

AFRECS E-Blast: January 23, 2013

PRAY. TEACH. PARTNER. URGE. GIVE.

In the church:

Forsaken and Forgotten: A Message from AFRECS Executive Director Richard Parkins

"You shall no more be termed Forsaken, and your land shall no more be termed Desolate." These words from the prophet Isaiah would be an especially welcome salutation to the people of South Kordofan and Blue Nile as they experience the horrors of extermination.

A [report from a recent visitor](#) in the region, Mukesh Kapila, describes the "ethnic cleansing" that has taken place with the Sudanese government noting the thousands of plastic bags to be removed as a perverted description of their unfinished business. Speaking as a representative of the Aegis Trust, an antigenocide organization, Kapila estimates the total numbers being killed, displaced or reduced to near starvation to be about 1.5 million in addition to the 300 thousand deaths resulting from the protracted conflict in Darfur. Such unspeakable and unabated brutality and inhumanity receives scant attention in the mainstream media and international bodies. Thus, indifference and neglect compound the tragedy.

We need not be a party to this indifference and neglect. We can all learn about the horrific circumstances of our Sudanese sisters and brothers through these e blasts. Knowledge and information should lead to prayer and action. Prayer is our inescapable obligation. Many of us are connected to parishes, dioceses or religious bodies whose voices can convey a message of concern and outrage. Such opportunities should not be overlooked.

We will soon witness a changing of the guard at the State Department as Senator John Kerry takes charge. Senator Kerry has a good knowledge of the Sudanese situation, having chaired the Senate Foreign Relations committee where witness upon witness has provided vivid accounts of the unending suffering that has occurred in this frequently overlooked region. His confirmation hearings provide an occasion to raise the plight of the Sudanese in Blue Nile and South Kordofan.

May we emulate Isaiah in our zeal to call attention to the devastation facing our Sudanese sisters and brothers as the prophet did in lifting up the plight of the people of Israel – "For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her vindication shines out like the dawn."

Richard Parkins

Prayer Request from the Diocese of Twic East

Bishop Ezekiel Diing of Twic East Diocese reports that his four-year old son, Paul Telaar Ezekiel, is seriously ill with a brain tumor. The bishop is asking for prayers for healing and comfort for his son and is trying to raise funds for the surgery he needs.

Christians in the North

We continue to hear news of various Christian groups in Sudan being persecuted or Christian workers with visas being expelled. Please pray for all those who place their lives in danger for the sake of the gospel in Sudan and around the world.

Lenten Studies with an ECS Slant

The Lenten Study from the [Diocese of Wau](#) in the Episcopal Church of Sudan, entitled "**Kaam thiin ciek yic - Moments**," has been updated with weekly reflection sheets; if you're using the study, you may want to check back at the site for additions closer to Lent. The Diocese of Missouri has created a virtual, asynchronous online group for participating in this study in hopes of deepening relationships among it and its partners in the ECS, Salisbury Diocese, and Church of Sweden. Missouri's director of communications [Beth Felice](#) would be happy to talk about this local adaptation of the study with others interested in doing something similar.

The [Diocese of Bradford](#) in the Church of England has a Lenten study entitled "**Jesus Through Other Eyes: Seeing Our Faith Through the Church in Sudan.**" Some of the material is online, but for the full course, including DVD, contact Bradford's Sudan group secretary [Tim Lewis](#). We checked with the diocese to be sure they are willing to mail their materials overseas (they are), but if you are outside the UK, you'll need to hurry since Lent starts soon. However, the course can be used at any time; while it is being featured for Lent, its relevance is not limited to these 40 days.

Blogging a Sudan Visit

Bishop Nick Baines of the Diocese of Bradford, England, has just returned from a visit to Khartoum, which he chronicled in his blog. He offers [information and insights](#) into what's happening in the northern dioceses of the ECS.

Bishop Andudu Speaks Out

The Anglican Communion News Service has an article on the [appearance on a panel](#) in Nairobi of Bishop Andudu Adam Alnail of Kadugli in the Nuba Mountains. The bishop spoke about the conditions his people are facing; the panel's comments were addressed to African leaders in advance of the upcoming African Union summit in Addis Ababa.

In politics -- the two Sudans:

Implementing Last Fall's Agreements

Despite news last week that South Sudan was [pulling troops from the border](#), talks on implementing the agreements made last fall have stalled again. Sudan and South Sudan have so far [failed to reach an agreement](#) that would allow oil production to resume. *The Sudan Tribune* offers [statements on the breakdown of talks](#) from the points of view of Sudan, South Sudan, and the African Union. While [Sudan blames South Sudan](#) for the breakdown, South Sudan has [appealed to the international community](#) for help getting agreement on the remaining issues. Seemingly intransigent disagreements over [Abyei](#) and the creation of a demilitarized zone along the border as well as Sudan's accusations of South Sudanese support for the SPLM-N and South Sudan's accusations of further cross-border attacks by Sudan continue. With respect to the last issue, [peaceful protesters in Wau](#) (Western Bahr el-Ghazal) came out to demonstrate against ground and air attacks in their state's town of Kitkit earlier this month, which they attribute to the Sudanese Armed Forces. The [UN Security Council](#) was scheduled to discuss on Tuesday, January 22, the failure to implement the agreement, and the [US Department of State](#) issued a statement on the topic Tuesday as well. Presidents Kiir and Bashir are slated to meet on the sidelines of the January 24th African Union summit.

Humanitarian Aid

Briefly --

- * **The EU** recently announced an [80-million-euro package](#) of humanitarian aid to Sudan and South Sudan for 2013.
- * **Samaritan's Purse** has an article about its [medical mission](#) near Doro refugee camp, 20 miles south of the border with Blue Nile State, Sudan.
- * In Sudan, a new hospital will receive [60 percent of its operating expenses](#) from the **government of Turkey** for five years.
- * **The UN** is opening a [new refugee camp](#) in Ajuong, Pariang County in South Sudan's Unity State, just across the border from Sudan's South Kordofan State in the coming weeks. This camp, which should start receiving refugees in March, and others that are planned will eventually absorb an expected 110,000 refugees from Sudan's southern conflicts, relieving some of the pressure on existing camps, especially Yida.
- * The Office of the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (**OCHA**) of the UN has published a new [report on humanitarian issues](#) in Sudan, with a breakout of displacement numbers by geographical source.

In politics -- Sudan:

The Ongoing Wars

An SPLM-North delegation has been in Washington, DC, this past week for [talks](#) with US Special Envoy for Sudan Princeton Lyman, who is [staying on](#) in that capacity until replaced by President Obama. The delegation has suggested that an African Union mediation team led by former South African President Thabo Mbeki could resolve the issues between the Sudanese government and the peoples of Darfur, the Nuba Mountains, and Blue Nile.

[Fighting continued](#) this week in South Kordofan. John Ashworth has published several articles on key players in this conflict, accusations of war crimes, and further attacks, all in [one post](#).

The [horrors](#) continue in Blue Nile as well, as the UK group HART (Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust) reports.

While most of the Sudan war news these days focuses on South Kordofan and Blue Nile, not all is well in Darfur. There are daily reports of attacks, skirmishes, and sanctions in the Darfur states. A snapshot from the Sudan Monitor Twitter feed shows, within a few minutes, news of the [expulsion](#) of half the NGOs in the West Darfur capital, [random attacks](#) (including rapes) in a North Darfur town, [deteriorating conditions](#) and a growing population in Zam Zam Camp in North Darfur, El-Fasher (N Darfur) area [farmers beaten](#) and their crops looted by camel herders, allegedly armed by the Sudanese government, and a [commercial truck looted](#) by 20 gunmen in West Darfur.

[Darfur peace talks](#) began this week in Doha, Qatar, between the Sudanese government and a faction from the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM). The JEM has [declined](#) to participate.

Efforts to Bring Down the Regime

Early this month representatives of major Sudanese opposition parties and rebel movements signed the [New Dawn Charter](#), which the government of Sudan [rejects](#), saying that the US and EU are behind it, a [charge denied](#) by the US. Some of the members of the opposition expressed [caveats](#) about the charter later.

Chinese Loan

China is [lending](#) Sudan \$1.5 billion to help stabilize the economy. No payments are due for five years.

A Little Culture

For a different perspective on Sudan, check out *Ahram Online's* article on the pyramids and other artifacts from the ancient [heritage](#) of Sudan.

In politics -- South Sudan:

Oil

While South Sudan continues to plan for a [pipeline](#) through Kenya for its oil, the US last week urged the nation to export as much as it can by [trucking oil](#) out through Ethiopia rather than wait for either the Sudanese pipeline to reopen or the Kenyan one to be built. To that end, Ethiopia has completed its portion of a South-Sudanese-Ethiopian highway capable of bearing the heavy truck traffic of the oil industry. Yet to come is the South Sudanese portion. We also learned this week that South Sudan has signed an agreement to [export oil to Israel](#).

The Lord's Resistance Army

The Ugandan army reports [killing a key bodyguard](#) of Joseph Kony, the LRA leader.

Tribalism

Ethnic divisions and conflicts continue to plague South Sudan in small but persistent ways and sometimes in significant outbreaks of violence. Abolishing tribalism has been a stated goal of both the government and the peoples of South Sudan since its creation. Last Saturday Vice President [Riek Machar admonished Nuer and Dinka](#) people to avoid bullying people from smaller tribes. The year 2012 saw thousands of deaths in the conflict between Murle and a Nuer/Dinka coalition in [Jonglei State](#), and although disarmament has been somewhat successful, tensions are still high. Further ethnic conflict has occurred recently in [Wau](#); the Sudd Institute has published a detailed look at the Dinka-Fertit violence there last month.

The South Sudanese in diaspora also make ending tribalism a priority, as evidenced by the organization [South Sudanese for Eradication of Tribalism](#), which held a conference on the topic last September in Minnesota. So important is the resolution of inter- and intraethnic conflicts that the Government of the Republic of South Sudan has announced a [national reconciliation effort](#) to be carried out in April 2013. (While tribalism is the most-referenced issue here, conflict and violence between subgroups of individual tribes are not uncommon; recently the news has been of conflicts in [Lakes State between rival Dinka groups](#) over grazing land as well as in [Jonglei State between Dinka groups](#).)

PRAY: Please pray for healing and comfort for our young brother Paul Telaar Ezekiel and for all those, especially in Sudan, who are persecuted for their faith. Pray for an end to conflicts and violence in and between Sudan and South Sudan.

TEACH: Lent can be an excellent time to focus attention on Sudan and South Sudan, whether by joining in a study with Episcopalians in Wau Diocese, looking at the faith through the lens of life in Sudan with Bradford Diocese, creating your own pilgrimage of the imagination in Sudan or Sudan-focused prayer discipline, or finding speakers on the church or life in general in Sudan

for Lenten study. If you want help connecting with people who have visited Sudan or South Sudan or finding other types of resources, feel free to contact AFRECS by replying to this or any AFRECS email.

This bi-weekly Sudan update is from the American Friends of the Episcopal Church of Sudan. You are receiving it because you are currently on an AFRECS listserv. Feel free to forward this newsflash to others who may find it helpful. To join the list if you received this email as a forward, please send an email to AFRECS_E-Blasts@afrecs.org with "SUBSCRIBE" in the subject line. If you wish to unsubscribe, please send an email to AFRECS_E-Blasts@afrecs.org with "UNSUBSCRIBE" in the subject line. For more information about AFRECS, visit our website <http://www.afrecs.org> or our Facebook page.