General

The violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms was unabated in the period of this report. Grave violations occurred against the press and the freedom of expression; hundreds of citizens were arbitrarily arrested by ethnic prejudices in the month of May, in response to attacks on the city of Omdurman by the Equality and Justice Movement (JEM). Special anti-terrorism courts sentenced 50 of the accused persons to death.

The trials were not processed in accordance with international standards; for instance, the accused were not able to meet with lawyers until after the start of trials; the confessions extracted from the accused were extracted in detention in isolation of the external world and the absence of legal consultants. Some of the accused persons relayed they had been tortured to be convicted for crimes by confessions against their will; but the courts did not investigate these allegations by medical examination.

The same period was marked by mounting violence in Darfur, which had earlier displaced about a quarter of million people since the beginning of 2008. The October report of the UN Secretary General before the Security Council stated that the violence led to a daily displacement of 1,000 persons. The attacks were escalated against relief workers by 208 criminal misappropriations of relief cargos, 155 kidnappings of relief workers, and 123 house trespass cases which forced two NGOs to freeze their activities between August and October.

The attacks against civilians and the joint AU international forces increased remarkably with scores extra-judicially killed. Recalling the ongoing armed conflict in Darfur, the South Kordofan region, especially the border areas with South Sudan, lived in tension. Several organizations joined the International Crisis Group to urge the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) partners to work firmly to consolidate the security and stability of the region, as well the AU forces to do more than observers.

Despite four months of applying the peace agreement, however, the CPA partners maintained strong military presence along the border.

In early June, the Security Council delegates discussed with the government in Khartoum three major issues, including the Darfur and Abyei “extremely serious” problems. The chief delegates said that the CPA implementation “is not applied as planned. There is a lot of frustration, especially in the South.” By mid July, the International Criminal Court Prosecutor General accused the President of the Republic of planning genocide and other crimes against humanity in Darfur, and he asked the ICC to arrest him.

On July 31, the Security Council decided to extend the UNAMID mission in Darfur to another year. And yet after almost one year of mobilization, the international force was desperately protecting civilians and its own safety. The forces now composed of only 9,000 members out of 26,000 are short of effective armament, in need of helicopters and other vital equipments.

A sizeable number of containers with such equipments had been awaiting entry permission from the Sudanese customs. Observers noted that the Afro-Asian AU international troop lacked training and expertise. On July 27, a group of more than 50 agencies working on humanitarian relief in Darfur said the international force “was the most recent unfulfilled promise in the world,” and that “without increasing support, it is regrettably inevitable that the UN-AU force will fail.”

On October 16, the Sudanese president announced in talks with the Arab League delegates “the People of Sudan Initiative,” a new project to make peace in Darfur. Opposition parties and major Darfuri rebel groups, however, rejected the initiative as “a trick of public relations.” More than 20 parties said in a statement that al-Bashir and the ruling NCP were party to the crisis, so they would not be able to adopt the initiative. Some parties cautioned, the Initiative might have negative repercussions in the internal and external efforts that aimed to end the crisis.

There is a possibility of deferring the national (presidential, parliamentary, and states) elections to a date later than next July for reasons, including the unstable relations between the two CPA partners. The latter accused one another of the ongoing laxity in applying the CPA and the

slow process of changing the totalitarian regime in the interest of the transition to democratic rule with reference to the Cairo Agreement with the NDA, Abuja Agreement with Darfuri rebel groups, and the Asmara Agreement with the East Front.

As a result of these agreements, about 60 laws restricting fundamental rights and public freedoms continued to contradict the CPA and the Interim Constitution. The obstacles of timely realizing the elections also included rejection of the Fifth Population Census by many groups, including the SPLM; the non-formation of a Council for Political Parties and Elections' Commission, besides the crisis in Darfir. Some SPLM leaders asked for deference of elections because "the rains and logistical factors" would make it impossible to make elections in July 2009.

Human Rights and public Freedoms

On May 2, al-Tayeb Ahmed, whose death penalty was confirmed by the Constitutional Court which asked a stay for the execution, was hastily executed.

On May 13, the security and intelligence department in Port Sudan abducted from university campus Ahmed Mohamed 'Abdu, student at the faculty of economics in the Red Sea University. He was then transferred by a military intelligence vehicle to Kilo Sab'a (7) where he was brutally tortured to disclose information about a political activist. The kidnappers abandoned the student who, lying unconsciously, was rescued lately by some passers-by.

In mid June, the National Assembly passed a new police act after lengthy arguments and reservations by the opposition since the new legislation authorized the president to form emergency forces and privileged the police with immunity.

The law stipulated that "an act made by the police in good faith in the course of or due to the functions or duties of police work is not a crime." Section 14 empowered the president to form "another police force" by recommendation of the minister to perform public, private, or temporary work. Para 2 of the same section allowed the president to delegate to this force all or part of the powers proscribed to the police forces.

On June 22, the president affirmed in a speech to a gathering at the

headquarters of the Peoples' Defense Forces that "the Jihad will prevail." The president further called on the PDF to be prepared to confrontations with the crisis, and praised the role the PDF played with disciplinary forces to repulse the JEM attacks on the city of Omdurman.

On June 26, the authorities expelled Doctors without Borders' head of operations Banu Altanbas from South Darfur since she refused to collaborate with the authorities to investigate the organization's misdemeanor in the region.

July 7, the National Assembly passed the elections' act that the NED opposed. The SPLM explained it was compelled to vote for the act to maintain the peace process for fear of extending the time already scheduled for approval. The opposition ascertained it was prepared for elections according to the approved act, provided that restrictive laws would be removed to ensure the democratic transition and the peace process in Darfur. The elections act was signed by the president on June 10.

July 14, the ICC Prosecutor General Luis Moreno-Ocampo accused the Sudanese President Omer al-Bashir of acting as the master-head of a genocide targeting three ethnic groups in Darfur. Ocampo appealed to the ICC to arrest Bashir for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and acts of genocide committed in Darfur. The Sudanese government rejected the Ocampo indictment of the president. Some officials threatened with more reactions, should the case further engage the UN.

By mid July, about a thousand families lost their properties for good after the Merwi Dam administration inundated, without prior notice, the area of Emry and parts of the Manasir land. The administration had previously ruled out the possibility of compensating the injured party, or to acknowledge complaints. Instead, the administration collaborated with the governments of the Nile and the Northern states to cordon the areas affected by the inundation with security forces, as well as preventing the journalists and relief workers from entry.

On July 29, a Khartoum court condemned to death by hanging eight citizens accused of attacking Omdurman. The convicted persons included Kamal Mohamed Saboun, Musa Hamid Osman, Younis 'Abd Allah al-Nadeef, Musa Adam, Bahr al-Deen Bashir, Bushara 'Abd Allah 'Eisa, Ibrahim al-Noor Zakariya, and Shumu Osman Ishaq. The judge submit-

ted the case of Abu Bakr Suliman Brayma to a juvenile court since he was less than 18 years of age.

July 31, two courts in Omdurman and Khartoum sentenced to death 22 persons accused of participation in the attack on the city of whom three persons were turned to juvenile courts. The accused were Mohamed Mansour Kittir, Osman Rabih, Mustafa Adam Saboun, Adam Mohamed 'Eisa, Mohamed Sharif 'Abd Allah, Ibrahim Abbakar Hashim, Adam al-Nour 'Abd al-Rahman, Mahmoud Adam Zariba, 'Abd Allah Adam Ibrahim, AbuBakr Ibrahim Sharif, Bashir Adam Sanoasi, Ibrahim Adam al-Rasheed, Mohamed 'Arabi Isma'il, Fadul Hassan Rizg, Bushara 'Eisa Mohamed Salih, Mahmoud Abbakar Mursal, Mohamed Hashim 'Ali, Mohamed Adam 'Abd Allah, Haroun 'Abd al-Gadir Haroun, Haytham Adam 'Ali Adam, Mohamed 'Arabi Omar Daoud, and Ishaq Yasin 'Ali Adam.

On August 4, the National Capital Non-Muslim Commission stated that drinking "is not prosecutable" by law or faith for the non-Muslim persons; but wine brewing is a crime by law. It wasn't clear, however, whether this exception might apply to the non-Muslims outside the capital.

August 5, the Minister of Justice appointed attorney Nimir Ibrahim Mohamed prosecutor general for the crimes committed in Darfur after 2003. The minister named a committee of attorneys to assist the new appointee who would submit a detailed monthly report on his mission. Observers noted that the minister's decision was an attempt to deflect attention from the ICC Prosecutor General by propagating the government's claim to prosecute perpetrators of the crimes against humanity.

On August 17, a Khartoum court sentenced eight citizens with death for participation in the attack on the city of Omdurman. The condemned persons were al-Sadiq Gabraldar, Tajaddin Mahmoud, Mohamed Bahar 'Ali Hamdain, al-Tayeb 'Abd al-Kareem Idris, Malik Adam Ahmed, Hamid Hassan Hamid, Bashir Adam 'Ashar Fadeel, and 'Abd al-'Aziz Nour 'Ashar. A juvenile court in Omdurman sentenced seven persons to death by hanging on the basis of the Shari'a rule of t'azeer. Al-Sadiq Gabraldar (17) was sentenced to death by the Shari'a hud penalty.

On August 20, a court in Omdurman sentenced to hanging until death

twelve persons accused of participation in the attack on Omdurman. Four other persons were transferred to juvenile courts. The condemned persons were Azraq Daldoum, Yahya Fadul Abbakar, Musa 'Abd Allah Shugar, Mohamed Abbakar Nasir, Ibrahim Salih 'Ali, Idris Omar Mohamed, Mahgoub Suliman, Nasir Gibril Adam, 'Abd Allah Mursal, Adam Ibrahim Nour, James Paul Francis, and Adam Suliman Abbakar.

On September 16, a juvenile court released four children from jail and surrendered them to their families. The released were Yousif Makko Nazar, Mohamed Ahmed 'Abd Allah, Osman Suliman 'Abd Allah, and Khalid Mahmoud 'Abd al-Rahman.

On August 26, the Supreme Court confirmed death sentences on nine persons accused of killing journalist Mohamed Taha Mohamed Ahmed, whereas the penalty of al-Tayeb 'Abd al-'Aziz Ishaq was commuted. The convicts included Ishaq al-Sanoasi Juma', 'Abd al-Hayi Omar, Mustafa Adam, Mohamed 'Abd al-Nabi, Sabir Zakariyah, Hassan Adam Fadul, Adam Ibrahim, Jamaladdin 'Eisa, and Abd al-Hamid 'Ali 'Abd al-Hamid.

On October 23, the Supreme Court overruled the defense appeal and confirmed the sentences of the first instance and appellate courts.

By mid September, an international report presented before the Human Rights Council in Geneva described the situation of human rights in Sudan as gloomy due to the killing of civilians by the government troops and the rebels, besides arbitrary arrests and tortures for political reasons. The report read that one of the main fears of the situation in Sudan was the escaping of punishment or the non-prosecution of the persons committing human rights violations.

On September 16, a court in Hasahisa sentenced a member of the NCP to five years imprisonment for the murder of Mutasim Hamid Abulgasim, a student in the Gezira University, during student demonstrations on January 2008 between the Democratic Front and supporters of the ruling party. The victim's father and other observers said they were shocked by the judge's change of the murderer's indictment from premeditated murder to culpable homicide "as the stab that killed the student was meant for a non-killing part of the body."

October 19, the government of North Darfur summoned an international employee because he made announcements claiming that the region witnessed a new wave of violence that displaced 50,000 citizens. The employee was Gregory Alex, head coordinating office of the UN humanitarian affairs in Khartoum.

October 24, the Supreme Court overturned an appeal by lawyers to reverse the penalty on the persons accused of killing journalist Mohamed Taha, editor of al-Wifaq paper. The Appellate Court confirmed the sentences on nine persons and commuted to four years imprisonment the case of the tenth accused.

July 1, nine journalists were denied the right to attend a special anti-terrorism court session for the trial of persons accused of attacking the city of Omdurman.

On July 22, the Sudanese authorities suspended U Tube in the international internet. The national communications department did not explain the reason for the suspension. It is thought, nonetheless, that the suspension meant to stop the Sudanese activists who had posted in the Tube some of the NSIS harassment of Darfuris in the National Capital.

July 28, the NSIS confiscated T.V. cassettes from a reporting team working with the Jazeera Channel. The team documented a conflict erupting between protesting villagers and the police at the 'Awag area of the White Nile in which two citizens were killed and nine injured. The team was stopped by the security officers on the way back to Khartoum because it was not licensed to take pictures.

August 10, the National Council for Press and Publications accused some bilingual journals of sedition, regionalism, and hatred of the government. The council asked the journals to abide-by the law and the journalists' code of ethics.

On August 21, the NSIS permitted Alwan publishing company to resume journalist activities; still, the suspension decision was not cancelled in actual reality.

August 10, the Council accused some bilingual papers of arousing hatred. On the first of September, the Council suspended the publication licenses of the English journals Sudan Tribune and The Citizen for admin-

istrative rather than political reasons; in addition, the editors were not resident in Khartoum and the two journals did not provide the Council with a daily copy.

The journals, however, emphasized the Council dissatisfaction with essays and statements by three southerners accusing the government of handicapping the CPA. After four days of suspension, the two journals were allowed to publish on condition that the editors would deposit a daily copy, and would show up whenever they might be required to appear before the Council.

On September 8, the Council accused Al-Captain and Al-Mirikh sports papers of posting fooleries and scandals; thus, legal and administrative measures were taken against the papers.

September 26, the secretary of vice president 'Ali Osman Taha attacked members of a BBC team after they interviewed Taha at the office of the permanent mission of Sudan at the UN, New York. The secretary pulled out the tape in possession of the team and destroyed it arguing that the interview questions were contemptuous. The vice president, however, apologized to the BBC journalist Logman Ahmed and his photographers, and promised to make another interview with them.

October 10, the ministry of foreign affairs prevented journalists working with daily papers from traveling with an official from Qatar in a tour to the cities of Juba and al-Fashir within the Qatari peace initiative in Darfur, as announced by the Arab League. The reporters of Al-Sudani, Al-Ahdath, Akhbar Al-Yoam, Al-Khartoum, and Al-Akhbar were forced to leave the aircraft "since the Qatari delegates were outnumbered."

October 11, the authorities arrested journalist Nuraddin Brayma of Agras Al-Horiya paper who was translating a statement by a Darfuri woman to a Qatari official.

By mid October, reports were published presumably with security orders that 16 Sudanese journalists and three English papers received funds from an American agency. Accordingly, the semi-governmental Council of Press and Publications established a committee to investigate the case with the accused journalists of whom Faisal Mohamed Salih, Dr. Murta-da al-Ghali, Hanadi Osman, 'Afaf Abu Kashawa, Hussain Saad, Lubna Ahmed Hussain, and Dr. Abbakar Adam Isma'il negated the accusation

and accused, in turn, the government's announced security and political sources of fabricating the report since the former failed to buy their independent journalism into partial stands with the government.

October 23, Agrab Al-Horiya issue was not published because the security censorial authorities removed at night seven items of the paper without explanation.

Ray Al-Sha'b opposition paper was not published four times in October due to the removal of many items from the paper before publication.

In October, the South Sudan authorities arrested a journalist for three days because he criticized the high salaries of government officials.

Violence and extrajudicial killings

May 1, the air forces raided the village of Um Sidir in North Darfur killing Isma'il Adam Abu Grain (70) and Mohyiddin Mohamed Hamid (27) and injuring Geedo Hamdan Hasabu, Nuraddin Mohamed Idris, Yousif Mustafa, 'Abd al-Kareem Ahmed, Ad-doma Adam Mohamed, Ahmed Mohamed Ibrahim, Faisal Nuraddin Ibrahim, and Adam 'Abd al-'Al among others.

May 5, more than fifteen students from the University of Khartoum campus were injured in conflicts using iron rods and knives between the NCP supportive students and others supporting the rebel forces in Darfur.

May 9, armed persons kidnapped nine Egyptians working in the oil fields of South Kordofan. On May 13, four Indian employees in a service company were kidnapped with their Sudanese driver on their return from an oil field in Abyei.

May 10, the JEM elements launched a surprising attack on the city of Omdurman to topple the ruling regime. About 200 persons, mostly military, were killed. As soon as the attack was repulsed, the security forces retaliated by arresting more than 2,000 Darfuris in the National Capital and the regions, especially in Gedarif.

Among the detainees there were 89 juveniles less than 18 years of age believed to have been arbitrarily arrested by ethnic origin. The chief JEM said that the failure of Bashir to negotiate, the inability of the International Community to resolve the conflict in Darfur, and the continuous suffering of people motivated JEM to attack the National Capital. For more

than two weeks the police and the NSIS sacked with robberies, criminal misappropriation, aggression and tortures the residences of Darfuris in the capital city and its suburbs, especially Um Beda, al-Fitihab, al-Thawra, al-Saliha, 'Ad Hussain, Dar al-Salam, and al-Salama.

To illustrate, the NSIS attack on the residence of Ibrahim Mohamed 'Abd al-Gadir at Um Beda on May 25, robbed SL40 million plus the jewelry of his wife, and tortured his brother Adam Mohamed 'Abd al-Gadir, a student at the University of Khartoum. On May 26, NSIS inspected the residence of Mohamed 'Abd Allah 'Ali at the Beit al-Mal extension, robbed his wife's jewelry, and battered and arrested him before his children. All these attacks were operated in the early hours of the morning.

On May 20, tens of citizens were killed in Abyei besides the displacement of more than 50,000 humans, as a result of violent battles between the Northern army and South Sudan troops. Most of the displaced people were unable to return home after two months of armed confrontations. The government's troops and militias deliberately killed the civilians who tried to escape.

After three months of military engagement, the UN stated that the North and South armies did not withdraw completely from the region, as planned to end the conflict. The international peace force assigned in the region stayed inside their barracks instead of protecting the civilians, which led the Security Council to ask the Secretary General to conduct an investigation on the performance of UN force during the engagements.

On May 21, 14 citizens were killed in armed conflict between two armed groups, the Mani-Arko faction of the Sudan Liberation Army and the faction led by 'Abd al-Rahman Musa at the Kafoat area in North Darfur State. Four villages at least were burnt in the conflict.

Also on May 21, a displaced person was killed and ten persons injured at the 'Atash camp in South Darfur, as a result of armed attacks on the camp. Nearby al-Genaina town, a group dressed in military uniform seized in ambush some arms of a Nigerian troop working with the peace keeping force - the fifth attack of its sort in this year.

May 23, unknown armed persons kidnapped Fadl Allah 'Ali Fadl Allah, a businessperson in South Darfur, and claimed for a big ransom to

release him. The kidnapped person was battered, and then released without taking the ransom.

May 27, scores of people were killed or injured in violent confrontations between two JEM factions near the Jebel Moon area. In the same time, a police officer of Ugandan nationality working with the peace keeping force in Darfur was killed inside his car at the area of Zamzam camp, south of al-Fashir city in North Darfur. The murderers escaped.

May 28, an armed group kidnapped two Care shipped vehicles on their way to an area located for the optional return of displaced people. The kidnappers threatened the drivers at Geerali area in the locality of Kas, South Darfur, and dropped them outside the trucks.

On June 4, students supporting the NCP brutalized students of Darfur causing bodily harm and serious injuries to Isma'il Ahmed Salih, Adam 'Abd al-Rahman al-Doma, Malik 'Abd Allah Suliman, al-Fatih Ahmed Mohamed, Ahmed Hasab Allah Hamid, 'Abd al-Nasir Mahmoud Jafoan, Ibrahim Salih Ibrahim, al-Nour Hussain 'Abd Allah, Adam Bagadi Hasab Allah, Ahmed Ibrahim Idris, Khalid Adam Salih, 'Abd al-Kareem Ahmed Yagoub, AbuBakr Hassan Adam Hussain, Mustafa Mohamed Mango, and Khidir Mohamed Khidir. The transgressors used iron rods, Molotov bottles, and knives in the assault.

In the opening days of July, armed conflicts resumed between al-Turjum and Bani Hilba at Danoura in South Darfur. Eleven persons were killed, including Ahmed Hanafi. Musa Mars, Adam Abyad 'Ali, Musa Ahmed Fadl, Ibrahim Hassan, Gamal Mohamed Abbakar, Younisain Adam, Higazi Mohamed Suliman, al-Sadiq Garour, and al-Radi Adam Abbakar.

July 9, an armed group ambushed a convoy of the peace keeping force in North Darfur killing and wounding 20 persons, of whom six were in serious condition, added to six disappearances. The ambush took place at the Um Hageeba area about 100 kilometers away from UNAMID at the Shangal Tobay area.

July 17, 28 persons were killed and seven individuals injured in attacks on the Fellata people at the village of al-Hashaba in the Buram locality of South Darfur. Twenty-one of the killed people were Fellata. Seven were killed from the attacking force which robbed 600 cows and

sheep. The deceased number increased to 35 individuals. These included Hassan al-Tahir ‘Abd Allah, ‘Eisa al-Tahir ‘Abd Allah, Mohamed Adam Hassan ‘Abd Allah, Mohamed Abbakar Ishaq, juvenile Hassan Salih Ishaq, Salih Nad al-rugal, Gibreel Homaïda, Zeinab al-Tahir ‘Abd Allah, Um Salma Ibrahim ‘Abd al-Rahman, Hassan Yagoub Bayh, and Idris Adam Sayar Ahmed Safi.

July 22, five merchants from the North were killed near Kobri Ganboul at Rabakoana district in the Unity State. The victims were taken to a nearby jungle where four were shot and the fifth brutally beheaded. The victims were Hani Hussain, al-Hadi Hussain, ‘Abd al-Ghani, Tajaddin, and another person whose name was not identified.

July 22, an armed group killed a SPLM local official, attacked inhabitants in the Kas locality, and rubbed their belongings. The murdered SPLM financial secretary was Nuraddin Gibreel ‘Abd al-Mula. Earlier, a group of SPLM members were ambushed and attacked with spears.

July 23, ten civilians were killed near Kapoita in attacks by a tank of Ugandan regulars who were said to have been moving after enemies of the Lord Army in the area.

July 28, two citizens were killed and two others wounded, in addition to seven policemen, in skirmishes at the al-‘Awag place of al-Quitaina locality. The conflict occurred after some inhabitants protesting compensations by the White Nile Sugar Project closed the Khartoum-Kosti highway. Later, two other individuals were killed and 47 protestors arrested by security forces.

August 11, a peacekeeping helicopter was attacked probably by JEM elements at Jebel Moon in West Darfur State. The shot helicopter landed safely near al-Genaina.

August 23, the International Red Cross suspended food and health activities at Quraïda in South Darfur due to the abduction of an IRC vehicle from inside the town by an armed group. The IRC said it would stop all activities in the region, unless the vehicle would be returned. After a week of the incidence, the IRC resumed its work because the vehicle was returned.

August 4, six individuals were killed and 14 injured by an armed

group at the 'Amar Gadeed area north of Malwashi in South Darfur. The armed group kidnapped a convoy of trucks on the Niyala-al-Fashir highway.

August 8, 15 persons were killed and others wounded in a tribal feud between the Joth and Niyan groups at the Lakes State, twelve miles away from the state capital city Rombeik.

August 22, 13 persons, including seven civilians, were killed and 31 injured in a tribal dispute on cattle at the Jonglei State. In the previous day, an armed group killed a person and injured two in another attack at the Jomaiz area on the Juba-Bor road.

August 25, 33 displaced persons were killed and 107 injured following attacks on the Kalma camp in South Darfur by security forces driving about 100 armed vehicles. Five regulars of the attacking forces were injured. Lining together, the displaced people at the camp tried to stop the attackers who claimed the camp possessed illegal arms.

August 27, the murders of five of nine Chinese workers kidnapped for more than a week by an armed group in South Kordofan were reported. By the ending week of the month, the minister of interior admitted before the Council of Ministers that the kidnapped Chinese were killed in opened fire between the kidnappers and the authorities. Previously, the minister of defense negated the occurrence of confrontations with the kidnappers and accused the latter of killing the victims in cold blood. This incidence was the third in a year against oil workers in the region – an attempt to force the oil companies to leave.

On September 5, two persons were killed and five injured as a result of indiscriminate shooting by armed horsemen with firearms at the Brayks area of the Shi'airiya locality in South Darfur.

September 10, two individuals were killed and eleven injured in the inspection by 1,400 SPLM soldiers of arms at an area in the Lakes State. The operation was accompanied with serious abuses and robberies.

September 12, many persons were harmed and others arrested at the Daim Gharb area in Port Sudan, as a consequence of shooting by the security forces in confrontation with Beja people. The forces sacked the residences of some citizens in search of prohibited materials, and then

battered the protesting residents against this illegal entry. The security forces prevented the wounded and their families from receiving medical attention in the hospital.

September 15, thousands of civilians were displaced from their homes after a week of violent battles between government forces and the rebels in North Darfur. The land and air battles included areas in north Kutum and the south west areas of al-Tawila.

September 24, nine persons were killed and ten wounded in attacks launched by armed horsemen and camel riders in the area of Geetom at the Barak locality of South Darfur. The murdered persons included the leader of the al-Mahaddi people Hassan Adam Barmiya.

Between October 7 and 17 Arab militias demolished at least 15 villages in South Darfur, thus killing more than 40 civilians and displacing thousands of the inhabitants of these villages. Some local sources accused the government troops of supporting the Maa'liya militias which attacked the Zagawa in Muhaet al-Hagiriya east of Niyala, the capital of South Darfur.

By mid October, scores of the SPLM splitting soldiers carried out highwaymen activities, robberies, and rapes in Rombaik. The rebels disobeyed orders to move outside the city; but they stayed in a special camp and performed illegal activities.

Arbitrary Arrests

May 1, the Red Sea State security forces arrested 'Eisa 'Abd al-Gadir, a strongly opposed activist of the Hadandawa people to the governor. The arrestee was transferred from his town Haya to detention in Port Sudan where he went into strike of food in protest of his arbitrary arrest.

After the JEM attack on Omdurman, the NSIS arrested arbitrarily more than 2,000 Darfuri-descent citizens in the National Capital, as well as extended apprehensions in the regions, especially al-Gedarif and al-Gezira.

May 11, Port Sudan security force arrested student Faris 'Abd al-Hadi from a neighboring spot to the city hospital. In the same day, the White Nile security elements arrested Darfuri travelers on their way to al-Obayid city. The bus was stopped at the mouth of Kosti Bridge by the se-

curity that ordered eight passengers to drop outside the bus. The passengers were taken to a military station and interrogated. These arrestees were Hassan ‘Arafat, ‘Abd Allah Hasabu Adam, Khalil ‘Abd al-Halim, Mohamed Daoud al-Doma, and Sabir. They were released on May 19; but their belongings were confiscated.

On May 12, the NSIS arrested Hassan al-Turabi, secretary general of the National People’s Party, and a number of his aides as suspects in relation with the attack on Omdurman. Turabi was interrogated about his party’s connections with JEM, and then released later at night. In the same day, Suliman al-Bassili, another NPP leader was released while the following members were not released: Dr. Bashir Adam Rahama, al-Safi Nuraddin, Nagi Dahab, Abubakar ‘Abd al-Raziq, Hassan Jubara, Tajaddin Bannaga, Nuraddin ‘Ali, Usama al-Yas, Adam al-Tahir Hamdoun, Khalifa al-Sheikh Makawi, and Dahab Mohamed Salih

May 17, the security forces arrested a family including eight children at their home without charge. The arrested persons were Zagawa people reported by one of their neighbors to have distributed candies when the JEM forces attacked Omdurman. The arrestees were: Haran Adam Khatir (father), Gamal Adam Khatir, Mahmoud Haran Adam, Khamis Haran Adam, Khalil Haran Adam, Asia Haran Adam, Kaltoum Haran Adam, and Maymona Adam Hussain (mother).

May 26, the police released 481 detainees suspected of participation in the Omdurman events.

June 8, the NSIS arrested in Khartoum Zubaida Sandal Hagar, her child Hassan ‘Abd al-Shatour, and her sister Zahra Sandal.

June 23, the release of 16 NPP members, mostly from Darfur, was announced after they spent 5 years imprisonment condemned of conspiracy against the government. The released prisoners, however, were immediately re-arrested and detained. These included Mohamed Musa Mohamed ‘Ali, ‘Amir al-Likka Kuku, Ishaq al-Sharif Urdi, Kong Shout Lee, ‘Abd Allah Adam Hasoaba, ‘Adil al-Doud Rihan, ‘Isam Ibrahim ‘Ali, Wida’at Allah Nasir al-Yas, Mohamed Babiker al-Amin, Adam ‘Abd Allah Yahya, Adam ‘Ali Isma’il, Nuraddin Yahya Ibrahim, Mohamed Adam Mohamed Badraddin, ‘Ali Hussain Nana, Salah Idris Ibrahim, and Mohamed al-Hadi Bashir.

On June 29, the authorities arrested two Nuer and Dinka Bor students at Bor in Gongli State because they published a statement in the international internet “arousing hatred.” The John Garang Institute for Sciences and Technology where the students study said they were suspended for three weeks; they were further required to apologize on returning to school.

On July 7, the security department detained for seven hours the defense lawyer Satti al-Haj in the case of the assault on Omdurman. The security officers threatened the lawyer if he represented the accused persons or even talked with the media about the case. By the end of July, the NSIS arrested many Darfuris working in the oil industry, including engineers Mahmoud Adam Gugga and Ahmed AbuBakr.

August 9, the authorities released eight members of the NPP who completed terms of imprisonments for a coup attempt in 2004. The released persons were Adam Yahya Ishaq, Mohamed Babiker al-Amin Zakariyah, ‘Amir al-Likka Kuko al-Nour, Mohamed al-Hadi Bashir al-Tahir, Nuraddin Yahya Ibrahim Nuraddin, ‘Adil al-Nour Rihan, ‘Ali Suliman, Hassan Nana, and Wida’at Allah Nasir al-Yas.

October 23, the security department apprehended seven guards of the SLA humanitarian affairs’ official, following circulation of a press release about the official’s meeting with representatives of relief agencies. The detainees were Mohamed Ahmed Salih, ‘Abd Allah Ahmed ‘Abd Allah, Mahmoud Adam ‘Abd al-Rahamn, Haroun Mohamed, ‘Abd al-‘Aziz Sa’eed, Tomsah Sheikhaddin Mohamed, and ‘Ali Mohamed Younis.

The displaced and the Refugees

In October, the International Migration Agency estimated the number of displaced people returning to the South in the year 2005 since the CPA signing, as 1.7 million people from a total of 4 million civil war immigrants in or outside the South. The living conditions of these people did not encourage them to return home. The violence in Darfur and other areas in Kordofan and the border with the South added about a quarter million migrants in the last few months.

In Egypt, the escalated suffering of thousands of refugees forced many refugees to take risks. About 25 Sudanese refugees trying to cross the in-

ternational border to Israel were killed by the Egyptian police. Many refugees were injured and scores were arrested.

October 27, a Palestinian human rights center reported 116 Sudanese detained in the al-Naqab desert detention inside Israel. The center said in a press release that the detainees suffered poor living and health conditions.

May 24, the Sudanese national Ahmed Khatir Mohamed was wounded by Egyptian police in his attempt to cross the border to Israel. The police arrested in the same day a Sudanese mother with her nine years daughter for the same reason.

In May and June, 300 Sudanese families moved from Halaiyb to Gafaneet as a result of pressures by the Egyptian authorities to get them to leave Halaiyb. The Sudanese commissioner said the Egyptian authorities harass the Sudanese movement in the area.

June 10, while trying to cross the border to Israel, a Sudanese person, Mohamed Tahir Mursal, was killed with a deadly shot, and three others arrested by the Egyptian police.

July 19, the Egyptian police killed ‘Abd al-Wahab ‘Abd al-Kareem Ahmed Adam (32) as he was trying to cross the border, and seven Sudanese were also arrested.

August 5, a Sudanese citizen was seriously injured and two others arrested by the Egyptian police while crossing the border to Israel. Abubakar Hassan Guma’ (34) was shot in his chest and arm, and his colleagues ‘Abd Allah Yagoub ‘Abd Allah (29) and Idris Khamis ‘Abd al-Rahman (24) arrested.

August 6, Haroun Mohamed Yahya Haroun (21) was immediately dead by a shot at his head; al-Amin ‘Ali Mahmoud (22) was wounded, in addition to the arrest of the Sudanese woman Hamdiya Mohamed ‘Ali (22).

FOR THE MARTYRS' RIGHTS:

Women must win the elections

Lawyer Manal Awad Khugali

A few years ago, the SHRO-Cairo website reported that "Civil society activists and leaders of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) joined the Ramadan Family League 13th anniversary celebration of the April 1990's Ramadan Rectification Movement in London (11/16/03)."

The report confirmed agreement of the NDA representatives, in accordance with the NDA Charter (The National Democratic Alliance Charter and Resolutions, Arab Lawyers Union, Cairo, 1991), with the Ramadan Family League (formerly the Sudanese Martyrs' Families Organization) among many civil society groups, to pursue full legal accountability of the Government of Sudan, as well as specific top officials of the government, for the extra-judicial killings of the Ramadan Rectification Movement's army officers and regulars.

It was known that more than 200 army regulars were murdered with the assassinated army officers. SHRO-Cairo reported (Sudan Tribune: December 3rd, 2003) that "both of the Army General Command and the Democratic Opposition's Legitimate Command of the Sudanese Armed Forces maintained full lists of the Ramadan Movement's army personnel."

The report mentioned the League's unwavering commitment to put to trial the "NIF murderer regime," in addition to "all elements of the June 1989's military coup that extra-judicially killed the army officers and regulars of the Ramadan peaceful movement in April 1990."

In the London meeting (2003), this writer called on the NIF rulers "to show without further delay where the martyrs were buried, deliver the martyrs' wills to the League, and commit the authorities to put to trial both the military and/or civilian killers of the martyrs." Speaking for the League, this writer "appealed to the national and international groups to

support the League. The peace process or any peace agreement should never exempt the murderers from full accountability of these heinous crimes.”

The names of the murdered officers were General Khalid al-Zain, Lieutenant-General ‘Uthman al-Sayed Baloal, Lieutenant General Hus-sain ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Kadaro, Brigadier Mohamed ‘Uthman Karrar, Colonel Mohamed Ahmed Qasim, Colonel Bashir Mustafa, Colonel Is-mat Merghani Taha, Colonel Salah al-Deen al-Sayed, Lieutenant-Colonel Sayed Hassan ‘Abd al-Raheem, Lieutenant-Colonel Bashir al-Tayeb, Lieutenant-Colonel Mohamed ‘Abd al-‘Aziz, Lieutenant-Colonel Bashir ‘Amir, Lieutenant-Colonel ‘Abd al-Mon’im Hassan ‘Ali Karrar, Major Nihad Ismail Humaida, Major Seed Ahmed al-Nu’man, Major Taj al-Deen Fath al-Rahman, Major Usama al-Zain, Major al-Shaikh al-Baqir al-Shaikh, Major Akram al-Fatih Yousif, Major Mua’wiya Yassin ‘Ali, Major Salah al-Deen al-Dirdeeri, Major al-Fatih Ahmed al-Yass, Major Isam Abu al-Qasim, Major Babikir ‘Abd al-Rahman Nugd-Allah, Cap-tian Mustafa ‘Awad Khugali, and Captain ‘Abd al-Mon’im Kemair.

There wasn’t any doubt the officers and the other regulars were extra-judicially murdered by the lawless tribunals of the same rulers who still are governing the Sudan today. The London meeting showed these clear facts:

(1) In the state press conference following the extra-judicial execu-tions of the Ramadan leaders, the June coup leader Omer al-Bashir, who is now the president of Sudan, described the murdered officers as “his en-emies” and admitted direct involvement in the killings.

(2) The killings were executed with the full consent of the coup leader General Omer al-Bashir, his deputy Lieutenant-General al-Zubair Mo-hamed Salih, Brigadier ‘Uthman Ahmed Hassan, Brigadier Faisal Salih, Brigadier Ibrahim Iddam, Colonel Faisal Madani, Colonel Salah Karrar, Colonel Martin, Colonel Bakri Hassan Salih, Colonel Mohamed al-Amin Khalifa, Major Ibrahim Shams al-Deen, Major Dr. al-Tayeb Ibrahim, Brigadier Kamal Mukhtar, Colonel Dahawi, and the State Security Direc-tor ‘Ali Nafi and his office assistants.

(2) The trials were conducted in gross violation of the Sudanese Armed Forces’ laws and regulations by the Bashir close assistants, Colo-

nel al-Khanjar and Colonel Kunna. These two officers were held directly responsible with their assistants for the unlawful trials of the murdered officers and the other regulars.

(3) The political partners of the June coup officers, Dr. Hassan Daffa Allah al-Turabi and 'Ali 'Uthman Taha, the two top leaders of the NIF ruling regime at that time, and the ruling Shura Council members Ahmed 'Abd al-Rahman, Ibrahim al-Sanoasi, al-Hakeem, Dr. 'Abd al-Rahman Khalifa and their Shura colleagues shared full criminal responsibility with the army officers who executed the army regulars in Ramadan (April) 1990.

There have been many coup attempts in Sudan. Some of them ruled the country like Ibrahim 'Abboud, Ja'far Nimeiri, and Omer al-Bashir military governments. All these coup governments committed gross human rights violations against the People of Sudan. Millions were killed and millions were displaced by civil war. Thousands were also tortured in clandestine detention centers the cities and small towns.

In April 1985, the Transitional Military Government put to trial top officials of the Nimeiri regime according to legal accusations. This important precedence must be affirmatively applied by the next Interim Government to put to trial the top government's officials accused of murdering the army officers and other regulars in Ramadan 1990.

New political developments in the course of years (namely the CPA signing between the government and the SPLM) did not change in any sense the legal facts mentioned above about the murders of army officers and regulars by the rulers of Sudan in 1990. Again, the same leaders accused of the murders still rule the country. The change that virtually occurred was that these crimes have been expanded to unprecedented levels by the genocide campaigns in Darfur in the succeeding years (2004 to the present).

The long silence of the government, legislature, and judiciary despite all demonstrations and public protests by the NDA, human rights organizations, and the Ramadan Martyrs' League was finally strongly interrupted by the ICC Prosecutor General, who documented firmly many crimes against humanity in Darfur and indicted the president to account for them as the ICC might decide.

The biggest anticipated change, however, is the possibility of a democratic post-elections' government in the year 2009 or 2010. That government should be legally responsible for the trial of the accused persons who might escape the ICC jurisdiction or procedure. Many of these persons acted with delegated powers or direct orders from the NIF/NCP ruling regime. They should account by law for all crimes committed against people.

Many women have been harshly harassed with their families in different forms of harassment throughout the country. These victims will continue to struggle for the due process of law, especially after the 2009-2010 post-election government.

To enable these thousands of victims to gain full rights and fair compensations, many women must win the elections to defend their rights. The women voting in the next elections must, therefore, select the legal and political defenders who would be able to pursue the due process of justice in the legislature, i.e. the elected parliament, to put it forward before an Independent Judiciary for the deserved punishment.

Recommendations

We ask the Government of Sudan to post publicly the full list of the army officers and the other regulars who were extra-judicially killed in April 1990.

We ask the Government of Sudan to post publicly the names of the officials, or any other citizens, who abused their legal authority at the time to enforce the lawless trials that led to the killings.

In 2003, we asked at the London meeting the Sudan Government, the Democratic Opposition (NDA), the Sudan peace mediators in Nairobi, and all supporting civil society groups of our cause to abide-by the international norms that call for State Parties to the United Nations to do justice with respect to the army officers extra-judicial killings in Ramadan (April) 1990.

In the year 2008, months before the national elections, we renew our call on the government, the NDA, the civil society, and the International Community to honor the rights of the martyrs and their families by the rule of law.

DAYS IN WOMEN'S PRISON

Artist Ni'ma Elrasheedi

It is not my intention to describe my human rights' struggles as a woman, how lovely they were under certain conditions and how hard and difficult they became in other instances. It is my aim, however, to address aspects of the harshness of life a female artist experienced in a camp of unemployed women who lived with their families as wives, mothers or daughters, in a poor neighborhood in the heart of Atbara, the famous city of the Nile State.

Atbara was well known as the city of iron and fire, the city of the workers who used to work with the Sudan Railways, one of the oldest national economies in the country, and a real environment of the workers' struggles for a better life in the service of the state's transportation giant. The Sudan Railways was a great independent foundation of trade unionism in the whole Arab and African regions, of which Sudan's million square miles is a diverse multitude of cultures and arts.

I was born to a railways worker, thirty years ago. We were living in a small one-room cottage surrounded by endless cottages of the same size; a distinct space of equal humans and construction, stones, and trees. No one will believe it: the few quarters we lived in and grew up until we were married to workers like our parents in these cottages, were residence of thousands of humans in that small area of the working city.

The place was jammed and over crowded with children, adults, and a pleasant play-yard for hundreds of goats, dogs, and cats - all living peacefully with the humans with whom they shared the daily life, freely entering and exiting the cottages and their open backyards. The environment was thus an extension of the rural agricultural and pastoral modes of life surrounding the iron and fire city.

The poverty of the place and its lacking in modern services, comfortable housing, and other amenities never stopped our parents, the railway workers, from organizing themselves in the unconquerable Sudan Railways Trades Union – a giant informal organization that stood parallel to

the railways giant corporation since it was born in the early 1940's of the last century.

The will power, determination, and modern organization of the workers enabled them to stand for their rights for decades, negotiate with the administration, and sometimes achieve significant agenda to improve wages, guarantee some retirement benefits, and ensure leisure time. The most important success of the workers' union, however, was definitely the union's ability to survive all attempts to break its unity or suspend its activities.

We, the children of the railways' poor workers and employees, namely the clerks, accountants, and store-keepers, were particularly tuned to discussions of the union and with that the political messages embodied in the occasional leaflets of the Khartoum competing parties, especially the Democratic Unionists and the Communists, to control the union.

The truth, nonetheless, was that none of these political groups controlled the railways' unionist movement simply because it stayed clear of all ideological indoctrinations, in spite of the membership personal affiliations or political preferences, to be able to unify the workers and accomplish their agenda.

The lessons we learned from our daily life at the Atbara Sika Hadid housing projects were thus powerful and everlasting: the strongest defender of a people's rights is their trades union if it maintains its ranks and file with independent professional work, apart from any intervening group in union affairs.

I became an artist; but I haven't yet produced works of art in any marketable business. From the most part, I harnessed my artistic talents to serve the educational needs of our children, the workers' children for whom there are not yet many artists to do that. I painted for them stories about the workers' unionism and patriotism against colonialism, reactionary forces, and exploitation. For that purpose, I utilized in my paintings the colorful background and the rich interaction we lived in the cottages.

I often designed my stories from the workers' vibrant heritage, the magnificent Nile, and the green sceneries all around us in Atbara, which contrasted deeply with the narrowness and the poverty of the cottages. Sometimes, the kids asked me in the loveliest innocence: "How come we

are not having better homes with all this space, green gardens, and running waters?!” I would answer them that the government in control of all these places “has not yet seen the necessity of your needs. But if the union owns some of them or at least influences the government, you will have them!”

Like our young ones, we have always criticized the administration’s harassment of the poor workers and the junior employees by all kinds of sanctions, deduction of salaries, or transference to remote stations for the least minor mistakes a worker might do. These criticisms made of us sensitive humans to the needs of the poor ones wherever they might be.

This life bitterness, however, did not help our careers to develop as ambitious professionals to gain the bountiful advantages of the urban life. Although I traveled a lot to Khartoum and Port Sudan, my soul was always attracted to the railways cottages, the struggling workers, and our mothers and sisters who stood by their side. The latter shared the union’s hardships, and encouraged our parents to continue the struggles unrelentingly, as well as taking care of the families of the persecuted workers.

I have lived dear years of my life in poverty. These years, however, were rich with generous emotions and a few aspirations. The latter were based on our appreciative feelings towards our families, the good parents and the kind relatives who magnified the best examples for us when we became adults. We have learned from them how to stay by the side of the poor, to defend the freedoms of unions, and to protect the rights of the press. We valued the peaceful assemblies and the right of ethnic and/or religious minorities to exercise public freedoms.

I feel I was raised up in a prison of deprivations because we did not have enough rooms or services in our cottages, to say the least. I believe, however, this peculiar type of detention was inhabited by a rare species of prisoners, the railways’ workers who were free people, experienced, professional, and well-organized by the railways union.

There was a strange fact that hit my head while writing this essay. I thought that there was one significant difference between the ordinary prison and the imprisonment I lived at the Atbara workers’ residence. True, both constructions were detentions in the very typical meaning of the word:

The ordinary prison was walled off against the external world with guards taking arms and watching the movement of the inmates. The workers at the railways cottages were living under watchful surveillance of all their moves by the Mamurs, the railways' administrators. Like any prisoner, the worker was sanctioned, and unfairly forced to comply with the Mamur's orders at all costs.

You might imagine with me now how significant the union was: It was only possible to enjoy less surveillance when the union stood up in strong protest of administrative repression, such as denying the extra-pay of over time assignments, or some other conflicts. The workers, however, were always ready to argue with the administration and to force their way in their own interest by the union. This was the most important difference between the workers' life and the other prisoners' realities.

"If the ordinary people organize themselves, in strong independent unions," one unionist told me one day, "then the multiple prisons of opinion, political rights, and the other freedoms will give way to a successful unionist movement. Alone, this movement will liberate society and the state from the detention mentalities that unfortunately build up a new prison every time a union is suspended, or a legal assembly is prevented."

As a woman, I agree with Nawal El-Sa'dawi and the other women writers who unfolded the secrets of the women's life imprisonment by the internalized norms of repression. This repression is forced by the social norms inside the women's incarcerating world, which lies beyond the social and cultural walls of gender discrimination and the other social ills in our society.

Well! The workers liberated themselves from the railways' imprisonment camps by the free activities of the unions. We, the women, have no alternative, if we want to liberate ourselves from the internationalizations of gender discrimination and the unfair ill-treatment over our lives, but to adopt the idea of unionism.

Against the monopolies of administration and the political means of control which restrict our participation in the national decision making, we will collaborate independently by our women's unionism with the workers' and the other professional unions to bring the social life to a higher level of equalitarian relations, more than ever before.

IN DEFENSE OF OCAMPO

To be fair to Darfur

Lawyer Mohamed Farah

The indictment of the Sudanese president Omer Hassan Ahmed al-Bashir and others by the International Criminal Court Prosecutor General Luis Moreno-Ocampo generated many arguments that aroused several questions as well.

Is the Security Council authorized to put to trial the indicted Sudanese before the ICC? Does the ICC have the jurisdiction over such trial when the accused persons are nationals of a State that is not party to the ICC protocols? Is the Sudanese Judiciary capable of doing justice to the victims of Darfur?

We will address our selves to these questions with due respect to the powers of the UN Security Council and the ICC protocols. We will also discuss some provisions of the Sudanese law concerning the competencies of the Sudanese Judiciary with respect to the due process of law to the victims.

The relationship between the ICC and the Security Council comes about in application of the Security Council's powers proscribed in the United Nations Charter, especially Chapter Seven which provides the Council with absolute political power in the matters of peace keeping, restoration, and construction. The Council is therefore authorized to move the case of Darfur victims to the ICC for investigation and prosecution.

All persons aware of the realities of the Darfur people, or following up the news about them, agree that some groups have been gravely affected by many injustices. We feel that no one should be surprised of the Council's intervention to build or to maintain peace since the Council had previously intervened in similar situations or in those less serious than the crisis in Darfur.

Article 13 (b) of the ICC Rome Statue states that the court might exercise jurisdiction with respect to the crimes indicated in Article (5) in

these cases: if the case is transferred by the Security Council by Chapter Seven of the UN Charter. Accordingly, the court assumes jurisdiction without being committed to the conditions of Article 12 (2) of Statute, so long as the case is concerning a threat of peace and security.

It is true that the ICC jurisdiction is based on the principle of regional criminality, not by a doctrine of universal criminal jurisdiction. But the indictment of Bashir is different because the case was transferred to the ICC by the Security Council. The latter has previously taken decisions for the maintenance and the construction of peace by means of special courts to see into the rights of victims of civil wars in Rwanda and Slovakia.

Aside from the success or failures of these courts, they had been established according to the Security Council decisions. The Republic of Sudan is one of the Member States of the United Nations of which the Security Council is a specialized organ in security affairs. The succeeding governments of Sudan ratified several international conventions. For example, the Vienna law of treaties (1969; approved ref. 20/90), which obligated States Parties to observe and to respect the rights stipulated in international instruments.

The question then is that, since the government of Sudan objected to the transference of the indictment and rejected jurisdiction of the ICC, as the formal and informal announcements relayed, does this mean that the government will concede to a special court if the Council so decides?

The nuisance exhibited versus the issue of rights is unacceptable for there are victims who have a right to put to trial those accused of committing crimes against them. Instead of doing justice to the victims, the government and its supporters, however, took their wrath on the ICC Prosecutor General Ocampo who has been performing his professional duty in accordance with the ICC rules, and aimed to have the rights of the victims fully granted by court decision.

Is the Sudanese Judiciary prepared to do that? We believe that the answer is No. This answer is not doubtful of the competencies of judges, although we do suspect the honesty of some judges; but it suspects reliability of the laws the judges apply. All laws related to the indictment contradict the international charters and treaties. For illustration, there are several sections in the criminal law (1991) and the Sudanese Constitution.

The Constitution (1998) stated that the police force is not an instrument of justice; but that it is an executive body under command of the minister of interior. The Constitution does not provide for the Attorney General's offices; but it ascertains only their tasks according to the Constitution and law, which ascertains further the Attorney General's supervision over attorneys. Despite these facts, the Law of Criminal Procedure (1991) guarantees the Attorney General's offices and the police force powers violating the freedoms and the constitutional rights of people.

It suffices to mention some of the violations in question. Section 25 of the Law of Criminal Procedure provides the police force with original powers in investigation, interrogation, arrest, closure of roads, markets, and other public space, inspection, evidence documentation and safe storage, bond taking, and summons.

Section 25 (2) allows the police to file and/or to cancel a criminal case in the absence of attorney. Section 129 (3) authorizes the police to use firearms to disperse illegal assembly. Section 129 (1) states that it is not possible to take criminal procedure against acts aimed by the police force to prevent crimes related to the public tranquility, unless by permission of the President.

Section 58 of the same law allows the Attorney General to sign an irrevocable final decision to suspend a criminal case versus any accused person, in any time after completion of investigation, before issuance of a preliminary sentence in the criminal case. The court should then suspend the procedure and issue the necessary orders.

These illustrations document some whereabouts of the due process of justice that violates the freedoms and rights of people. How then would this state of affairs straighten out when both the attorney and the police represent synonymously the plaintiff and the judge, while these authorities are normally practiced by a neutral prosecution and an independent judiciary?

Would any one expect Omer al-Bashir in the accused side and the minister of justice attorney general 'Abd al-Basit Sabdarat, the former adviser of the president, or whoever represent him in the Attorney General's Chamber, to defend the public right? If that is the end of it, there is surely The Lord Whose Justice will retaliate for the victims of Darfur.

WHEN WOULD A WOMAN LEAD THE NATION?

Activist Jozina Vataki

The Quarterly editors asked me to respond to the critical views of my fellow activists with respect to the women's rights. I remembered at once the unresolved problems and continuous harassment by the male-dominated governments in the societies they created, even in the family and the private spheres of life, so that almost every man on earth exercised some sort of authority over us, the women, the largest and the most important powerless minority in the world.

I hesitated to restrict my reflections on the three main issues my colleagues competently handled in this Quarterly, regarding the women elections' candidacy, unionism, and the pursuit of victims' and martyrs' rights. Here, I have to express first my deep regret that the CPA partners agreed to force the women's candidacy in the so-called unified slate of women candidates. This means the CPA partners wanted to control the women's elections by choosing the women's candidates to their own satisfaction. Is this a free election?

Any way, I wanted to write about the highest goal for women to accomplish: namely the occupancy of the Presidency offices of the Republic. I am exposing this special dream, which is not at all impossible if the women strengthened their will, as occurred in several countries like our African Liberia, as well as India, Bangladesh, Britain, and Sweden among others.

The ruling men in these countries failed to end the political, or military, or development problems in their nations. The succeeding women did not solve all the inherited problems. But they were not less competent than their male counterparts, if not more capable of resolving them wisely. It will take no minute to see that the male-incited civil wars that devastated our Sudanese nation were always waged by governments or opposition groups led by men to the detriment of millions of the powerless women, children, and elderly victims.

We do have women in some leading positions in different activities; but they haven't yet assumed the upper hand in the national decision

making in war or in peace. For a long time, the northern activist women were supported by a few political groups to work independently from male-domination to service their own issues. Most recently, the southerner women have done a good job organizing into scores of NGOs, as well as joining SANU, USAP, SPLM, and the other concerned groups with the optional unity and progression of our nation.

These activist women, nonetheless, are kept far behind by the men's struggles to control power relations. Indeed, it is repeatedly the same case when a few women try to force their way as promised national leaders in the battle grounds with men, they will be pushed aside by the competing men before the men resume gender-specific competition among themselves.

This biased competition will not grant equal opportunities for women to victor. So the women would have to find the right alternatives to compete for power for better chances in different conditions, than those existing in the present time. We need to understand why the men always monopolize power relations in their own terms at expense of the women who comprise at least half of the surviving population worldwide.

Many colleagues emphasized the perpetuated strength of the men who inherited from ancient times this enormous wealth and formidable powers in society. Sometimes, some women were queens, as in the case of the Nubians in the Nile Valley and other African places. Still, the question is open: Why is it the men maintain the same gender relations at expense of the women, in the final analysis?

I am not personally convinced that the men's authority bodies grant them a normal margin over women in the situations of fighting or the severe struggles in the local and national or even international levels. I am more convinced that women too could make their own margins over competitors, or at least to work side by side with men, if the women unite as one human race that is sharing the same deprivations, suffering the men's monopolies, and paying for the men's failures.

Look, my dear sister, at the toll the women of Sudan suffered from the civil wars in the South, the East, and the West. How many millions of us, the women, paid dearly to survive to keep up the lives of the children, parents, and husbands in the swamps of death and the smoke and dust of tortures? How many millions of women took up the harshest jobs of

maintaining the household in the empty camps of the wretched ones, the displaced people and the refugee population?

How many women in the urban offices or companies worked day and night to heal the wounded, feed the hungry, and service the needy? Aren't we the noblest and the strongest of all humans in account of this colossal burden?

Now, let us ask ourselves this clear-cut question: Have the men recognized these huge women's sacrifices? Have the men in control of the government, most particularly, made the right legislation to guarantee the women's rights without elusiveness or deliberate reductions and restrictions?

Have the executives maintained the rights and freedoms acquired by the long struggles of the women, the right of the equal pay to the equal work for instance? Have the judges considered the situation of women before they sentenced them to death or imprisonment? Do they feel the touching teaching of the Lord to be merciful to the women who carried them in their wombs?

I agree with my colleagues that there is a dire need for the Sudanese women to establish their own political party and unionist movement. I have always venerated the Sudanese Women's Union, among our southern female institutions, for what it accomplished for women, especially in the north, in 50 or more years of women's struggles.

Also, I commend the men who in the past or in the present time support the SWU and the other women's NGOs. And yet, these highly appreciated struggles were limited because they had been pursued within the male-dominated spheres of power and social interaction.

The Sudanese women, South or North, are called upon to line up in one national entity. Let them name it as they wish. But they have to start a fresh and a new formulation to bring this dream to life. Let them know that they will never free themselves from the meager gifts of power the men offer to keep the women at bay: the 25% or 30% percentage of this party or that regime.

The Sudanese women should create their own party, a party with bureaus, committees, and grassroots organization, all targeting the women and filled only by women!

THE WOMEN'S ACTIVISTS

Criticize politicians, executives, and judges

Fathiya Hassan - Omdurman

No matter how much the Omdurman National Radio and T.V. fill the air with lies about the President's kindness to the Darfuri children arrested in the aftermath of May 10, whom we saw beaten up, bleeding, and crying for their assassinated fathers and widowed mothers: nothing of this government propaganda will stop the tears of the mothers, or the murders or tortures of the fathers, or the humiliation of the ethnic origin and the denied faith – their real pride as free and original humans.

The President, his party, and executives have shown the serious face of breaking the law as they continue to maneuver and play elusive games with the law to get their things done with whatever price that might cost. But what about the judges; why should they follow suit? They do not have to maneuver or play elusive games with the rule of law they legally represent. The judges will be questioned and blamed much more than all executives would face, as soon as the rule of law is made available.

Mastora Marjan – Kosti

I was a victim of police campaigns against the women selling tea at the verandas of al-Sug al-Arabi market for a long time in Khartoum before I was compelled by strong appeals from my aging parents to return to live in our home city Kosti.

The police and those commanding them to degrade our human dignity forget that the tea sellers are members of respectable families; they are poor; but they are not without families and homes. My pains as a woman were greater than my colleagues, the men who were equally hunted down by the police for selling goods without the Baladiya [local government] permits.

Apparently, the eviction of metro tax was a legal reason for the police hunt of the tea sellers and the others. But, the real cause was that the poor women and men earning their bread thru this harsh life refused to pay the

additional payments imposed by the police and the metro employees on us.

We would always ask ourselves: why would these government employees act wickedly with the poor women who definitely comprised a genuine section of their own families? Aren't they trained to respect us as honest citizens?

My misery was not put to an end in Kosti. Many executives of the city metro are not different in any sense from those of Khartoum. Some of them are arrogant and cruel in nature, as if their parents are the same and one person. My parents, however, advised that it was government training and laws that made of these employees what they became rather than their parents or families.

What is worst is that such executives are equally corrupted since they would not refrain from asking us, the poor sellers of tea and other cheap things, to offer them the little we have without paying us the due charge.

Roqaiya Abu Fatma – Port Sudan

Elections, I am told, will have the women voting for a unified slate of female candidates. The CPA partners, we are taught, wanted this arrangement to guarantee the women's right to enjoy "democratic freedoms."

When I repeated this lesson to my insightful mother, she said "this joke" about democratic freedoms is meant to control the women's vote to favor certain candidates as might be influenced by the government monopolies of the media and other means of control.

My mother explained to me that the democratic elections of Sudan since the mid 1950s of the past century granted the women the right to choose their own candidates in mixed party lists, as well as individual party lists.

This free procedure of gender-superiority allowed the women to compete with the men candidates in the graduates and the geographical constituencies. It was this broad co-existence and competition that brought to the Sudanese Parliament Fatima Ahmed Ibrahim as the first Arab and the first African member of a democratic parliament in the 1960s.

My mother expressed her dismay at the tendency of the Arab and African media to ignore this brilliant fact when nowadays women have been elected to parliaments in some Arab or African assemblies.

Soniya Shihata – Khartoum North

The health care is non-existent in our hospitals. What are the doctors doing? Where are the other executives? The absence of trades unions proved to be a vital reason why the government is so reckless towards the health care and the well-being of patients.

Our doctors are so fragmented in a miserable way with the government policies that compelled most doctors and licensed nurses to emigrate, besides the ideological battles among themselves that they almost completely failed to hold one national medical conference in two decades.

The doctors must regroup in the Sudan Doctors' Union, the glorious union that, led by the late Izzaddin 'Ali 'Amir, 'Abd al-Wahab Sinadah, Osman Surkatti and their competent colleagues, helped many times to savage the debilitating health of our country.

It is time for the doctors to come together as expeditiously as they could, in unity, to improve the deteriorating conditions of our hospitals and the falling out of the good reputation of the Sudanese health services and caring personnel. Once these simple and direct agenda are fulfilled, the Doctors' Union will hopefully find itself once again in the path of success the earlier pioneers successfully erected and honorably guided.

Agaya Margo – Juba

As a southerner lady, I have no doubt that the men politicians love to possess authority so that the women would continue to work under their domination. We have many political parties in the South. Some of them, like SANU which was formed in the early 1940s, made the effort to bring about equal representation of women in the party activities and leading committees. But the bulk of parties, including the ruling SPLM, have not yet attained that goal.

Eventually, I have to criticize the laxity and the non-willingness of our parties to boost the position of women in their political groups, although these very political circles know how deep and big the women's role continues to be in the South. I know our southern leaders care so much for the promised unity with the North. I have to criticize our leaders, however, in their unabated negligence of the basic fact, that the South is not a copy of the North.

The North “contemporary” heritage, which sidelines the women and peg them to the men, is not a dominant culture in the whole South, although I know a great many southerners treat women as many northerners did. So let me say it clearly and straight ahead to our southerner men:

If you continue to ignore the women’s equal play in our politics, a day will soon come when the southerner women will surely join their North-South all-women political party that, as my sister Jozina wrote in another place in this Quarterly, will generate presidents, ministers, and other top positions to compete with the competing parties in the democratic elections.

Kaltoum Gido – al-Fashir

Thanks, Quarterly editors, for this space to publish my concerns, indeed bitterness for the complex rounds of legal disputes and endless arguments on the need to settle the crisis in Darfur, without paying any real attention by the government to return our displaced people to their dispossessed homelands.

How many families are daily displaced, even those still living in fear under the terror of government authorities in al-Fashir, al-Ginaina, Niyyala, Kutum, or Zalingi?

I hope the generous readers imagine the huge number of displaced humans in the region, every day, for more than five years. Official estimates spoke about a million human or even 1.5 millions. This figure is quite possible.

A resident in the capital Fashir, I can assure that my 200-member extended family in the beginning of war has been largely dispossessed of their gorgeous cultivations as they existed within many villages in the area.

Most of my family members were forced to run away from the violent attacks of government armies and militias on our present-time abandoned and/or demolished villages until only 8 of my family members survived in the city.

Some news confirmed that scores of my extended family were either killed, or that they escaped the killing to face the horrible status of displacement in the camps without agriculture or merchandise, or services

or education in the wilderness of the Sahara.

We were independent. We lived on our own resources, our gardens and fields. My bitterness is due to the losses my family passed over. My sadness is because of the terror, fear, and the life instability encircling our lives even inside the city.

When would our good life come back to the remaining members of my family? Are we going to live until the day a government of patriotic leaders and honest staff will faithfully regain our rights and fulfill our needs, or shall we continue to hate and disregard the very idea of government after all we passed through in the last five years?

Announcement

The Quarterly Editorial Board announces, the North-South NGOs Conference (Sudan, 2008) is not published in this Issue for security reasons. We apologize for the inconvenience this decision might have caused. The Conference Report will be published in a special issue of the Quarterly.