

Jihad In Sudan Redux Posted by Charles Jacobs and Sasha Giller Jul 6th 2011 at 4:44 pm in Africa, Humanitarian, Islam, Islamic extremism, human rights | Comments (8)

On July 9, the mostly Christian South Sudan will legally and officially separate from the Muslim north and become a new, independent and free country. Fearing loss of its iron clad grip of other non-Arab regions in the north, whose people likely envy the freedoms won by the South, Arab/Islamist leaders in Khartoum have launched a military assault on the Nuba Mountains, a mixed Christian, animist and Muslim region. Reports from the area are gruesomely reminiscent of the decades-long assault Khartoum waged on the South. These include forced conversions to Islam, mass displacement, bombing of civilians and mass slaughter.

Anticipating the effects of Christians winning freedom from his rule already in December of 2010 Sudan's President Omar Hassan al-Bashir, who is indicted by the International Criminal Court for genocide and crimes against humanity, laid out a vision for the future of his nation:

If south Sudan secedes, we will change the constitution and at that time there will be no time to speak of diversity of culture and ethnicity... Sharia (Islamic law) and Islam will be the main source for the constitution, Islam the official religion and Arabic the official language, he told a group of supporters.

Al-Bashir made his statement as the people of Southern Sudan were preparing to vote in the referendum that secured their imminent independence. With less than a week left before South secedes, al-Bashir is determined to fulfill his promise not by changing the constitution, but through murder and ethnic cleansing.

After concluding a military occupation of the disputed border region of Abyei, which resulted in the expulsion of more than 100,000 (non-Arabs, mostly from the Dinka tribe), Sudanese army and government-sponsored Arab militias attacked the African tribes of Nuba Mountains, a region situated in the Northern state of Southern Kordofan. Reports indicate indiscriminate bombings of civilians and a systematic killing of the black-skinned Nuba, which forced estimated 100,000 to abandon their homes. One report described "door to door executions of completely innocent and defenseless civilians, often by throat cutting." Another suggested the government might be using chemical weapons. The Bishop of Nuba Mountains described the events as genocide: "Once again we are facing the nightmare of genocide of our people in a final attempt to erase our culture and society from the face of the earth." A well-respected Sudan analyst concurred.

Nuba embody the diversity of culture and religion that al-Bashir wants to destroy. Numbering

some 1.5 million, Nuba people are Christians, Muslims and the followers of traditional faiths. It is not uncommon to find the adherents of all faiths within a single family. Comprising from more than fifty tribes and speaking an equal number of languages, the Nuba have an incredibly diverse culture.

Just like the Africans of the South, the Nuba have faced racial discrimination from the Arab governments and elites of the North, which led them to join Sudan's People Liberation Army (SPLA) at the beginning of the second outbreak of Sudan's Civil War (1983-2005). The government's response, especially after the Islamist regime of Al-Bashir and Hassan al-Turabi seized power in 1989, escalated into the campaign of annihilation. The Nuba people lost their lands; they were murdered, starved and enslaved. In what some called genocide in the name of Islam, all Nuba-Christians, animists and even Muslims-were targeted for eradication; estimated 200,000 perished.

In the crackdown that reach the Nuba Mountains even before the outbreak of the war, Christian clergy was murdered; churches burned, while Christian children were abducted, forcibly converted to Islam and often forced to join the Sudanese army to fight against their own people. In the current attack Christian places of worship are also being destroyed. In January 1992, South Kordofan governor, Lt. General al-Hussein officially declared the war a "jihad." Shortly after, in 1993, the religious leaders of Southern Kordofan issued a fatwa that legalized it:

The rebels in South Kordofan and Southern Sudan started their rebellion against the state and declared war against the Moslems. Their main aims are: killing the Moslems, desecrating mosques, burning and defiling the Koran, and raping Moslem women. In so doing, they are encouraged by the enemies of Islam and Moslems: these foes are the Zionists, the Christians and the arrogant people who provide them with provisions and arms. Therefore, an insurgent who was previously a Moslem is now an apostate; and a non-Moslem is a non-believer standing as a bulwark against the spread of Islam, and Islam has granted the freedom of killing both of them.

Following this religious ruling, Sudanese soldiers and allied militias began killing Nuba imams, burning mosques and desecrating Korans. Today, the same actors praise God as they kill the innocent.

To destroy the social fabric of the Nuba society the government forces and the Arab militiamen systematically raped thousands of Nuba women, including girls as young as nine. The raping took place during abductions, in military camps, and in so-called "peace camps." One victim, a 17 years-old girl named Fawzia Jibreel, told African Rights:

After dark, the soldiers came and took the girls to their rooms, and raped them. I was taken and

raped... When you have been taken, the soldier who has taken you will do what he wants, then he will go out of the room, you will stay, and another one will come...Every day the raping continued... It is impossible to count the men who raped me. Perhaps in a week I would have only one day of rest. Sometimes one man will take me for the whole night. Sometimes I will be raped by four or five men per day or night; they will just be changing one for another.

The policy of rape is being used in the Nuba Mountains once again.

On July 1, during Friday prayers in a mosque in Khartoum, al-Bashir said that he ordered his soldiers to continue "cleaning" South Kordofan. As history shows all those who care about the plight of Nuba and other Africans of Sudan must take his words seriously and act to stop his religious genocide.

*This article was first published in [Big Peace](#) on July 6, 2011*

By Charles Jacobs and Sasha Giller

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