

SLAVERY IN MAURITANIA AND SUDAN

JOINT HEARING
BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEES ON
INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS AND HUMAN RIGHTS
AND AFRICA
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
ONE HUNDRED FOURTH CONGRESS
SECOND SESSION

—————
MARCH 13, 1996
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Printed for the use of the Committee on International Relations



U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

25-249 CC

WASHINGTON : 1996

For sale by the U.S. Government Printing Office
Superintendent of Documents, Congressional Sales Office, Washington, DC 20402
ISBN 0-16-052817-8

11461-59

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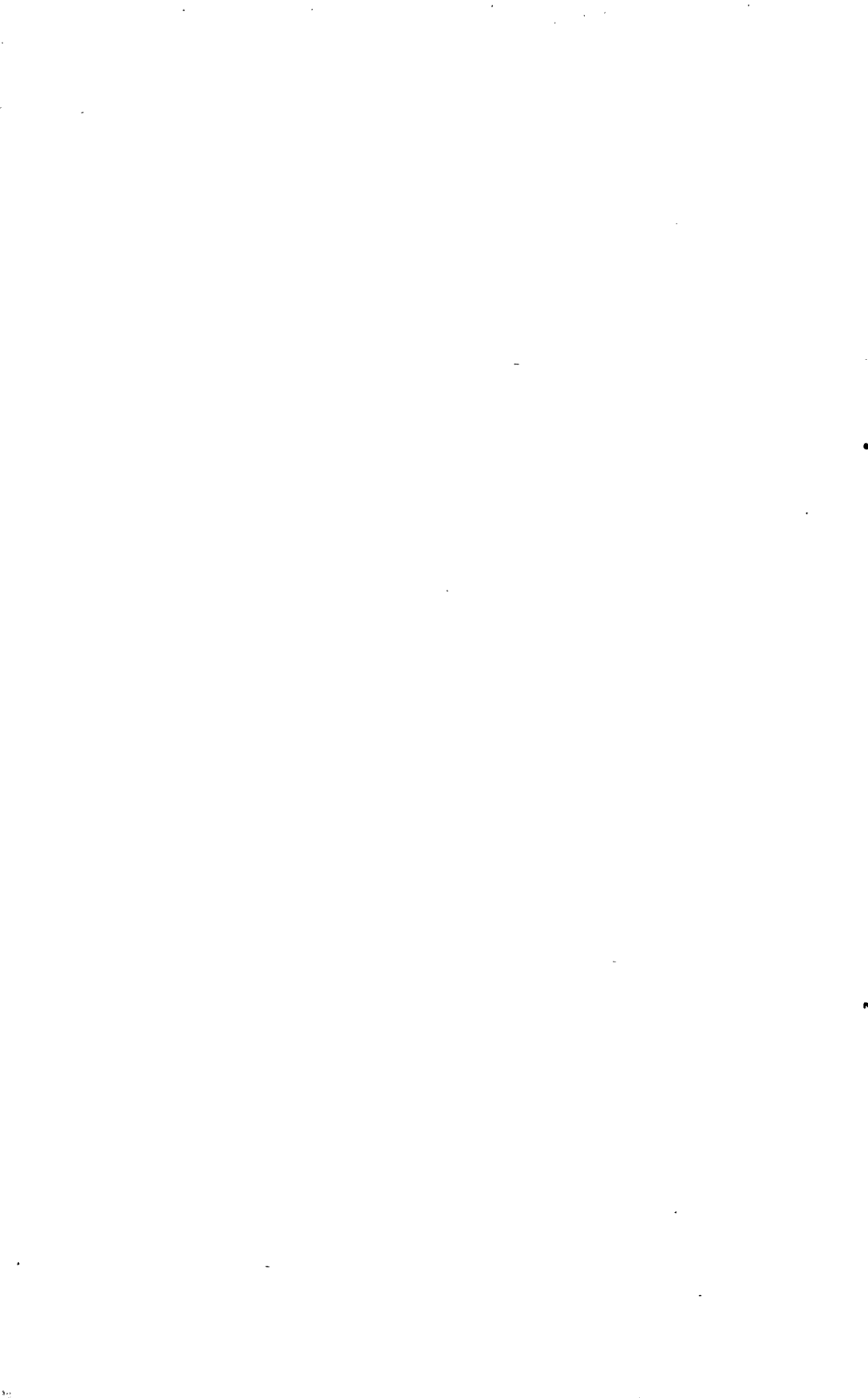
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SLAVERY IN MAURITANIA AND SUDAN

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 13, 1996

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS AND HUMAN
RIGHTS, JOINT WITH SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittees met, pursuant to notice at 2 p.m. in room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC, Hon. Christopher H. Smith, (chairman of the Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights), and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, (chair of the Subcommittee on Africa) presiding.

Mr. SMITH. This hearing of the Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights and the Subcommittee on Africa will come to order.

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen.

The testimony we will hear today is about the practice of human chattel slavery. Most of us had believed that to a large extent this horrible practice belonged only in the past. But several of our witnesses today will tell us of having seen it firsthand, having spoken with slaves as well as with their slave masters.

According to accounts by anti-slavery activists, including some of our witnesses today, chattel slavery in Mauritania and Sudan is substantially identical to slavery as it was practiced in other centuries. It represents the subjugation of one race by another, or often of members of one religious group by members of the other. It frequently includes the grossest forms of degradation of women and children. Slavery is not to be confused with similar institutions such as serfdom or indentured servitude; however wrong these institutions are. They involve only the ownership of one person's labor by another. In true slavery, the heinous practice of slavery, as we will hear is being practiced today, the master owns the slave's body. He owns the right to decide whom the slave will marry. When babies are born, the master owns the babies and can buy and can sell them. True slavery is about treating people as though they were not people, as though they were things without souls.

We will also hear today from former Congressman Mervyn Dymally, who represents the Government of Mauritania. I understand that Congressman Dymally will testify that slavery no longer exists in Mauritania, at least officially, and that the government is doing its best to eliminate the so-called vestiges of slavery. We will clearly give him a respectful hearing, but we will also ask him how he

responds to the specific charges of people who say that they have seen slavery firsthand.

The civilized world owes a debt of gratitude to the modern anti-slavery movement, some of whose leaders are here today.

I would also like to personally thank Barbara Ledeen of the Independent Women's Forum who has been tireless in bringing this issue to the attention of official Washington.

In the modern world we often speak of fundamental human rights. Sometimes we say these words without thinking about what they mean. I believe that the idea of human rights has meaning only if rights are God-given, inalienable, and indivisible. Slavery is the ultimate denial of all of these rights. Toleration of slavery, even when it is far away and in another country, is the ultimate statement of radical cultural relativism. We must do whatever it takes to abolish slavery. Not only because its victims are our brothers and sisters, but also because as long as there is anybody in the world who is a slave, none of us is truly free.

I would like to ask the distinguished chairwoman of the Subcommittee on Africa, Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, if she would have any opening remarks.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Chris. I am glad that our two subcommittees have been able to work together to bring public attention to the persistent reports that slavery does indeed continue to exist in Mauritania and in Sudan.

Slavery, what a shocking topic for a congressional hearing in 1996. We think about slavery as something that we read about in history class. Something that existed back in the distant past, something that belongs to a different era. The topic is one that you would think of as a subject for a historian's society meeting rather than as a human rights issue of the 1990's. And yet there are credible reports that slavery still exists and that human beings are still being bought and sold in Sudan and Mauritania.

If slavery does indeed exist in these countries, then we must do everything in our power to bring it to an end. There can be no tolerance for slavery anywhere in the world. The United Nations reported over a year ago that there is information that shows a massive increase in the number of cases of slavery, forced servitude, slave trading and forced labor in Sudan. If there is slavery in Sudan, then there ought to be international action, effective international action, to impose severe and universal sanctions against Sudan. We should impose a broad range of sanctions against Sudan or against any other country that tolerates slavery or that engages in slave trading.

With regard to Mauritania, the State Department Human Rights Report seems to have changed dramatically from last year. For instance, last year's Human Rights Report on Mauritania reported that with regard to the camp for refugees in that country, "Informed estimates are that 10 percent of the 80,000 refugees in camps are slaves."

This year's report says nothing whatsoever about those slaves, as if they simply disappeared. Similarly, the report of the State Department states that, "Tens of thousands of persons whose ancestors were slaves still occupy positions of servitude."

I do not understand that State Department's distinction between being a slave and occupying a position of servitude, and we hope that the distinction becomes clear today. To say, as this year's Human Rights Report does, that these people remain in servitude because of their lack of knowledge about their own status, is to confirm that they are still slaves and are treated as slaves by their masters.

This is an important issue and one that deserves and indeed demands congressional action.

I look forward to hearing from the Clinton administration and from the distinguished panel of experts that we have invited to share their expertise with us today. Once again, I congratulate Chairman Smith for his cooperation in this hearing.

Thank you, Chris.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much.

I would like to welcome and say how pleased we are to have Secretary William Twaddell. Mr. Twaddell joined the Foreign Service in 1969 and held numerous positions in the Persian Gulf area until he was appointed ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Mauritania in 1988. In 1991, he left the position to serve as Chief of Mission in Monrovia, Liberia, until 1995. And in August, he assumed duties as Deputy Assistant Secretary in African Bureau.

Mr. Secretary, welcome to the subcommittees and we look forward to your testimony.

STATEMENT OF WILLIAM H. TWADDELL, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY, BUREAU OF AFRICAN AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Mr. TWADDELL. Thank you. Thank you Mr. Chairman, Madam Chairman.

I am here today to discuss with you the extent of our knowledge about a question of great concern to all who are interested in freedom and human dignity, the question of slavery today in Mauritania and Sudan.

Our current views on this issue were submitted to the Congress last week in our "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1995." In addition to the text of the reports on those two countries, I request your permission to provide for the committee a longer statement on this question.

Let me summarize, if I might, our main conclusions. Let me begin with Mauritania.

Our "Human Rights Report for 1995," as Madam Chairman just quoted, indicates that, "Such practices as coercive slavery and commerce in slaves appeared to have virtually disappeared." And concludes, "Reports of involuntary servitude are rare and unconfirmed. According to the laws of that land, citizens of Mauritania are now both constitutionally and legally free."

What is at question, however, is whether these constitutional and legal guarantees have been fully implemented throughout Mauritanian society. Where there is evidence that the government of Mauritania has made progress toward ensuring the full emancipation of all its citizens, it is also true, and we continue to hear reports that slavery exists.

In reviewing this question over the past 16 years, since the decree of July 5, 1980, declaring the emancipation of slaves, we have noted a number of measures undertaken by the Mauritanian Government. These include ordinances and regulations calling for the enforcement of that decree of 1980. Public education campaigns about the practice of slavery and the rights of freed slaves have been conducted throughout the country, including by radio. Beginning in the early 1980's and continuing into the 1990's, there have been a number of cases in which judges who failed to apply the emancipation law were sanctioned or removed from the bench. A non-governmental organization formed in 1978 by former slaves has been allowed to work, to inform the population about liberation, and to assist former slaves in their problems with their former masters.

The creation of two additional organizations in 1995 demonstrates that the social consequences of centuries of slavery continues to be felt. It also shows that the government is not posing obstacles to these actions seeking to remedy this deplorable heritage.

Since 1980, we are aware of missions to Mauritania by 13 national or international organizations for the purpose of investigating the question of slavery. Nevertheless, we continue to hear reports that slavery exists, not merely vestiges, but slavery itself.

Journalists and other investigators have reported that sales of slaves continue. Sources have reported that not all Mauritians are aware that slavery has been abolished. The government has been accused by some of being too passive in its efforts to educate the people concerning their rights and legal status and enforcing its own laws.

The American Embassy in Nouakchott devotes a significant portion of its time following the question of slavery. We have worked with American and international organizations interested in this question and welcome, and I underline, do welcome the opportunity to consult with them and share information. Naturally, wherever evidence of the continuing existence of slavery surfaces, we strongly condemn the practice.

It is our hope that as Mauritania progresses, and in particular, as it develops and improves its economy, increased prosperity, literacy, and education will create conditions under which the vestiges of slavery will truly become only an historical memory.

The fact that cases relating to slavery continue to be brought before the courts indicates that not all former masters have accepted the law of the land. We will continue to urge the government of Mauritania to exert additional effort and resources to programs designed to educate its citizens about their rights inferred by their own laws.

Turning to Sudan. The United States is gravely concerned regarding the continuing pattern of gross violations of human rights in Sudan, including increased credible reports of slavery. For 12 now, going on 13 years, Sudan has suffered the slow hemorrhaging of a long bitter civil war. Human rights abuses related to the chaos and horror of war continue. But there is also a pattern of serious abuses associated with the government's attempt to subjugate opposition wherever it is found. One aspect of that campaign may be

the taking of slaves by the army of Sudan or forces under its control.

In addition, all warring parties in Sudan continue the practice of forced conscription as a means of replenishing the ranks of their armies.

The government of Sudan has denied that slavery exists and refused to investigate such reports or to cooperate with others seeking to do so. This year's State Department Country Report on Sudan includes a section concerning the persistence of slavery and the alarming increase in reports of the seizing of civilian captives, particularly in war zones.

There are also credible but unconfirmed reports that women and children were sold and sent abroad to work as domestic servants, agricultural laborers, or sometimes concubines.

In some instances, it is reported that local authorities took action to stop occurrences of slavery. In other cases, authorities apparently did nothing.

The Administration has not hesitated to bring such concerns before the international community. And especially before the organs of the United Nations.

In a November 28th speech before the General Assembly last year, Ambassador Madeleine Albright stated, "The government of Sudan remains an egregious violator of internationally recognized human rights. Over the past year, we have seen increasing reports of slavery and forced labor of women and children belonging to racial, ethnic, and religious minorities."

Since 1993, the United States has taken the lead in introducing resolutions on such abuses, both in the General Assembly and the U.N. Human Rights Commission. We will do so again at next week's meeting of the Commission in Geneva, where we will again introduce a resolution on human rights in Sudan, including a provision regarding slavery in Sudan, as detailed in the findings of the Commission's Special Rapporteur.

We continue to fully support his efforts and endorse his recommendation that monitors be placed in key locations to improve the quality of available information.

There is no doubt that the human rights situation in Sudan continues to be appalling and that there is evidence of the practice of slavery in that war-ravaged country. Unfortunately, the government of Sudan has not until now been responsive to the mounting international criticism.

Mr. Chairman, Madam Chairman, the situations in Mauritania and Sudan relating to the question of slavery are distinct. What is consistent, however, is the concern and attention the Administration devotes to trying to bring the practice to light and to an end.

(The prepared statement of Mr. Twaddell appears in the appendix.)

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Secretary, for your testimony. And without objection, your full comments will be made a part of the record.

I have a number of questions, and I will yield to my distinguished colleagues for any questions that they might have.

Both the Congresswoman of the African Subcommittee and I and other members of this committee, including my distinguished col-

league from New Jersey, Mr. Payne, have followed this issue for some time now. I've read the Country Report which suggests that slavery has virtually disappeared in Mauritania. Then we have testimony today from Charles Jacobs of the American Anti-Slavery group, that points out that as recently as 1993, the U.S. State Department estimated that up to 90,000 blacks still lived as property in Mauritania.

And then we have testimony as well from Samuel Cotton, from the Coalition Against Slavery in Mauritania and Sudan, who points out that the practice remains massive and rampant in Mauritania. The testimony that he has gleaned during his fact finding there suggests that the charge of slavery is still a way of life in Mauritania. It has simply shifted from the overt to the covert practice.

So while there are paper promises that abound and legal strictures on the books against the overt practice, it seems to have gone underground based on testimony and evidence that both of our subcommittees have received. And there are volumes of it.

How does the State Department respond to that, especially in light of their claim that it has, "virtually disappeared"?

Mr. TWADDELL. Mr. Chairman and Madam Chairman, I do thank you for underlining the apparent discrepancy between the numbers cited last year and this year's report.

As I was reviewing this material, it occurred to me that there is a very plausible cause for confusion. And if I may, I would like to read the three operative paragraphs from this year's Human Rights Report concerning Mauritania, because it does, I think, go a bit to the point of what you brought up, Mr. Chairman and Madam Chairman—chattel versus servitude.

"Mauritania has officially abolished slavery several times, most recently in 1980. Nevertheless, the legacy of slavery remains in its economic and psychological manifestations. And there are reports of persons continuing to live in conditions of involuntary servitude. Tens of thousands of persons whose ancestors were slaves still occupy positions of servitude and near servitude, although such practices as coercive slavery and commerce in slaves appear to have virtually disappeared. In most cases, those remaining in a situation of unpaid or poorly paid servitude do so for lack of better alternatives or lack of knowledge about their own status. Some freed slaves, Haratines, have either stayed with or returned to their former masters and continued to provide labor in exchange for room, board and other basic necessities. Others live independently but continue in a symbiotic relationship with their former masters, performing occasional paid or unpaid labor in exchange for food, clothing and medical care.

"There are no reliable statistics for the number of Haratines who continue to work for the same families for which they worked before the emancipation of 1980, whether as paid or unpaid labor. Reports of cases of involuntary servitude are rare and unconfirmed."

I believe those are the two. There is another paragraph that addresses the question of custody and inheritance, but those cited I think accurately portray the situation that our staff in Nouakchott, as well as our researchers back here, believe describe the situation as of 1995.

Mr. SMITH. Let me just ask you. How do you respond to the assertion that it has just simply gone underground and that 90,000 people are enslaved. I mean if they were indeed freed, I think there would have been some evidence of that other than an explanation that, because of a symbiotic relationship or some other reason, former slaves have just stayed with their "masters"?

And what kind of reporting do we actually get? I mean we have heard that the sale of slaves no longer occurs in the public square. It occurs behind closed doors, often in private residences and things of that kind.

So, you know, it may be out of the sight of our investigators or our embassy people.

Mr. TWADDELL. Well, in fact, we would welcome any indications or any evidence or any leads that we could pursue concerning the sale or the transfer of human beings. When we have asked some of those journalists and investigators for particulars that we might pursue, unfortunately the particulars have not been forthcoming in a way that was timely or inclusive enough to enable our people on the ground or indeed other international investigators to specifically identify such cases.

Mr. SMITH. How many people do we have on the ground, working on this at the embassy?

Mr. TWADDELL. Our embassy staff there is greatly reduced from what it was a few years ago. I believe we have six Foreign Service officers. This includes one full-time reporting officer, the Ambassador and the Deputy Chief of Mission.

Mr. SMITH. How many Foreign Service personnel are dedicated to this issue?

Mr. TWADDELL. I would say the Ambassador, the Deputy Chief of Mission, and the political reporting officer take this as a large part of their portfolio.

Mr. SMITH. So the Ambassador is going house to house?

Mr. TWADDELL. The Ambassador, when she has indications of such an instance, has in the past been available and prepared to go and pursue those lines of inquiry.

Mr. SMITH. Can you tell the subcommittees why the Anti-Slavery International Organization, the world's largest or oldest, I should say, human rights group is not allowed to monitor conditions in Mauritania? I mean you made the statement that there is a seeming openness on the part of the government to allow organizations, yet we know *that several have been excluded from onsite investigations* and reporting which would obviously greatly assist our own government in its job.

Mr. TWADDELL. I believe, Mr. Chairman, that Anti-Slavery International has been allowed on the ground and conducted investigations. With regard to remaining to monitor, I am not sure what their objectives were. But in fact in 1992, the Anti-Slavery International conducted investigations in Nouakchott.

Mr. SMITH. The key word is "monitor." One-shot deals do take a snapshot of the situation, but much can be hidden and cloaked in those kinds of settings, which is why monitoring is so important, to ensure that they get an accurate long-range look, especially since the 90,000 people from your testimony—I do not have a sense of an accounting for those people as to where they are.

Mr. TWADDELL. Mr. Chairman, we would welcome and, in fact, we have urged the government of Mauritania not only to receive these investigative groups but to be fully cooperative with them. If Anti-Slavery International or others felt it worthwhile to create a permanent presence there, I think that is a recommendation that we could support.

Mr. SMITH. You have testified that beginning in the early 1980's and continuing to the 1990's, there were a number of cases in which judges who failed to apply the new law were sanctioned or removed from the bench.

How many judges were so sanctioned and removed from the bench, and, conversely, how many received no penalty or perhaps only a slap on the wrist?

And how do we define sanctions? I mean what does the government of Mauritania impose on a judge who has not fulfilled the letter and spirit of the law?

Mr. TWADDELL. Mr. Chairman, from my recollection, I believe that there are cited in various of the documents with the committee three or four judges that have been either sanctioned or removed from the bench for failing to factor the emancipation of 1980 into their decisions. I do not have the years, but I believe in our longer statement submitted for the record, there is reference to that.

Mr. SMITH. So "a number of cases" refers to three or four judges?

Mr. TWADDELL. These cases follow a certain pattern and they have had to do with custody of individuals who a former master claimed to be theirs. This would be directly to the issue of chattel or inheritance or transfer. These are cases that have been brought before the courts of Mauritania, have received publicity, and when the judges in those cases ruled or seemed to be ruling in favor of the former master, those rulings were overturned and the judges sanctioned.

Mr. SMITH. Can you tell the subcommittee how many judges were not sanctioned when they did not follow the law?

Mr. TWADDELL. I believe that all others followed the law. These stood out because they were in contradiction—

Mr. SMITH. Do you have any evidence of that?

Mr. TWADDELL. I will have to research that for you, Mr. Chairman. I do not have that in my questions and answers.

(The response of Mr. Twaddell follows:)

There are no official records kept by the Mauritanian Government of the number of judges removed for failing to apply the anti-slavery law and the total number of such cases in general.

The details of publicized cases to which I referred follow. In March 1995, a judge in Nouadhibou, Mr. Mohameden Ould Sidi Brahim, was removed permanently from the corps of judges for incompetence, related to his refusal to recognize a former slave's right to inherit property. Another case reported by the U.N. Commission on Human Rights in an expert study of 1987 involved a judge who was temporarily removed from the court because he did not apply the anti-slavery laws. A third report, dated July 5, 1983, stated that the Mauritanian Government sanctioned a judge for not applying the emancipation declaration.

Mr. SMITH. Who has standing to bring a case in the courts of Mauritania, and what kind of resources are required to successfully bring a case?

Mr. TWADDELL. One of the most effective and active instruments is this group El Hor, founded in 1978, by a former slave himself. He is active not only in publicizing the issues but in bringing to the courts and to public attention instances where such challenges to the existing law occur.

There are also provisions in the law of Mauritania that there be public defenders but the mechanism of the State and the resources of the State are very limited. In fact, these non-governmental organizations are more active and effective in bringing such cases to the public.

Mr. SMITH. Let me just ask one final question.

Again, two of those who will testify, Charles Jacobs and Mr. Cotton, both argue that slavery never ended in Mauritania. Specifically, Mr. Cotton talks about how it has gone underground.

Is it the State Department's testimony that that is not the case? Are you disputing that as a fact?

Mr. TWADDELL. We are saying that such cases have not credibly been brought to our attention in recent years. We would very much welcome specifics of such allegations that we would join in others in investigating. Yes, indeed.

Mr. SMITH. The distinguished chairwoman from Florida.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you for your testimony this afternoon.

To continue with the line of questioning from Chris, when the State Department reports that the people in Mauritania are living in a state of servitude because they do not know that slavery has been declared illegal or they do not know that they are free to leave, would it not be correct to say that these people then are still slaves?

Mr. TWADDELL. I think, without doubt, psychologically many of them have difficulty distinguishing between the condition that might have legally existed before 1980, when the latest manumission was handed down.

They are, however, free to move on to another life. They are, by the tests of the court, by the documents, the constitutional and legal body of the country, free to move and to seek employment or pursue their own lives.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. But it remains a problem in Mauritania for a person to know whether he or she is not a slave. And if the problem is a lack of communication, would it have not been appropriate for the U.S. Government to, in its foreign aid program for the country, to have provided assistance to the Mauritanian Government or some other agency to make sure that every slave in this country learns of his or her emancipation? Is that something that you have been looking at? Or with any of the human rights and democracy funds to the anti-slavery groups that are presently working there?

Mr. TWADDELL. In fact, we have urged on a number of occasions that the government do more to publicize what is in fact its policy and its own law. At various times, the government of Mauritania has. Immediately after emancipation in 1980, for 2 years, the government of former President Haidallah conducted radio broadcasts on a regular basis concerning the institution of the prohibition of slavery and the manumission. This was done in the languages of

Hasaniya as well as the indigenous languages of Soninke, Wolof, Bambara and the Halpulaar languages.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. I am sure the transcriber is going to have fun with that one.

Mr. TWADDELL. I think it is in the statement, but—

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. And for the human rights and democracy funds and the anti-slavery groups, would that have been a better way for us to have communicated with the individuals in Mauritania? What sort of funding do we provide for them and does the ending of slavery not warrant a substantial effort on our part to support these anti-slavery groups that are working there under great pressure?

Mr. TWADDELL. We are constrained in what we have available to work with the government of Mauritania at this point in terms of our bilateral assistance. But we have made a small grant that has enabled members of local Mauritanian human rights groups to have exchanges with Freedom House. This is the sort of interaction that we think is very useful for both institutions, organizations, and promotes the shared objectives.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. I am familiar with that organization. They do good work in many countries.

Just one last question about Mauritania before I ask a few on Sudan.

Given your conclusion that, not only do the vestiges of slavery continue to exist in this country, but also that slavery itself may be continuing, what sort of diplomatic or other steps are we prepared to take to make sure that Mauritania ends slavery? Is the Clinton administration prepared to impose economic or political sanctions against this country if slavery is not ended? And ended, in fact, as well as in theory. And if not, why not?

Mr. TWADDELL. Madam Chairman, there are a number of things we are doing, that we intend to continue doing, that we would urge the government of Mauritania to get more intensively involved in as well.

We have talked about public education programs, and I think that is at the heart of what needs to be done at this point.

We have talked about the need, as I mentioned to Chairman Smith, not only to receive international human rights organizations interested in the issue of slavery, but if they would like to have a more permanent presence, we would certainly ask the government of Mauritania to consider that. I think that might go a long way to assisting them in their campaign as well as in assisting the outside world in its access to information on the issue.

We have encouraged the government to give official recognition to El Hor and the other two more recent organizations, although they seem to operate completely freely without hindrance, they do not have registration as officially recognized non-governmental organization in Mauritania.

We have suggested as well that the government publicize the particulars of the judicial actions that were taken in such cases as I mentioned in those three or four cases of custody.

Other measures, and I take this largely from recommendations of the World Bank and the U.N. Subcommittee on Human Rights that said that the long-term problem that you allude to, I think,

Madam Chairman, of the state of peoples' minds, the perception that they may not somehow be wholly free, needs to be attacked on fundamental societal grounds.

With regard to education, in fact the government is doing probably the extent of its limited capabilities in promoting primary and secondary education. This obviously is fundamental to people knowing about their rights and their situation in their country and in the world.

The other is another very long tedious slog and that is creating economic opportunities and a labor market that may provide viable alternative employment for many of those who are in the servitude and semi-servitude condition that prevails today.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, although I know my time is up, if I may just ask one question on Sudan.

In your most recent Human Rights Report which we have discussed, the State Department concludes that the cases of slavery in Sudan have increased alarmingly.

What steps is the Clinton administration prepared to take to step up the pressure with this government, the Sudanese Government, to take effective action to end slavery? If a country such as Sudan engages in slavery and the slave trade, should we not be prepared to lead the international effort to impose total political and economic sanctions against that country, including trade embargoes, expulsion from the United Nations and from the World Bank and measures such as those?

Mr. TWADDELL. Madam Chairman, you asked what we are prepared to do. Next week, we will again take the initiative in pressing the U.N. Commission on Human Rights to condemn human rights abuses in Sudan and create a greater capability to monitor the situation of human rights and slavery in Sudan.

Currently, the Special Rapporteur is barred from being present in Sudan. He has been prohibited entry. He has encouraged that there be monitors set up in the three neighboring countries of Uganda, Ethiopia, and Eritrea.

We think this would be a very useful mechanism to augment our knowledge of what the situation is there. We feel not only by his absence but since the 7th of February by our own absence in our embassy in Khartoum—we are disadvantaged in being able to effectively and intensively monitor the human rights situation.

Regarding sanctions, embargoes and the IMF, Sudan is at the end of the most recent decade of terrible civil war. Its situation of human rights is truly appalling. The effects on the civilian population of 27 or so million people in the last 12 years has been a million and a half killed, three million internally displaced, and an estimated 600,000 in refuge outside the country. There have been numerous instances of atrocious human rights behavior on the part of the government of Sudan as well as on the part of forces opposing the government of Sudan. It is truly a horrendous situation.

I think any consideration of sweeping global actions really has to take into account the dreadful situation and the opposing forces of those fighting and wreaking havoc on the civilian population and the hardships of the last 12 and, in fact, the last 40 years in that country. It is not something that can be done uniquely by the Unit-

ed States. In fact, it is something that effectively has to be done by all of the international community.

Lamentably, only the countries in the immediate sub-region have taken this as a particular undertaking and campaign. But as we have in the past, we will again next week in Geneva try to raise Sudan's abuses in the international forum of the Human Rights Commission.

Mr. SMITH. Just very briefly, if the gentlelady would yield.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Yes.

Mr. SMITH. As you pointed out, Mr. Secretary, in your testimony, it is, however, only the government of Sudan and their forces that stand accused of engaging in the practice of slavery. Is that correct?

Mr. TWADDELL. That is our understanding, Mr. Chairman, yes. And I believe the U.N. Special Rapporteur has prepared a report to that effect.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Johnston.

Mr. JOHNSTON. Mr. Twaddell, Islam is one of the great religions in this world. And I would like to talk a little about the religious makeup of Mauritania first, called the Islamic Republic of Mauritania.

What does the Koran say about slavery? Do you have any idea? And are there Muslims enslaving Muslims in Mauritania?

Mr. TWADDELL. Mr. Congressman, I at this point do not believe that anyone is enslaving anyone, that the active capture of slaves, transfer and sale of slaves is a current practice in Mauritania.

Regarding the religious composition of Mauritania, it is correct that it is an Islamic Republic. I would estimate 99 percent of the population espouse Islam. They brought the religion with them or they converted hundreds of years ago.

I point out that of the four or five major identifiable ethnic groups who claim parts of Mauritania to be their homeland, all espouse Islam.

There are Catholic churches that operate in Mauritania. They operate without hindrance. There is stern disapproval, however, if there are attempts at proselytizing practicing Muslims. But the practice by Christians of their religion in Mauritania is permitted.

Mr. JOHNSTON. As contrasted with Sudan, which is—Shari'a is the law now—is it not that they all be Muslim and they all be Arabs?

Mr. TWADDELL. Shari'a is the law, as I understand it, in the northern regions of Sudan. But it is not being applied in many of the southern regions.

Mr. JOHNSTON. Do you equate conscription to slavery?

Mr. TWADDELL. I would, if they are underaged boys, Mr. Congressman.

Mr. JOHNSTON. Then your report says the SPLA purportedly held thousands of children in camps against their will as a reservoir of recruits. So then you have slavery in the south too.

Mr. TWADDELL. I think you have me. I would consider—

Mr. JOHNSTON. It was not a trick question.

Mr. TWADDELL. No, I realize. I just was not very quick on my feet.

I would consider such recruitment a deprivation of one's freedom. Certainly that. I come back to the definition that we were working from earlier, however, that of chattel slavery, and that being the position of being bought or sold.

Mr. JOHNSTON. Let me follow up on the Chairwoman's question about sanctions against Sudan.

We have closed our embassy there and our ambassador is now in Nairobi.

Mr. TWADDELL. That is correct.

Mr. JOHNSTON. We have declared it a terrorist country. We have not broken diplomatic relations.

Mr. TWADDELL. That is correct.

Mr. JOHNSTON. I am not recommending it, but is that an alternative?

Mr. TWADDELL. Under some circumstances it could be contemplated. At this point, we have decided given our grave concern that we not break relations with Sudan. We maintain relations with Khartoum but just removed our people from their presence at the embassy there.

Ambassador Carney is in Nairobi, as you indicated. And he is our ambassador to Sudan. We would welcome changes on the ground and policies by the government of Sudan that would permit the return of our embassy staff to Khartoum.

Mr. JOHNSTON. Just following up. You know, Sudan is almost totally isolated now. On its east, Eritrea, Ethiopia; in the south Uganda, have all broken diplomatic relations with this country.

Is there a chance that with the help of the presence of these three countries that the OAU could work through the United Nations to have some type of an embargo, particularly through Port Sudan and the Red Sea?

Mr. TWADDELL. As you know, Mr. Congressman, 6 weeks ago the United Nations passed a resolution requested by the governments of Ethiopia and Egypt in their complaint of the attack against President Mubarak in Addis Ababa last summer.

The government of Sudan has approximately two more weeks to show that they are responding to the instruction of that resolution of the United Nations. After that the governments that brought the complaint, their sponsoring organization, the Organization of African Unity; and the Security Council of the United Nations, may again take up the issue of non-compliance and appropriate measures to be taken against the government of Sudan.

Mr. JOHNSTON. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you.

The chair recognizes Mr. Bereuter.

Mr. BEREUTER. I thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, for your courtesy and that of my colleagues, since I am not a member of the subcommittee and need to get on to other committee business involving Taiwan.

I want to express my appreciation to the two chairmen for their holding this hearing today on such an important and often overlooked issue. Your hearing addresses a gross injustice concerning the most fundamental of human rights of perhaps thousands of Sudan and Mauritania's underclass.

It is hard to believe that chattel slavery continues to exist in 1996. Yet in this region of the world, some humans still clearly are considered property of masters and expected to perform unpaid labor.

Mr. Chairman, I believe that the perpetuation of this phenomenon has been downplayed and neglected by both the U.S. State Department and the governments involved.

I hope your two subcommittees will light a fire beneath the State Department and these two countries and report my resolution to the House for favorable action.

Why is this appropriate? We constantly hear the euphemism that only vestiges of slavery remain in these countries. To me that phrase has no meaning. Either slaves, regardless of their number, remain in these countries or they do not. We will no doubt also hear today that slaves choose to stay with their masters out of economic necessity. Are we expected to lend a sympathetic ear to such excuses? To do so would make a mockery of the principles of equality that our nation has for so long struggled to achieve.

If I am outraged about this issue, I think outrage is appropriate. The dearth of firsthand accounts of slavery has frequently been cited as evidence that this institution has all but disappeared. Do we really expect slaves to come knocking at the door of the U.S. Embassy to report their situations? Furthermore, have we historically interpreted the paucity of firsthand accounts from political prisoners interned by repressive regimes around the world to mean that political prisoners do not exist, either? Certainly not. Numerous stories of slavery continue to filter through to Amnesty International and other human rights organizations.

Other independent investigators, such as Sam Cotton, from whom we will hear later today, have labored hard to break the conspiracy of silence surrounding this shameful practice.

Mr. Chairman, I introduced a bill last month, H. Con. Res. 142, regarding the human rights situation in Mauritania, including the continued practice of chattel slavery. My hope is to spur both Mauritania and, with your help, Sudan, to stamp out this heinous practice once and for all and to conduct vigorous prosecution of violators of existing anti-slavery laws.

I also urge the State Department to be much more vigorous in pursuing reports of slavery in those countries and to regularly initiate contact with independent observers of the human rights situation there.

Again, Mr. Chairman, I commend both of the chairpersons involved for conducting the hearing and I thank your witnesses for their willingness to testify.

As I said, I need to return to other committee activities, but I know that you are going to properly pursue this very serious matter.

And, Mr. Chairman and Madam Chairman, I thank you and I thank the gentleman from North Carolina for giving me a chance to make this statement before I have to proceed.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Bereuter, for your fine statement.

And I would like to recognize Mr. Frazer.

Mr. FRAZER. Mr. Twaddell, when you testified that slavery has either been abolished or there may be vestiges of slavery, could you

tell us how and when were they emancipated? Was there some public pronouncement in the international press? And were there international observers? And where did they go and how were the former slave masters compensated?

Mr. TWADDELL. Mr. Congressman, there are probably three specific references to the ending of the institution of slavery in Mauritania in recent years. One is their own constitution at the time of independence from France in 1960. The next year Mauritania adhered to the U.N. Convention concerning slavery and human rights.

The most recent public statement was the July 5, 1980, proclamation of manumission by President Haidallah in Nouakchott, Mauritania.

Mr. FRAZER. Mr. Twaddell, segregation has been ended in the United States many years ago by proclamation, but there are still vestiges of it.

Are you prepared to represent as a representative of the State Department that slavery no longer exists in Mauritania and simply because there were some high-sounding proclamations that there is no one being held in slavery in that country?

Mr. TWADDELL. I am prepared to cite, Mr. Congressman, as I did a few minutes ago, the language of our Human Rights Report that was issued to the Congress last week in which we talk about the continuation of instances, in the tens of thousands, of servitude and near servitude.

However, we make the additional point that we have not seen evidence of the buying or selling of human beings and the practice of chattel slavery in Mauritania in 1995 or indeed in recent years.

Mr. FRAZER. But are you not in fact double speaking if you say that there are vestiges of slavery but we have not seen evidence of the exchange of people for money or their being treated, as we are calling them here, as chattel?

The question I have to ask is whether the State Department is making a statement that slavery does not exist in Mauritania?

Mr. TWADDELL. When I say "vestiges of slavery," Congressman, I am talking about servitude and semi-servitude. I do not think that is slavery itself. I think that is a vestige of slavery. It is nothing—

Mr. FRAZER. Are we playing with words?

Mr. TWADDELL (continuing). not sold.

Mr. FRAZER. Is this not just a fancy way of saying that the State Department will not go out and say there is no slavery in Mauritania but perhaps there are people who work and do not get paid against their will?

Mr. TWADDELL. I think that there are people who work and do not get paid. I think there are people who work for well under the government's indicated minimum wage. I call that servitude. I do not call that buying and selling human beings.

Mr. FRAZER. Just one last question.

Mr. TWADDELL. As the Chairman mentioned in his opening statement, there is a distinction between servitude and contract labor and chattel slavery.

Mr. FRAZER. Just one last question.

Have you been to Mauritania?

Mr. TWADDELL. I spent 3 years there, 1988 to 1991, as Chief of Mission.

Mr. FRAZER. And based on the time you spent there, can you say today that slavery does not exist in Mauritania today? Forget about all you have read, what you have told me has been written. Does slavery exist in Mauritania?

Mr. TWADDELL. I would feel very uncomfortable saying, as a certainty, that slavery does not exist. It is a vast country. There are parts of it that, until the droughts of the mid seventies and eighties, were totally out of the reach of the capital. I think it is very conceivable that the practice of slavery continues in very remote parts of that vast desert country.

Mr. FRAZER. Is the United States doing anything to encourage that country to abolish slavery?

Mr. TWADDELL. Yes, we are, sir.

Mr. FRAZER. Thank you.

Mr. SMITH. The chair recognizes Mr. Funderburk.

Mr. FUNDERBURK. Mr. Secretary, regarding your comment on underground slavery in Mauritania, is it not a severe indictment on the U.S. State Department and Foreign Service when officers can be working for years in a place and not come up with credible first-hand evidence or documentation of the evils going on all around them?

I witnessed this type of blindness to reality when a dictator in Bucharest was killing people and destroying a society and it was all conveniently overlooked. If the United States was really interested and really tried, do you not think it could get the evidence or would already have had the evidence?

Mr. TWADDELL. I will repeat that we would be delighted to have a good lead, Mr. Congressman, and we will pursue it with whom—

Mr. FUNDERBURK. What are the Foreign Service officers doing there?

Mr. TWADDELL. They are reporting on the situation they find on the ground, sir.

Mr. FUNDERBURK. They must be blind.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Funderburk.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Let me first of all commend you for both committees calling this very important hearing on the question of slavery in Mauritania and in Sudan.

I hope this hearing will be helpful in preventing further suffering which has already reached massive proportions. This is at least the fifth hearing that I have been on dealing with Sudan since I entered Congress. I had an opportunity to speak to Columbia University in May of last year on this issue of slavery. And on February 24, 1995, I convened a meeting in my Washington office to meet with legislators, with the President of the Mauritania Senate, Mr. Farber, who was accompanied by Mauritania's ambassador, Ismail Ould Iyahi.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss our mutual concern regarding the continued existence of slavery in Mauritania. Mr. Farber remembers my work in the human rights violations and dealing with this whole question of slavery. He mentioned that I

was not very popular in Mauritania. Thank goodness I do not have to run there. I informed him that I understand that slavery is against the law in Mauritania. They made that clear. But until the practice of slavery is stamped out, the Black Caucus and other Members of this Congress will speak out against slavery. We cannot continue to condone slavery. It is time that the government really becomes involved in attempting to eliminate it.

I just looked over some of my records and I had a floor statement on H. Con. Res. 176, and this was a resolution expressing the sense of Congress regarding human rights violation in Mauritania. And that was on July 29, 1991. And we talked about the problems then in 1991. And here it is in 1996, and we are still dealing with the question of whether it is overt or covert, whether it is State sponsored or not State sponsored, whether there are slaves or there are not. The fact that it is traditional rather than by law. And I think that unless the U.S. representative there is serious about trying to eliminate or push the government—and my purpose for meeting with the president of the legislature was to try to appeal to them that why does not the government take a more forceful stand? They say, well, you know, historically people state, well, after the Emancipation Proclamation, slaves stayed with the slave owner too, because they were not encouraged to leave. They were not assisted to leave. There was no place to go.

But once the Freedman's Bureau, back in 1865, was established, then people did go because the government became a part of the government policy to see that the vestiges of slavery would be ended. You are not going to end the practice if the government of Mauritania is looking the other way; if they are allowing the so-called practices as practices. It is not legal. It is like cases of laws in Supreme Courts because you can have de facto segregation or de jure, and they are both the same result and are treated the same, whether it is de facto or de jure.

You still had de jure slavery in Mauritania. And until there is a realization and our government takes a strong stand against it, sure, conditions have improved in Mauritania. You know, back many years ago, in 1991, there were 200 political detainees who died in detention. Others died of starvation in detention, of illness in detention. Back in 1991, there were 500 prisoners who died—also died at another time in detention.

You go back a few years earlier, they estimated in 1981 there were 100,000 slaves that could be identified in Mauritania.

So, yes, there has been some improvement, but there is not determination to end the vestiges of slavery, and I think that until that happens that our government should be forceful there and in Sudan in ending these vestiges. It makes no sense as we move into the 21st century that we are still talking about we are going to try to do it or it is not as bad as we think it is, or something we are going to work on, or they are trying to do a better job. That is what we continually hear. And we will continue to press this issue and to push for sanctions and other kinds of issues until the governments come around and say that we will try to really get involved in ending this.

We had a hearing at the Congressional Black Caucus last year at our legislative conference on the question of slavery in Mauri-

tania and in Sudan, and there is a tremendous growing interest in this country, and I am going to remain vigilant on this issue until we see it ended.

I have no further questions at this time.

Mr. SMITH. I want to thank the gentleman from New Jersey for his tenacity in keeping this issue before the subcommittees, before the Congress and the American people.

And I would like to ask Eni Faleomavaega if he would take the chair. All of us have a vote. We have about 5 minutes and then we will continue the hearing.

We will continue while Mr. Faleomavaega takes the chair. Please take it.

Ms. MCKINNEY. Eni, as you proceed to the chair, I am going to have to run and vote as well. But I had three questions that I particularly wanted to ask, and I do not know that I will be able to stay here and hear the responses.

I would like to present them to Mr. Twaddell for a response at a later time, but I do want you to know publicly what those questions are.

You answered yes to Congressman Frazer's question about the United States encouraging the government of Mauritania to eliminate the vestiges of slavery.

I would like to know exactly what it is that the United States is actually doing.

The second question I have is what is the role of color in determining who is enslaved?

And the third question that I have is does the government of Mauritania, Congressman Payne mentioned the Freedman's Bureau, does the government of Mauritania have the kinds of institutions established as the United States did in the post-Civil War era that were established so that those who had been slaves could find their way out of slavery and into some kind of mainstream living?

So those are my three questions that I would like to have Mr. Twaddell respond to me in writing please.

Mr. TWADDELL. Well, I could attempt to do that very quickly before you go to your vote.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA (PRESIDING). I think it might be better, Mr. Secretary, that the gentlelady from Georgia will submit it in writing in a little more comprehensive way.

Mr. TWADDELL. That is fine.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. And then that way you could respond a little better, if that is all right.

Ms. MCKINNEY. Thank you.

(The information appears in the appendix.)

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Secretary, I am sorry I came a little late, but I did receive the gist of your testimony, a very comprehensive one at that.

You indicated earlier that you spent 3 years in Mauritania. What years were those?

Mr. TWADDELL. I arrived in September 1988 and left in August 1991.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. So you pretty much are quite familiar with the landscape and the scope of—

Mr. TWADDELL. Yes. It has been 5½ years since I left, but I knew it pretty well when I was there.

Mr. FALCOMAVAEGA. You indicated earlier that by description, and, of course, I do not want to get into semantics either, but I guess because of international standards, we have what is called a chattel slavery, and then you have servitude, and then you have contract labor.

Is this how they divide the forms of slavery that we currently have in the world today, or is it just a definite distinction of these three different formats?

Mr. TWADDELL. I think there is a definite distinction without trying to split hairs or become overly semantical.

Mr. FALCOMAVAEGA. Let me ask you this.

Among the three classifications, as I had indicated earlier, which one was practiced by the United States before the Civil War, if I might add, among the three—

Mr. TWADDELL. As I understand it, in parts of this country slavery was practiced up until the Civil War.

Mr. FALCOMAVAEGA. Yes. Was that chattel slavery?

Mr. TWADDELL. That was chattel slavery, as I understand it.

Mr. FALCOMAVAEGA. OK. And that is the worst form?

Mr. TWADDELL. That is the buying and selling of human beings.

Mr. FALCOMAVAEGA. OK. Go ahead. I am sorry. I did not mean to disrupt your—

Mr. TWADDELL. No. But I do think that there is a distinction between slavery, as it is commonly defined in the dictionary, and servitude, that may have elements of either psychological or economic compulsion, but does not have behind it the force of law.

Congressman Payne talked about slavery continuing *de jure*. Clearly I would have to contradict him. It has been written out of the Constitution and in the 1980 Emancipation Declaration. *De facto*, servitude? Yes. It certainly is a phenomenon. Is it a dreadful thing? Yes, it is. Is it something that we should encourage to have ended as rapidly as possible? It certainly is. Are there practical mechanisms to achieve that? I think there are things that we can urge the government of Mauritania to do with greater vigor. And some of those we may be able to assist.

I would like to see the practice of servitude and semi-servitude end as well.

Mr. FALCOMAVAEGA. And I might add that on these two classifications of servitude and contract labor, certain African countries do not have this problem. I mean they are not the only ones that have this problem. This is a worldwide problem.

Am I correct in making that statement?

Mr. TWADDELL. I think it occurs in many places.

Mr. FALCOMAVAEGA. But really the essence of the concern, and I am sure that the members of the committee have, and certainly this member, is in reference to chattel slavery. This is really where the concern seems to be quite paramount, and I wanted to ask you if you could elaborate a little further on your experience in being there previously for 3 years in Mauritania, what your experience was. I mean did you physically see this, or was this by manner of reports from the countryside, or was it by rumors, or—I am not quite clear on that.

Mr. TWADDELL. In my time in Mauritania, and since, I was not aware of any instance of buying or selling of human beings. There were instances, as cited in the testimony, in which competing claims for human beings by former masters against former slave parents, usually for children, were brought to the courts. This is clearly evidence of the transfer or the possession of one human being by another.

By law, it could not happen. However, the cases were brought to the courts for the disposition of the courts. So clearly in people's minds and in the practice in some instances, the phenomenon of slavery is still perceived to exist. Certainly in the minds of the parents who went to the court to claim their children, the perception of slavery was the case in point.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Does this seem to be the perception? And maybe if you could elaborate for the record. You have indicated that the State Department did submit the 1995 Report on Human Rights, in essence on Mauritania alone, on the issue of slavery. Could you elaborate a little further on that? Was it specifically in your description or the State Department's position, where does it fall among the three categories that you have indicated earlier?

Mr. TWADDELL. I could read three sentences from that report that would encapsulate it.

"The legacy of slavery remains in its economic and psychological manifestations, and there are reports of persons continuing to live in conditions of involuntary servitude. Tens of thousands of persons whose ancestors were slaves still occupy positions of servitude and near servitude although such practices as coercive slavery and commerce in slaves appear to have virtually disappeared."

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. I gather that the government of Mauritania absolutely denies any such claims that there is chattel slavery going on in Mauritania. Does this seem to be your impression by way of information given to our State Department?

Mr. TWADDELL. I would let them speak for themselves, but I would point out that there are these instances over the last 5 or 6 years in which the government of Mauritania publicly challenged the decisions of certain judges that seems to contradict the reading of the Constitution and the Emancipation Proclamation. In that sense, they certainly would have to acknowledge that there were challenges to this law.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. You indicated earlier also in your statement that the government of Mauritania—is it quite free to allow NGO's like Amnesty International, the International Commission of Jurists, the Human Rights Group on Imberg, Scotland? The government has been pretty free to allow these different organizations to come in and investigate or research or study or whatever the situation is with that?

Mr. TWADDELL. I am a little reluctant to characterize it. I do know that there have been 13 governmental and international non-government organizations that have been allowed to go to Mauritania to conduct discussions and investigate the subject of slavery. I do not know if I would characterize that as completely open, completely receptive.

One of your colleagues suggested that it might be more effective to have a permanent presence on the ground of an international or-

ganization. There are now three Mauritanian domestic non-governmental organizations that concern themselves with slavery's vestiges.

Mr. FALEOMAVEGA. I think the concern that we have here, Mr. Secretary, and I never questioned in my mind about your sensitivity to this very important issue. It is ironic that we are at the eve of the 21st century and we are still talking about slavery.

And I think this is where the sensitivity arises with the members here on the committee and seeing that certainly our country should absolutely be at the forefront in seeing absolutely that this form of—you might say inhumanity—be stricken forevermore from this planet. And I think you can recognize the sensitivity of why the members are so uptight about this and hopefully that our friends from Mauritania as well as Sudan will have their opportunity to make their statements.

And I really appreciate your coming forth and representing the Administration in this important issue.

I am going to turn the time over now to the co-chair of our joint hearing this afternoon, the gentlelady from Florida.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN (PRESIDING). Thank you so much. I thank you for chairing the subcommittee in our absence.

We thank the Secretary for his testimony here today and for the members who were not able to participate due to other pressing congressional obligations, we will forward those questions to you.

We thank you so much for being with us today.

Mr. TWADDELL. Thank you very much, Madam Chairman.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Now I would like to call our second set of panelists, Mr. Samuel Cotton, Executive Director of the Coalition Against Slavery in Mauritania and Sudan. Charles Jacobs, Research Director of the American Anti-Slavery Group. Mr. Mohamed Nacir Athie, Executive Director of the International Coalition Against Chattel Slavery. And Mervyn Dymally, a retired Member of Congress.

Please join us. As you are seated, I would like to read a short introduction for each.

Mr. Cotton is the executive director and a founding member of CASMAS, the Coalition Against Slavery in Mauritania and Sudan. He has traveled across the United States speaking in public forums and at churches and universities about human rights and recently completed 28 days of ethnographic research in Mauritania and Senegal. Mr. Cotton earned his B.A. in sociology from Lehman College and is currently a doctoral candidate in social policy at Columbia University.

Mr. Jacobs is a co-founder and current research director of the American Anti-Slavery Group, an organization whose intent is to place the issue of slave trade in Africa on the American agenda. He has published numerous articles on the subject and was featured in a PBS series exposing slavery in Sudan and Mauritania. He organized the first anti-abolition sit-in conference in over 130 years last May at Columbia University. He has been blessed for his work by the Black Catholic Bishops of Sudan, and cursed for it by followers of the Nation of Islam.

Mr. Athie is a Mauritanian diplomat in exile and co-founder of the American Anti-Slavery Group. Before coming to the United

States, Mr. Athie held the important position of Chief District Commissioner in South Mauritania and Chief of Staff for the Governor in East Mauritania. In the United States, he has created the Committee for the Defense of Human Rights in Mauritania and now serves as the chairman of the International Coalition.

Congressman Dymally is a former Congressman, a former colleague, and Lieutenant Governor of California, and served as the chairman of the Subcommittee on Africa from 1991 to 1992. He is a member of the U.S. Mauritania Friendship Society and has been an advocate of Mauritania for the past several years. Mr. Dymally has made approximately 25 trips to Mauritania and has published four reports on the issue of slavery there—the latest of which he will present to the committee today.

We welcome all of you, and if we may begin with Mr. Cotton.

Mr. FALCOMAVAEGA. Will the Chairlady yield?

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Yes. I am sorry. Yes.

Mr. FALCOMAVAEGA. I am not taking anything away from the other members of the panel, but I certainly would like to offer my personal welcome to not only as a former distinguished member of this committee, but a subcommittee chairman of the African Subcommittee. Also former subcommittee chairman of the International Relations Subcommittee, of this committee, and the gentleman from California, Mr. Dymally, whom I have the highest admiration and respect for. And would like to offer that personal welcome and make him feel at home. He has been here in these parts for quite a while and seeing that he has not gotten any white hair, not as much as what he had 20 years ago, but still looks nice and handsome, but certainly would like to offer my welcome to Mr. Dymally for being here.

Mr. DYMALLY. Thank you, my friend.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much.

Welcome to all the panelists.

STATEMENT OF SAMUEL COTTON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, COALITION AGAINST SLAVERY IN MAURITANIA AND SUDAN

Mr. COTTON. Thank you, Madam Chairperson, and the members of the subcommittee.

I am Samuel Cotton, a Ph.D. candidate in social policy at Columbia University, and I will be reading this statement in a summary fashion, only certain paragraphs to fit the 5-minute requirement.

I am the executive director of the Coalition Against Slavery in Mauritania and Sudan. CASMAS and I are grateful for this opportunity to testify before the subcommittee about the buying, selling and breeding of black Africans in the Islamic Republic of Mauritania by Arab Moors, Beydanes.

Between December 23, 1995, and January 17, 1996, I conducted ethnographic research in Senegal and Mauritania on the practice of slavery, utilizing camera, audio and video recording devices.

Interview of black Mauritians in the refugee camps of N'Dioum, Boki-Diawe, Wourossogui and Horkadiere provided testimony which supported the charge that slavery is still a way of life in Mauritania and has simply shifted from an overt to a covert practice.

I also interviewed Mauritanian refugees in Dakar, and I was interested in examining and finding out if Garba Diallo's work—where he talked about slaves moving from Mauritania across the Senegal River into Senegal—was valid. I researched that subject and have documents to prove that small traffic exists.

I arrived in Mauritania on January 2, 1996, and departed January 12, 1996. I conducted interviews with the leaders of two anti-slavery organizations, Messaoud Ould Boulkheir, president of El Hor, and Boubacar Messaoud, president of S.O.S. Slave. Both leaders stated that slaves are kept in bondage by a combination of physical restraint, psychological domination, religious manipulation, and the lack of government interest in creating programs that would enable slaves to make the transition to freedom. Boubacar Messaoud added that slavery is massive in Mauritania, especially in the countryside and that there is a traffic in slaves between Mauritania and the Arab Emirate States.

To protest the practice of slavery, they have begun to put their articles in the newspapers. That has been mentioned in the testimony. And they have done that to move from a political base, to what they consider a legal base, to let the world know that these things are happening.

Haratines and runaway slaves state that the government of Mauritania does not penalize slave owners nor has it created any concrete programs to end the practice of slavery.

I have included in my testimony the case of Fatimetou Mint Rabi Ould Ely, a child who was taken from her family by a government official and disappeared into the slave network in Mauritania. This was also published in the newspaper called *Le Calame* No. 99—9 August 1995.

And for the reason there are not concrete programs or any laws with teeth in them, the Arab population carries on the business of slavery as they have for centuries. The difference is that today the buying and selling of slaves takes place in the houses of Moors and are private arrangements between Arab families. Open slave markets are clearly a thing of the past. Marriages are arranged and a strong black male is placed with a strong black female, and the Arab families arranging this marriage divide up the children that are born. Black women are bred many times by different slave men and their children become the property of the master.

When asked in an interview why her master holds her children, the slave woman, Aichanna Mint Abeid Boili stated, and her picture is right there. She was photographed in a safe house at night where she was hiding from people who had been sent by her master to retrieve her. When I asked her why her master was holding her children, she said, "Because my belly belongs to my master."

I also interviewed four runaway slaves and one freed slave, one male and four female. Their testimony was recorded.

It is important to me that the U.S. State Department listen to the people in bondage and not the oppressive government of Mauritania. The shift in the language of the State Department from stating that slavery exists to stating that slavery is over and only the vestiges of slavery remains is disturbing.

Then there are the attacks in the press on the Mauritania refugee, Mohamed Athie, by the U.S. Ambassador Dorothy Sampas in

an effort to improve the image of the Mauritanian Government, a government practicing a system of apartheid, guilty as recently as 1991 of the murder of 1500 of its black citizens, and the ethnic cleansing of approximately 100,000 peaceful black citizens. These actions raise both ethical and moral questions for the United States.

If slavery is over in Mauritania, when did this great event occur? Who observed the freeing of over 90,000 people? How and with what methods were the slaves informed that they are physically and spiritually free? Where are the interviews that indicate slaves are remaining in bondage only for economical reasons? What provisions for their physical needs were made, food, clothing and shelter? How were they protected from their masters recapturing them and returning them to slavery? What governmental or international organization monitored and evaluated the success of what would have to be a stupendous undertaking?

Why did not the Mauritanian Government allow the political parties of the Negro Africans and the anti-slavery organizations of the Haratines to monitor this major event since slavery is at the top of their agenda?

There are no valid answers to these questions because no empirical data nor any studies conducted by experienced investigators, such as the London-based Anti-Slavery Society, exists which support the statements of the State Department or Ambassador Dorothy Samps.

The United States was once a slaving nation and participated in the emancipation of millions of Africans. America has historical experience in this area and clearly recognized the need for concrete measures when it created the Freedman's Bureau of 1865 after it argued for 2 years as to whether or not such an arrangement was necessary.

Does the State Department really believe that a system of slavery that began before the American slave trade and has continued to this very day will not require concrete and measurable interventions?

The last paragraph simply speaks to the fact that I hope that this change or shift in the Clinton administration's perspective on this country does not continue.

Thank you.

(The prepared statement of Mr. Cotton appears in the appendix.)

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much.

Mr. Jacobs.

STATEMENT OF CHARLES JACOBS, RESEARCH DIRECTOR, AMERICAN ANTI-SLAVERY GROUP

Mr. JACOBS. Yes, Madam Chairwoman, thank you. It is an honor to appear before you today on behalf of a people most Americans had thought long ago vanished, black chattel slaves.

I am Charles Jacobs, the research director of the American Anti-Slavery Group, an organization of American and African abolitionists, black and white, Christian, Muslim and Jewish, who for 3 years have endeavored to place the issue of present-day black slave trade on America's international agenda.

America is a nation which risked its very existence over the issue of one man owning another, yet as we sit here today in the capital of freedom, black people in Africa, north and west, are being kidnapped and captured. They are bought and sold. They are given as wedding gifts. They are inherited. They are tortured.

And as the picture submitted in my testimony shows, they are branded. Indeed they are bred: the children of raped slaves belong to the master.

I would ask the committee to look at this picture. We have a larger one here, taken by a Newsweek photographer in 1992. The girl in the picture must be 11 or 12 years old. She belongs to these men. She serves these men. She is a Mauritanian black Muslim. They are Arab-Berbers. She will be theirs in every sense of the word. Her children will be their children.

Yet there has been to date no direct action on the part of our government to come to these people's aid. Even though we have acted in the past in other cases of slavery. For example, the sugar in your coffee this morning might come from Haitian slaves who are at gun point forced to cut cane in the Dominican Republic. Knowing our history, President George Bush actually came to the aid of these Haitians. However, the problem continues.

In the Clinton Crime Bill, we made it a crime for U.S. citizens to travel to foreign soil to pay to have sex with little children who are bought and sold and made into sex slaves. Finally just last year, it was discovered that in El Monte, California, Thai nationals had been lured into this country with the false promise of good-paying jobs and were discovered in fortresses surrounded by barbed wire, not permitted to leave, forced to make clothes for little or no money until they could pay back their masters for their purchase. Secretary of Labor Robert Reich moved immediately to free those slaves and to punish their slave masters.

Why then has the United States not acted on behalf of the slaves in Mauritania and Sudan?

I am by profession a management consultant. I had been in my earlier days an activist in the civil rights movement. I was at Martin Luther King's march. When I met Mohamed Athie and other African exiles, I thought it would be simple to write this up. Everybody knows that it is there. I made 50 phone calls to the most prestigious human rights organizations, organizations whose reports have prompted this Congress to act before; Amnesty International, the Anti-Slavery International, Puebla Institute, Human Rights Watch Africa, the U.S. State Department, the United Nations—all know this. I thought the task would be to simply reconvene the Anti-Apartheid Coalition, tell them the story, and they would reactivate, because after all, slavery in North Africa is certainly no less horrendous than apartheid in South Africa.

To that end, we wrote and published articles in over 200 black papers in the country. We sent document packages, including photographs of slaves, to many human rights organizations, black organizations, women's groups:

I must say, just on a personal note, when you read these reports that are sitting silently in the back of every human rights groups' files, you will be very upset. For example, in Mauritania, I am in public dispute on the pages of the New York Times with the am-

bassador to Mauritania, Dorothy Sampas, who stated that slavery is virtually ended.

I echo Sam Cotton's question, if it ended, then it must have been the most massive emancipation since the exodus from Egypt. Did the waters part? The sound of the chains dropping would have been immense. This just simply did not happen.

In Mauritania, if a slave is—in our own historical language we would have said "uppity,"—he can be tortured in a variety of ways that are astounding. And it is difficult to talk about the humiliations of other people, but we have decided to bring this up.

There is the camel treatment, by which a camel is deprived of water for several days so that his stomach shrinks. The offending slave is tied to the underbelly of the camel. The camel is then taken to drink. His rapidly expanding stomach pulls the slave apart.

There is the insect treatment, whereby an offending slave has desert insects stuffed into his ears, capped off with stones and bound. This drives people mad.

I would refer to the picture of Alang Ajak in my package. In Sudan, as you know the war is raging. Arab militias armed by the government of Khartoum raid African villages. They shoot the men, they capture the women and children. These are kept or sold north. The State Department today said that they would bring this to light. They do not bring it to light.

A declassified State Department document, urged to be declassified by Congressman Wolf, says that many of the slaves are trucked to Qadhafi's Libya.

To conclude, we know that this happens. We have to move the debate beyond whether or not slavery exists. This country cannot turn away. We would be shamed were we to turn away. We must act.

Thank you.

(The prepared statement of Dr. Jacobs appears in the appendix.)

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Dr. Jacobs, for your fine testimony.

I would like to invite Mr. Mohamed Nacir Athie, if he would present his testimony at this point.

STATEMENT OF MOHAMED NACIR ATHIE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, INTERNATIONAL COALITION AGAINST CHATTEL SLAVERY

Mr. ATHIE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to dedicate my testimony to my brothers in bondage in Mauritania and to the blacks that have been suffering for a long time under the dictatorship government of Maaouya Ould Sid'Ahmed Taya.

My name is Mohamed Nacir Athie. I am a Mauritanian diplomat in exile here in the United States. I am also the executive director of International Coalition Against Chattel Slavery.

My personal nightmare and that of my family are simply insignificant compared to the daily harassment and abuses hundreds of thousands of human beings are experiencing day in and day out.

But first I would like to say this. God bless the Congress of the United States for calling and holding this critical hearing on slavery in Mauritania and Sudan. By doing so, you are demonstrating

an active interest on the slavery matter. Also you are showing support for the slaves around the world and in particular for the slaves in Mauritania and Sudan.

Second, I am also proud as a Mauritanian Halpular, who first benefited of the political asylum status in 1989 in this country, to take a stand before the Congress of the United States and testify on behalf of our brothers who are still in chains in Mauritania by the Arab-Berber masters.

There is more. Maaouya Ould Sid'Ahmed Taya, after seizing power through a military plot, in appointing himself chairman of the military junta, Prime Minister, Defense Minister, has presided over the most systematic violations of human rights and civil rights against the black population living in the south, targeting particularly the Halpular community to which I belong.

The violence of killing, rape, tortures of Halpular reached unprecedented height and created a crisis between Senegal and Mauritania.

I would like to say now who are the slaves in Mauritania? The Mauritanian slaves are the product of invasion, raids, and rape of African women. They are called Abd. Anti-Slavery Society, the oldest human rights organization based in London, calculated that, I quote, "The country holds a minimum of 100,000 slaves with a further 300,000 part-time slaves or ex-slaves." This is written in 1982 by John Mercer.

No matter how Arab-Berbers came into contact with black Mauritians living in the south, a long time ago events and historical records have demonstrated that most of them were after the hunting of the slaves.

Mr. Chazal, French colonial governor, regulated taxes on slaves. He made that agreement with Arab-Berbers in 1932. The Arab-Berbers were required to pay for one slave five goats, which shows the taxation on such animal was two francs and 50 cents each, which means that an Arab master could pay 12 francs 50 cents to be free, to just not go to war or something like that.

In reports from Africa, G. Diallo said, "Because of the massive sexual exploitation of female slaves by white Arab-Berber masters, the slave population or Haratines and Abd has increased to become the largest single ethnic group in the country." Professor Diallo said also that 40 percent of the population is slave.

Slavery today. In his introductory remarks to the Anti-Slavery Society, John Mercer wrote in 1982, and I quote, "The head of state from 1960 to 1978, Moctar Ould Daddah, who was the first president of Mauritania, kept slaves behind his Presidential palace.

Mohamed Isa Al Qadeeri, a Kuwaiti journalist, wrote in the Kuwaiti newspaper, Al Wattan, April 1989, page 4, "At the end of my last visit to Mauritania, among the gifts given to me which I strongly refused by my Arab friends was a black slave."

In his report titled "Mauritania Slavery Alive and Well," 10 years after the last abolition, Africa Watch wrote, and I quote again, "Abolishing slavery which is deeply rooted in Mauritania is difficult and a long-term problem. Our criticism is not that the Mauritanian Government has tried to eradicate slavery but failed. It did not try at all," says Africa Watch. "We are not aware of any significant practical step taken by successive government to fulfill the impor-

tant responsibilities Mauritania undertook when it passed laws and ratified international agreements prohibiting slavery. Its persistence is largely explained by the fact that legislative enactments have not been accompanied by initiatives in the economic and social fields." This is 1990.

And it says the same thing again in 1994 in their book, which is called "Campaign of Terror." This is the book, "Campaign of Terror in Mauritania," 1994.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

(The prepared statement of Mr. Athie appears in the appendix.)

Mr. SMITH. I thank you for your excellent testimony. Your full statement will be made a part of the record.

Mr. Dymally.

**STATEMENT OF MERVYN M. DYMALLY, MEMBER OF
CONGRESS (RETIRED)**

Mr. DYMALLY. Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you very much. Let me thank you for giving me this opportunity to address you on this subject.

My name is Mervyn Dymally, a former Member of Congress and a former chairman of the Subcommittee on Africa. I am a legislative advocate for the Islamic Republic of Mauritania.

Before I do, Mr. Chairman, let me digress for a moment. I want to make a comment about Ambassador Sampas, U.S. Ambassador to Mauritania. As my friend, Mr. Faleomavaega, said, I chaired the Subcommittee on International Relations. I had the dubious distinction of being one of the most prolific travelers in Congress, second only to Mr. Solarz. In fact, I beat him one year. I visited 41 countries in Africa. I served as congressional representative to the United Nations, where I met Ms. Sampas.

I know of no other ambassador who is as dedicated and committed to their job as Ambassador Sampas, a woman of great integrity, a public servant, who is dedicated to the question of reconciliation and diplomacy; and I want to say that she is one of the finest ambassadors, if not the finest, that I have met in the 12 years that I visited every corner of the world and slept in many embassies and had many a meals with ambassadors. She is an outstanding public servant and in my judgment she is doing a very good job.

The Mauritania Government is pleased to have this opportunity to address this question of the vestiges of slavery in the Republic of Mauritania. Let me say at the outset that no one in Mauritania denies the fact that at one time slavery existed. Ever since independence Mauritania has moved toward the abolishment of chattel slavery as it was known prior to independence. On several occasions, there have been Presidential orders, amendments to the Constitution on this subject. The current government has made it abundantly clear that slavery will not be tolerated in Mauritania.

Beginning last year, a campaign was initiated across the country, mostly concentrated in the African American media, appealing to African Americans about the question of slavery in Mauritania, for obvious reasons. Ever since 1993, I have visited Mauritania on at least two occasions every year and sometimes as many as four times a year. Every time I visit I raise this question of slavery with the U.S. Embassy, with the Palace, and on two occasions with the

President himself. Each time I have gotten full assurances about the strong commitment to abolishing every vestige of slavery in Mauritania.

To show their commitment to the abolishment of this issue, the Mauritians have sent since 1993, that I know of, three delegations, two of which I was intimately involved in. I took a delegation headed by the President of the Senate, who in American terms would be considered black, to Arizona, to meet with Reverend Leon Sullivan and the leadership of the African American Summit. And the chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus, in his testimony today, made mention of that visit.

The focus of the visit was to convince Americans that the Mauritians were deeply committed to the elimination of every vestige of slavery. Subsequently, a delegation went to Dakar, Senegal, at the African/African American Summit headed by Reverend Sullivan. The President of the Mauritanian Senate addressed the problems and possibilities of democracy in Mauritania. Basically what the President of the Senate said was that colonialism left Mauritania in a desperate state of poverty and illiteracy. Ever since independence, even under the military rule, the country has moved forward to eliminate these two phenomena, including the vestiges of slavery.

More recently, the government received a loan from the World Bank to construct 600 schools, elementary schools, in the rural areas of Mauritania, an issue in which the President and the Palace have taken a strong interest. The Mauritians believe that the one way to eliminate any vestige of slavery is through education and economic development, and they are moving swiftly in that direction.

In the United States, the Mauritanian Friendship Society has issued four reports. Last week, copies of the recent report was circulated to authors and co-authors of H.R. 142 by Mr. Bereuter; and today I have made copies available to members of the subcommittee. The last report was written by an NGO in Mauritania and circulated by the Friendship Society with a brief preface.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, the Mauritania Government wishes to invite Members of Congress to travel to Mauritania at any time. They have also asked anti-slavery groups to provide evidence of specific time, place and names where they believe there is evidence of slavery in Mauritania.

Today, one of the witnesses has so-named these incidents, and I will take that up with the government.

In January of this year, I visited Mauritania on two occasions. The first time I missed a meeting with the rector of the University because he was in Paris. Both he and I considered the meeting so important that I journeyed there the following week to meet him. I subsequently came back to the United States attempting to seek funds to no avail, and I want to address the question the chair of the Subcommittee on Africa raised about the absence of funds.

I went to the Africa Bureau of U.S. A.I.D. to ask for some funds to conduct a Conference on Democracy and they said they had no money. And I went to the National Democratic Institute. Mauritania is not even on their agenda. And so there is an absence of

financial interest in this question of eliminating the vestiges of slavery in Mauritania.

Last week, however, I received a letter from the rector that he is proceeding to raise funds for this conference. It is our intention to invite pro-Africa groups and Members of Congress to attend this conference.

Mr. Chairman, in my brief statement to you, I wish to give you some assurances that the government of Mauritania considers this a very serious matter and is deeply committed to the eradication of all vestiges of slavery. Now, that is not to say that it is within the realm of possibility that this situation may exist and there may be appearances of slavery. I do not deny that. That is a possibility.

But let me conclude by quoting the recent Country Reports of the U.S. Department of State, and I quote. "Some freed slaves have either stayed with or returned to their former masters and continue to provide labor in exchange for room and board and other basic necessities. Others live independently but continue a symbiotic relationship with their former masters performing occasionally paid or unpaid labor in exchange for food, clothing and Medicare. There are no reliable statistics for the number of Haratines who continue to work for the same families for which they worked before the emancipation of 1960, whether as paid or unpaid labor. Reports of cases of involuntary servitude are rare and unconfirmed."

Mr. Chairman, I want to make four observations which are not included in my written statement. First, the chair of the Subcommittee on Africa raised the question of the absence of funds to conduct classes and programs and institutes on this question on the part of the U.S. Government and that is a fact.

Second, the chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus made an analogy to the Freedman's Bureau after the end of slavery in the United States and I have been advocating that. I think I am that close to getting the Mauritanian Government to respond to that proposal, and I hope this conference that is being proposed this spring in Mauritania will address that subject.

Third, the chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus in Mauritania would not be black. General Colin Powell, who may very well be the first Republican Vice Presidential candidate, in Mauritania would not be black. Indeed, his counterpart, the colonel of the army of Mauritania, if you put him next to General Powell, one would ask him if he were from Jamaica. He is not black. So one has to be very careful when you talk about black and color in Mauritania.

And, finally, I regret very much because of a miscommunication Dr. Ainina, the former Mauritanian ambassador to the United States, was unable to testify, and I would like to include a statement in the record at some subsequent time.

Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you very much for this opportunity. I am disposed to answering any question in the future. Thank you very much.

(The prepared statement of Mr. Dymally appears in the appendix.)

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much, Mr. Dymally.
We will begin the questioning at this point.

I would like to note that Mr. Chabot has now joined us on the subcommittee for these hearings, and we will yield to him momentarily.

I have been working on behalf of human rights as a Member of Congress for 16 years. I have been all over the world, as you have been. I have not been to Mauritania, although I have met with diplomats and talked to people with regard to the issue. As a matter of fact, I too was the congressional delegate to the United Nations, and raised a number of issues relevant to human rights in Africa when I was there, including what I thought was the unbelievable abuse by General Magitsu when he used food as a weapon and exacerbated what was a famine and used it to hurt people. We tried to get corridors of tranquility established to get food stuffs to suffering people.

I mention that because we have testimony from very responsible sources here, and the volume of testimony that continues to come in to both of our subcommittees suggests that indeed slavery continues. It may be just de facto and not de jure. But, you know, it has always struck me that in every country where human rights abuses have been suggested, except with maybe the exceptions of places like North Korea, there is always a law or some other cover that the government hides behind. In bilaterals with the Soviets during the 1980's, they always had a convention against—and you just fill in the blank. They were signatories to U.N. conventions, for example. They were signers of the Helsinki Final Act, which guaranteed all kinds of rights. They could always trot out their own constitutions and say, "Look, freedom of religion is enshrined in our Constitution."

China does the same thing. Cuba does it as well, as the gentlelady points out. They can show you chapter and verse on paper. But the reality is far from the stated beliefs or at least the articulated beliefs in those documents.

And now we have testimony by very responsible people who suggest that indeed slavery is covert in Mauritania. That because of all of the statements made, the government has made what I would suggest are token efforts. I asked the Administration witness earlier, how many of those judges lost their jobs? And I think his response was three or four over the last several years. That is hardly a crackdown on those judges who would deny people their freedom.

And he did not have the answer; perhaps you do, Mr. Dymally, as to how many judges were brought up on charges of not permitting people to be free as they ought to be. And where do we get those statistics? Are they independently verified? Or are they just spoon fed from the government, a fact that would raise my suspicions and, I think, those of many other people as well.

But how do you respond to the testimony that it has just gone underground? Out of sight, out of mind. I mean how do you independently verify it? You are a paid lobbyist for the government of Mauritania. And for the record, if you could state what that salary is, it would be helpful to our deliberations as well.

Mr. DYMALLY. It is \$120,000.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you.

Mr. DYMALLY. Mr. Chairman, I am not here in denial. I am here to take the message back to Mauritania, and you have made a very

eloquent point. You sound as if you were Dymally in the Palace talking, because that is the point that I try to make whenever I go.

As an aside, however, you made mention of another country, Ethiopia. I am here pleading for some funds to resurrect the Mickey Leland Home for Boys. Communism has forced people to be orphans at 30 years old. The 30-year war. And so it is a constant battle in Africa.

So back to Mauritania. I am not here to deny or to contradict anyone. I am simply here to take the message back, and that is what I have been doing since 1993, with some constancy, I think, the chair of the Africa Subcommittee could tell you that; the chair of the Congressional Black Caucus would tell you that; that I am not here to contradict or to criticize anyone, but simply to listen to what is going on here, take the message back to the President, to the Palace, and to give you some assurances of every time I speak with them, they are committed to this question of eliminating slavery in Mauritania.

Mr. SMITH. Do human rights organizations have unfettered access to the country?

Mr. DYMALLY. Yes. I was recently assured in January that anyone who wishes to come now, they can come. They had one dispute with one organization in the United States which wanted guarantees to come in and they felt it was intruding on their sovereignty, but Freedom House just left there. I think they were there in either January or February.

Mr. SMITH. If a slave comes forward with testimony—and we heard Dr. Jacobs describe some of the methods that have been chronicled by Human Rights Watch Africa about what is done to those people who step out of line, and he mentioned a third in his testimony that is absolutely despicable—if people come forward and tell these groups and representatives of human rights organizations, do you have any fear whatsoever that there will be repercussions visited upon those people?

Mr. DYMALLY. No, in fact, I have discussed this issue with the Embassy. The invited members of the opposition, members of the media. I raised that issue, would they join in an effort to help groups from the United States and their response was favorable.

Mr. SMITH. What I am getting at is, as these people come forward and out of the household where they are literally captive, what happens when they tell their story and then have to go back to that house?

Mr. DYMALLY. Well, there have not been very many stories to the government.

Mr. SMITH. Torture works.

Mr. DYMALLY. As far as I know.

Mr. SMITH. My experience has always been that people are deterred from speaking by the grave implications of what might happen to them, which again has been chronicled by many of the human rights groups.

Is it your testimony that there is no torture by government or by a privatized method of torture where—

Mr. DYMALLY. My testimony is that the government has told me, and the embassy has told me, there is no torture.

Mr. SMITH. Can you independently verify that?

Mr. DYMALLY. I am sorry?

Mr. SMITH. Apart from statements by the government and our own Embassy, which are at odds with testimony given here today, can you independently verify that through your own sources?

Mr. DYMALLY. No. Except the word that I have gotten from both sources.

Mr. SMITH. From those two sources.

Mr. DYMALLY. Yes.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Cotton, did you want to respond to that?

Mr. COTTON. There is only one way to really respond to this, and that is, we need to have a clear understanding of this country and what is going on. And I respond to it by saying that their dialog is very clever. When I do an analysis of the literature, they move from slavery itself to the vestiges. And what is curious, is that they have eliminated a class, that is in that country, in the discussion.

There are four classes that I took note of when I was in that country. There are the Negro Africans, who are holding on to their African culture and their heritage. And they call themselves Negro Africans for that reason. There are the Haratines. Those are the ones the State Department mentions in the discussion. These are the ones they discuss that go in and out of slavery. That they might listen to their master or they might not. That is the Haratine class.

But the class that is not discussed is always the mythical or the mysterious—the missing 90,000. They are called Abd. Plural, Abids. This 90,000 is not accounted for in any of their discussions. However, the cases that he is talking about being brought to the government are abundant.

I have pictures of four of them. They are right there. In terms of the State Department, I have a contract of 1992. This particular contract deals with the racial nature. This is an Islamic country, but they buy and sell black Muslim people, which means, as from the dialog with people, that these are sub-human people, which allows them to buy and sell them with religious impunity. So a selective morality kicks in. That is why this government can carry on like this with a clear conscience because the people they buy and sell are not humans.

The contract opens, if I might read that to the record. This is for 1992 in the Islamic year 1412, the month of Hija. "In the name of Allah most gracious and most merciful salutations and peace upon him." They will cite the name of the people and the family name so that the government, if they were interested, could trace it. "Mohamed Vall Ould Nema, son of Sidiba, bought from Mohamed Lemine Ould Sidi Mohamed, son of Taleb Ibrahim, a slave with her daughter, named Kneiba, for the price of 50,000 Ouguiya received entirely by the seller from the buyer. Therefore it becomes effective his property of the two slaves listed. The two parties did receive my witness and the buyer accepted this before the hidden defects of the slaves. The contract was made at the end of the month of Hija, of the year 1412, or 1992, by this judge or religious figure Abedrabou Montali Ould Mohamed Abderrahmane, son of Berrou. God forgive me and my father and all the believers."

This picture is the woman and the child in the contract. They can be contacted in Nouakchott through the head of El Hor,

Messaoud Ould Boulkheir, which is not recognized by the government. And she can be contacted because they are fighting in court with this contract. This is the contract. This is the translation in French.

The buying and selling of people goes on and on. All of these individuals have a pattern that you can see in the film. And that particular pattern is, that once that woman runs, many times she is permitted to run. Some of the reasons for that permission has to do with the master does not feel like carrying her weight in his household, but he has her babies so he has fresh slaves. So he will let her go, knowing that the government does not have any programs. Just as I found them living in the streets and in barracks in Nouakchott starving and carrying all sorts of labor trying to stay alive, like buzzards, their masters know where they are, trace them through other slaves, and then they show up. "Give me your babies then. You are hungry. Why don't you come back and work?"

These are Haratines going in and out of slavery and runaway slaves. The Abids, the slave class, are in slavery and have the slave mentality, as it has been called many times in discussion, that of a donkey. This is important to understand. A donkey mind.

I asked individuals what that meant and they talked about how a donkey is tied outside of a building and he does not go anywhere. You can beat his flanks blood red, splay them, but he does not move. These individuals are raised from birth when they are bred. They are told that the way to paradise is under the foot of their master.

This class of people stay in the hinterlands, the desert, or are shipped out of the country. No studies have been done, or that can be produced, whereas there was a government organization that went to these Bedouin's tents, highly mobile people, who carry their slaves from one place to the next, interviewed them, told them what was happening.

So that is my response. My response is if he went to anti-slavery organizations who are not acknowledged, they have cases upon cases. They produce the people. They produced the pictures. But this is not what he is interested in. That is my response.

Mr. SMITH. Would either of you two gentlemen like to respond as well?

Mr. ATHIE. Yes. I would like to add this. I have in my hand here a petition that is written by some refugees, Mauritanian refugees, against Ms. Dorothy Sampas, who is the U.S. ambassador in Mauritania. And this petition is addressed to the President of the United States.

"If Mauritania was at war, and it is, these slave masters would be today tried and we would call a tribunal for them, an international tribunal."

There are two kinds of crime against humanity in Mauritania. First, the slavery issue. And I am sorry to see, Mr. Dymally, whom I met twice, giving some kind of smooth response to the issue of slavery in Mauritania. There is slavery—It is not black slavery, or it looks like it, there is slavery. The buying and the selling of people, human beings, who deserve to have the basic human rights everybody has.

People do not speak up and try to end this evil practice in this country, and unfortunately, it is going on in most of Arabic countries. Whether we like it or not. I am a Muslim and I am proud to be. This issue is going on in most Arabic countries and in particular here in Mauritania and Sudan.

I think there is a strong step that needs to be taken, and I am glad we are here to talk to the U.S. Congress. Then from here we go to the United Nations so some international pressure would be put on these slave states. It is very unfortunate to have Mr. Dymally here who is agent of the Mauritanian Government trying to dilute this issue. We are hurting in our bodies. We are being killed day in, day out, 300,000 slaves, and this is an international organization that says this.

When you go to Mauritania, you do not need to investigate. You will see slavery there—right from the airport. You do not need to go inside the country, as has been suggested here. Right from the airport you will see the slaves in Mauritania. It is horrible. And we are still here in 1996 saying that it is a vestige slavery. This State Department report is incomplete. And information that is incomplete is wrong. Totally wrong.

And there is a big difference between this report and the report of 1991, 1992, and 1993. We would like to know what is the position of the State Department on this issue today. We know that the U.S. Ambassador in Mauritania has been very much criticized for her actions. Here is the petition. And there is no faith at all today in the U.S. Ambassador in Mauritania.

I would like to make it clear for the record. We are human beings and we deserve respect. We are willing to work with the Arab-Berbers in our country, but we do not want to be slaves—there are also hundreds of thousands of people who are today deported by this government:

Mr. DYMALLY. Mr. Chairman—

Mr. ATHIE. And close to 500 people have been killed in jails. And the people who killed them have been promoted. They are in the government. What about all of the international laws? What is the United Nations doing?

This is my response to this—

Mr. DYMALLY. Mr. Chairman, I do not think—

Mr. SMITH. I will ask you to just hold that thought until Dr. Jacobs, then I will gladly—

Dr. JACOBS. Yes, just two points.

Mr. Dymally was asked about torture and he said that they told him that they did not torture people.

I spoke to people in Amnesty International who told me that in 1990 and 1991 there was a massive ethnic cleansing of the free blacks in the south. The free blacks in the south are in resistance to the slavery and to the oppression by the Arab-Berbers.

They had the only fertile farmland left after the droughts and they were pushed across the Senegal River into Senegal, and black Africans in the army and in the civil service were jailed and tortured. And people in Amnesty International who witnessed this said it was the worst that they had ever seen.

In fact, there is a man sitting behind me and we had not planned this—there is a man in this audience who was an army captain,

a Mauritanian black, and who has in audiences in Harlem and in Brooklyn taken off his shirt to show the tortures that were done to him, and perhaps Mr. Dymally ought to go outside with us and see the scars. He might return and tell us he's getting a different job.

Mr. DYMALLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I did not know that I was on trial here. Neither did I know that Ambassador Sampas was on trial.

Some of the people who signed that petition are refugees who seek to become political refugees so they can obtain asylum in the United States and they are unhappy about that. That is all I need to say.

I am simply here to express a point of view, not to criticize anybody's testimony or to deny it. Simply to let you know that this is a matter which I take up at least twice a year when I go to Mauritania, expressing congressional unhappiness with this subject. I think the chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus, the chairman of the subcommittee will tell you, I have brought delegations so that they can express their unhappiness to these delegations.

Mr. COTTON. Please. It is very important. I would like to add, I appreciate what Mr. Dymally said, because what he is saying is very informative. I spent 4 days in the refugee camps, living and sleeping in them along the river. And interviewed numbers of people. This is the consensus amongst the leaders and the people. That Madam Sampas, as they call her, is the one who is really working for the government of Mauritania. They feel that Madam Sampas is the person who takes the government's view. Whenever they are in conversations with her, they speak like Donnelly.

Mr. DYMALLY. He is the ambassador to Trinidad.

Mr. COTTON. Excuse me. Your name, sir.

Mr. DYMALLY. Dymally.

Mr. COTTON. Dymally. I am sorry.

They speak like Dymally. In other words, when they say, "This is happening to us," she says, "But the President Taya, I met with him and this is what he told me." Whenever they bring up issues, this is what she does. She espouses the governmental view.

So I had that particular data recorded as to know how they view her, how they are distrustful of her, and afraid of her, because they feel she is behind a movement to send them back to Mauritania.

Now, she is alleged to have said that they are interested in staying there. This sort of voices the gentleman's sentiment that they are staying there because they get free food or they want a shot at the United States.

These people, if you remember the New York Times article, go down to the river and stare across the river at their farms, at people who own their cattle now. They had villages. They were businessmen. They were prosperous people. They were working hard. Their centers of commerce were in the south. How was it that suddenly they have acquired great and massive character defects, and now they want to be lazy and to live off the crumbs that they live on.

I went to desolate, lonely, with no electricity, places far out into the countryside. They do not want to stay there. They would like

to go across the river back to where it was lush and where they had their farms.

So this is a common thing for representatives of that government, even representatives from our government, to say, "What does Taya say?" This was not just voiced by people who were refugees. I also have a recorded record of the Widows. Now, the Widows is an organization of women whose husbands, whose sons, whose brothers, were tortured to death and murdered. And they have been constantly going to the U.S. Ambassador, and she told them in an interview, "Well, forget about this right now. Life is like that. Don't push things." They do not trust her either. By that time, I was in Mauritania.

So the feeling is that the United States is in harmony with the slavery because she espouses and voices whatever they tell her to voice.

The problem again is this. The anti-slavery organizations which are not recognized by the government—now, we have to ask ourselves why would a country, interested in ceasing the aspect of slavery, not recognize two organizations who have files on slavery and whose main agenda, at the risk of their lives, because they are a small percentage of this free slave population—not dominated people. Why would they not be part of any governmental arrangement to monitor the government's progress to give them suggestions as to how to do this? They are not monitored. They are not involved because relationships are being developed between the former slaves and Negro Africans. This would unify the country. And because these coalitions are being made, these two groups who have not been co-opted and given big salaries to stop their discussion on this issue, are now working with the Negro Africans on a coalition against slavery.

This is another important point in terms of understanding what truth is. Haratines have been responsible for the murder of 1,000 Negro Africans. So in their minds—the Negro Africans, who are these Haratines who have been under control of the Arabs for centuries, think that we should trust them. But the issue of slavery is so great in their minds in terms of humiliation of their people, in terms of a system of apartheid, that they are coming together. So the government will not involve them.

This is important. How can, again, the United States of America, my country, with the knowledge of a Freedman's Bureau, with universities that train researchers, and know how to do interviews, know how to take numbers, know how important it is to have observers, how is it that the State Department would move over 90,000 and arrive at the word "vestige"? This is causing black Africans in that country to feel one thing. When America, a powerful bright resourceful country, is able to make a move like that, it has another agenda. Is that agenda: Since Iraq is no longer having trouble—and relationships were supposedly broken between Mauritania and Iraq, now that this has happened, we are not going to be that concerned about slavery and we will now shift our policy?

This might not be true. But it is in the minds of the suppressed in that country. They have cases, Mr. Chairman and Madam Chairperson, that can be pulled out, the people can be traced. Their families can be traced. They have, especially this woman here,

Aichanna Mint Abeid Boilil, has five children who are in slavery right now. If the State Department wants to contact her, she will tell them what families they are with, what area they are in, and who is renting them now.

So I wanted to add that because his dialog helps us to appreciate that it is the U.S. Government's position, once Mauritania gives their position, the U.S. Government officials or their representatives, say, "Thank you, President Taya." And they walk away.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Cotton, thank you for those comments.

Before I yield to the Chairwoman of the Africa Subcommittee, one of the biggest concerns we have on this subcommittee is the white-washing of crimes and the belittling of crimes against humanity, and certainly slavery fits that definition.

Last year we had a hearing—a series of hearings on the Country Reports on Human Rights Practices—and one of the more telling comments by Amnesty International was that in this Administration, human rights had been an island. No connection to policy. Very often their statements—the Country Reports—are relatively accurate, but when it comes down to linkages to policy, it is not there. Which means it is an exercise in just exposing something and then doing nothing.

In the case of Mauritania, this apparent rewriting of reality—and we are going to delve much further into this on both of these subcommittees—raises the specter of the government misinforming and becoming part of the whitewashing of these atrocities.

You know, Mr. Dymally, you said you were not on trial. You are the government spokesman here representing the government. I do not think it is fair to say that you are acting in a neutral position or just as a conduit of information back and forth, which is why I asked you before what your sources of information are.

Like a good reporter, we always want to know what are the sources, where is information coming from? And the government is just spoon-feeding information and there is a give and take back and forth. The victims are not served by that process.

Mr. DYMALLY. Mr. Chairman, I had—

Mr. SMITH. Let me just finish and then I will be happy to yield to you.

I would hope, and perhaps you can agree to it right here, that you would join people like Mr. Cotton and others and visit ladies like the lady that he has described here and talk to her. And then represent to the government what the information is that you are finding. Because very often our country reporting on human rights practices falls far below a standard of really trying to seek out the unvarnished truth. And if we buy into some fiction, shame on us, as Americans and as a Congress. And this is bipartisan. You know, the gentleman from New Jersey, my good friend, Mr. Payne, has been outspoken on this, for which we are all indebted to him.

Human rights abuses anywhere in the world need to be exposed. I do not care, you know, who comes and makes presentations about them. We need to expose them and try to mitigate and hopefully eradicate them.

And so let us stand in solidarity with the victims. I urge you to go to the refugee camps and talk to people other than just the gov-

ernment and perhaps bump into some of these people who could really direct you to the real victims.

Mr. DYMALLY. I said before, I welcome your remarks. I will take them back to the appropriate authorities. I still insist I am not on trial here. I am an advocate—

Mr. SMITH. It is the government's policies that are being scrutinized here—

Mr. DYMALLY. I have no problem with that.

Mr. SMITH. And you are the representative.

Mr. DYMALLY. I have no problems with your criticism. I, Mervyn Dymally, am not on trial. That is all I said. Period. We may disagree on that, but I am not on trial.

Let me say this to you. That I plan to do just that. My role is not all-inclusive. There are human rights groups which do what they do very well. My role is to do what they do not do. That is, to take the message to the proper authorities as often as I can, and I do it at least twice a year. And I do not go there without meeting with the Chef de Cabinet, and expressing to him congressional concerns. What the Congressional Black Caucus thinks, what the chairman—how strongly he feels about this, what the African American community feels, what the media is saying, that is my role. And I do not go there apologizing but trying to get them to shift in an area that would reconcile their differences with the U.S. Government and the Congress. That is all—that is the role I play.

Now, I plan to expand my role to do exactly what you suggest. This July I will spend approximately 3 or 4 weeks there and visit the camps and the refugees in the rural areas. I have done quite a bit of it, and I have done a lot of meetings. So I am not defending what these men are saying or criticizing. I am simply saying I have a particular role. Each one of us has a role. You are not a member of the New Jersey legislature. You are a Member of Congress. And the legislature takes care of problems and the city councilmen take care of potholes. I take care of the Congress. I go back to Mauritania and I say, "The Congress is very unhappy."

I took a delegation to meet the chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus, and I told them he only saw you because he is my personal friend. Because he is so unhappy about the situation there. I try to impress upon them as often as I can the unhappiness in Congress. But I will expand my role.

Mr. SMITH. Do you agree with the State Department's assessment that slavery has virtually disappeared in Mauritania?

Mr. DYMALLY. Yes.

Mr. SMITH. You do? Have you heard anything today that would cast some doubt on that?

Mr. DYMALLY. Yes.

Mr. SMITH. Did you hear anything new today?

Mr. DYMALLY. Yes.

Mr. SMITH. I appreciate that.

Mr. Payne.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you very much.

Let me thank the panel for your testimony, and as it was indicated, I received a delegation from Mauritania since I had been so outspoken and had a panel at the Congressional Black Caucus dealing with the problems, particularly in Mauritania.

And I did ask at that time if there could be some proclamation from the government to reaffirm its opposition to slavery and to make some declarations that would show that the government opposed covert slavery. As we talked earlier, the de facto as opposed to de jure.

But to this day, I have not had anything sent to me that says that they have taken some action on that.

And so I would just like to ask Mr. Dymally what has happened to that request, and if, in fact, they have made some progress on that?

Mr. DYMALLY. Subsequent to your meeting with the President of the Senate, I took them to Dakar, Senegal, to influence that decision. Met with the President, met with the Chef de Cabinet, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, expressed your concern, which I share. I have been urging them to set up a bureau, a commission, an office. I think I have succeeded in moving to the point of holding a conference this fall to which we would invite Members of Congress and pro-Africa groups. I have submitted the names of just about every pro-Africa group I can think of to attend this conference. And so we are moving there slowly.

But I must admit that they have a philosophical problem, a philosophical difference, with you. They believe that since they declared that slavery ended, it would be admitting that you are still beating your wife to set up a bureau. It would be like calling upon Congress to implement the 13th Amendment. That has been their response. But I have consistently urged them to change that position and I hope that this spring we will have begun in that direction, and that your presence there or members of the Congressional Black Caucus will influence that final decision.

Mr. PAYNE. I am glad that there is continued discussion. But you see, the whole denial questions, problems, can never be solved. And although you say it would be an admission, there is a denial that vestiges still remain.

It is like any kind of illness. Unless you recognize you have a problem, then you cannot deal with the problem. If you deny that there is indeed a mental health problem, or any kind of substance problem, or even a physical problem of health, if you deny it and do not take that to the proper authorities to look at it, then nothing will happen. And if the government philosophically feels it is an admission that there are still vestiges of slavery, if indeed they did some proactive work, then the situation is not going to get any better. The economic situation is not improving to the degree that people then can motivate themselves to move out on their own once this invisible hand is still over them and these invisible strings are still holding them. They say, "Well, you are free. No one is going to prevent you from leaving." But by the same token, as I indicated before, in 1863, when slaves in the United States were freed, they looked out and said, "Free to go where? At least there is a leaky roof here and the option is across the street, sleeping in the woods somewhere."

And so the government set up the bureau to assist the freedmen and changed the law so that they could vote. And in 1868, after the Freedman's Bureau was formed in 1865, in 1868, as a matter of fact, slaves, former slaves, gave Grant the overwhelming vote of

over 90 percent of the 450,000 voted, and Grant won the election of president by 300,000 votes. It was actually the former slaves because Grant lost the white vote actually.

And so it was because of a concerted effort on the part of the U.S. Government to say "You are free. These are your rights. This is how you do it. This is what we say the steps are. This is how a business is run. This is where you can go. This is what we will provide—some direction."

There was a concerted effort. Of course, we are talking, you know, 100 years ago, 125 years ago. And so it is not even recreating the wheel. I could get the Library of Congress, you know, to give you the Freedman's Bureau legislation to take back with them. I mean, you know, if they need some kind of a framework. But if in fact they are going to continue to deny that there is indeed a need for this, then the problem is going to continue, it is going to worsen. People's rights are not going to be heard and the problem is not going to go away.

And the only way that we will be able to send a message is that we have to then have stronger policies toward Mauritania and other countries that refuse to move in the right direction. And I think it is an obligation, a responsibility, an obligation for our Congress to have more stringent legislation directed to countries where it is philosophical or whatever the reason are not working—you know, they can do what they want to do, but they cannot do it with our support and the support of other world bodies that would normally be involved in attempting to move this along.

And so, you know, there are so many unanswered questions even in the human rights reports. They still say that the government is not forthcoming in addressing the vestiges of slavery and it is talked about in Section 6C. The discrimination laws favor individuals on the basis of ethnic and tribal affiliation, social status, and political ties. These things are—and, of course, traditional maltreatment. We have not even gotten into the question of women, which are just really mistreated in so many ways. That is a whole other area.

We realize it is a complicated and complex country, but if the Nation itself decided that it wanted to move into the 21st century, and move out of the dark passes of former years, they could do it. And I think that we will have responsibility to keep the pressure on Mauritania and on Sudan and any other country where we see continued violation of human rights, and it is a responsibility of this body to do that.

I mean there are no questions. If slavery was ended, what kind of compensation? No one knows what happened. What happened to the 90,000 people who were slaves and all of a sudden they were decreed free? Where did they go? Where is that whole body of people? There are so many unanswered questions. You therefore assume that it is illogical to think that they have dispersed. And indeed they are in fact primarily still in the situation that they were in several years ago.

Mr. DYMALLY. Mr. Payne.

Mr. PAYNE. Yes.

Mr. DYMALLY. So powerful were your words. When I went there, I convened a meeting of the opposition and asked the specific ques-

tion. "If the government opens up a bureau against slavery, would you oppose it?" And the answer was no. "Would you criticize the Government?" "No."

Mr. Chairman, each one of us plays a different role. My role is a different role from these gentlemen here. My role is to push the government as a result of congressional sentiment. That is how I see my role.

And after the meeting with Mr. Payne, I went back there, convened a meeting, as former chair of the Africa Subcommittee, and met with the opposition and the media and asked that specific question. "Would you oppose a bureau against slavery?" The answer was no. And I took that message back to the government and I will take it again when I go back in July or probably before. And that is what I do.

In a way, I am on their side trying to clear this question up but in a different way. They would not listen to me if I went there calling them bad names.

Mr. ATHIE. Can I add something?

Mr. Dymally said earlier that these petitioners do want to have political—

Mr. DYMALLY. I said some. I did not say all.

Mr. ATHIE. Pardon?

Mr. DYMALLY. I said some.

Mr. ATHIE. How do you know that?

Mr. DYMALLY. I have my sources as you do.

Mr. ATHIE. These people want to go back to Mauritania. They do not want to come here on political asylum status. They are farmers. They have been living in their country for generations. All they know is Mauritania. That land that we call Mauritania. Whether the government wants it or not, they are from that country. And now the Mauritanian Government is trying to fool the international public opinion by sending here an ex-slave as a Mauritanian ambassador.

I think that is just an insult to the intelligence of the American public. The real question is how to solve the problem of slavery in Mauritania. This is the real question, by not sending just one person who is going to come here with the mission of saying, "Look, I'm a former slave, and if I can be a diplomat or an ambassador, then there is no slavery in Mauritania." This is the kind of thing that we are going to have and really we just want to reject that nomination of an ex-slave who is working for the government to just not go straight to the real problem of solving the problem of slavery in Mauritania.

And there are many more. I do not trust the Mauritanian Government to hold a Freedman Bureau. This government is not credible.

First, they killed all these people, 500 people in jail, and thousands tortured. And then they deported close to 100,000 people, and they still have this institution of slavery, and it is only the government that can do it. But this is not the government that is going to solve the problem in Mauritania. Not this government of Colonel Maaouya Ould Sid Ahmed Taya, who was siding Iraq against the United States. This is somebody who does not believe

in democracy. He does not have any respect for human beings. The black who are there are just for him slaves.

This is the real situation. I do not think even if we have a Freedman Bureau with this government, it is going to be another way to control the slaves, but not to free them.

Thank you.

Mr. COTTON. I would like to add a recommendation to the committee. This country must be understood in terms of slavery as a nugget, existing in a universe of apartheid in a differentiated form.

When we think about it, the Negro Africans have endured humiliation, racism, deprivation because of their race, murder, of the worst form, brutalization. They have lived this while slavery revolves in the middle.

So it is important to recognize that if the United States sends people to understand, all respects due to Mr. Dymally, they would not trust him, just like a Jewish person who saw someone come from Himmler's cabinet, to talk to them about—and to ask them for information on people. They would not do that.

I would not have been allowed in a safe house to look at a woman running from her master if they knew the next day I was having dinner with Taya.

So when we approach this—my research was successful because I am an African American who had the features, could go and put on the clothing of the people, live in the community, live in the refugee camps and just talk and walk and record. I did not represent a threat to them. I had spent a year making contacts here so I could be vouched for when I arrived.

So we must also recognize that when these people think about going back, they are thinking about returning to a period of time of nightmares, of rapes, of being shot to death, thrown in the river to drown. And that is what they do. They go to the river and they look over to their land.

I did not observe anyone saying that they wanted to come back here. They want to go back there but they have no guarantees from the government for protection. Their land has been given to Tuaregs, who came with their own slaves from Mali.

So what happens? Since the whole aspect of slavery is based on complete economic deprivation, the humiliation of the subject, being Abd from birth; if you have now taken, the proud people who had their lands, who had their farms and their cattle, who had commerce back and forth across the river—you have now taken that all from them, killed their families, promoted the people who murdered them, and now, with nothing when they are destitute, you ask them to return.

Who therefore is returning? Someone just one notch away from complete subservience, dependent on whoever gives them something to eat or work at.

And it is important to understand that this is a process of ethnic cleansing, the breaking and the humiliation of a black race of people. If they are forced to return because they will be starved in Senegal, the fate of those who return you simply have to use your imagination. Those who return are activists who have been voicing things against the government, who have families there. So this

wanting to return is based on requirements. "Will you guarantee us protection? Who will watch out for us?"

You know, sir, rapes are still going on in the villages across the river. There is the gendarmerie that still runs around with former slaves at their command that beat people, shoot people. It is not the frequency it was before, but the refugees know because of the traffic that is going back and forth across that river, what is happening inside the country.

So when we talk about the U.S. Government being part of a push to go back to your land now and Senegal, saying, "Hey, you can't have refugee status. Go back home." We are asking people, and I would like to make this clear—and like I say, this is analogous to saying to people, people who escaped from Auschwitz and Dachau: "Look, we are sorry. Come back home."

If this understanding is not clear, we will not be working the problem from the standpoint of the people. If you will notice, human rights organizations that went to—and I appreciate Freedom House. I have worked with them. But when Freedom House went, two white men went. Two white men. How are white men going to blend into a community and see and talk to people? The moment they hit the communities, who are these white men and who are they connected with? Well, they are staying at the hotel and they are also working with the U.S. Ambassador. That is the kiss of death. And they are also working with the government.

So African Americans or Africans who cannot be compromised—or, my God, if we can find these things—should be sent on a mission of fact finding with the ability to move to and fro.

As you know, and I do not think this was answered honestly, the London anti-slavery organization, please call Michael Dottridge of that organization, is not permitted. They are the ones that came in after the 1980 edict and said, "Look. You said it's over, but we count 100,000 plus 300,000 part time." So this is something that must be understood.

The last point for psychological understanding is this. The people in that country have been raised for centuries to listen to their masters. I do not know how important this is to the State Department because they seem to go over this point. We all know of a woman or a child who has been incested from the time they are 2 years old. And that father can walk over to that child and incest them at 16 years old. Even if the child runs away, the father can walk over to the child and say, "Come on baby, we're going home."

That child will go home with him. That wife who has been brutalized will go home with him. This is a people raised at the level of animals. They will run away. They will think about it; then they hear their master's voice.

I was told that even Haratines that I was working with and helping, if their master asked them about me, that I was there, they would freely tell them.

So please allow individuals who understand, from the side of the oppressed, their psycho-social condition, their conditioning for hundreds of years, the power of that government, the fear of living in a terrorist nation. I am talking about terrorism on their own people. This must be taken into account and be understood.

So we can say to this gentleman here, Dymally, go and talk to them. I will tell you who they see when he comes to them.

These things must be taken into consideration. If not, we are being totally insensitive to a very brutalized people by asking them, "Open up to us. Tell us. Give us key people. Let us talk to people who are hiding. What are their names? Take me to the safe houses." And then after this is over, let us say, after we all go home and the cameras go off, and then it is nighttime, and I was there at nighttime, then there are headlights. Then people disappear. Then people are beaten to death.

So, just as we went home from Selma, Alabama, after a voter's registration drive, those people have to live there. And we have to be very cognizant of that, if our motive is to uproot this century's oldest heinous activity and also approach these people in a way it can be therapeutic and helpful to them.

And that is my recommendation, sir.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Cotton, thank you for that very eloquent and sophisticated read of the situation, which I think is necessary. Otherwise, in my view, we are talking about a village where people go and they look without really seeing.

And I would urge Mr. Dymally, with all due respect, to really take back the message of our concern, Democrats and Republicans, of this subcommittee and the gentlelady from Florida. More scrutiny, not less, more concern, not less, will be brought to bear on these issues. We heed the insights of our distinguished panel and I know I am most grateful for what you have done this afternoon.

Mr. DYMALLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You can be assured I will.

Mr. SMITH. Very short. Because the next panel needs to get underway.

Mr. DYMALLY. Thank you very much. You can be assured I will take back the message.

Mr. SMITH. OK. I appreciate that.

I would like to again thank this panel, and invite the third panel, if they would come to the witness table.

Meanwhile, I would ask Congressman Frank Wolf if he would join us. Mr. Wolf has been a leader on behalf of human rights around the world. He and I have traveled to many countries. He has undertaken three trips to Sudan, and has spoken out very boldly on behalf of human rights, both in that country as well as here in the United States.

I would ask him if he would come and join us for this next panel.

And I would ask Congresswoman Ros-Lehtinen if she would introduce our panel.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. We welcome the panelists who will be appearing before us. Baroness Caroline Cox, Deputy Speaker of the House of Lords; Gaspar Biro, Special Human Rights Rapporteur to the United Nations; Kevin Vigilante, Clinical Associate Professor of Medicine, Brown University School of Medicine; and Augustine Lado, President of Pax Sudani.

Baroness Caroline Cox is a board member of the United Kingdom branch of the Christian Solidarity International, a human rights organization working for victims of repression worldwide. She has visited Sudan on behalf of this group many times, most recently in

January of this year, and three times the previous year, obtaining first-hand evidence of human rights violations from former slaves, families with enslaved relatives, and survivors of militia slave raids.

The evidence which she will present today will be based on these first-hand accounts of modern-day slavery.

We thank you for that.

I will read the introduction to our other panelists.

Dr. Gaspar Biro is a U.N. Special Rapporteur on Sudan. Since his appointment in 1993, Dr. Biro has made two trips to Sudan and several trips to neighboring countries to investigate human rights abuses. He has been banned from Sudan since 1994, after his first report to the United Nations prompted the Sudanese Government to label him worst than Rushdie for his Satanic report. He has published several reports since then.

Dr. Kevin Vigilante is representing the Puebla Institute, a private human rights organization based here. Dr. Vigilante has spent 10 days in Khartoum, Sudan, last year on a human rights fact-finding mission. Two years ago he was included in Time Magazine's list of the top 50 leaders of the future under the age of 40, and received 46 percent of the vote when he ran for the House of Representatives in Rhode Island's District 1. He graduated from Cornell University Medical School and completed his residency at Yale.

Dr. Augustine Lado was born in South Sudan and is now a refugee living in the United States. He is chairman of the Coalition Against Slavery in Mauritania and Sudan, and President of Pax Sudani, a human rights organization campaigning against slavery in Sudan. In addition to publishing several articles on slavery and genocide in Sudan, Mr. Lado organized a symposium on the subject and has made presentations at the Abolitionist Conference at Columbia, the Sudan Association Conference in Boston, and at an Amnesty International-sponsored conference on the plight of indigenous peoples.

We welcome all of the panelists and we will begin with Baroness Cox.

STATEMENT OF BARONESS CAROLINE COX, DEPUTY SPEAKER, HOUSE OF LORDS

Baroness Cox. Madam Chairman, thank you for this invitation to give evidence this afternoon.

As you have said, my evidence is based on first-hand experiences obtained during eight visits to Sudan over the past 4 years; six to Southern Sudan, including two to the Nuba Mountains; one to the north to meet the government and to visit territories controlled by the government. And one to the Eritraen-Sudanese borderlands. The visits are sponsored by Christian Solidarity International or CSI, a human rights organization working for victims of repression regardless of their creed, color or nationality.

We focus particularly on people cut off from major humanitarian organizations, such as U.N. organizations or the International Committee of the Red Cross, because those organizations can only visit places with the permission of a sovereign government.

Being independent, we can go to people who are denied access by those organizations and therefore we can meet people who are bereft of aid and also of the advocacy that goes with aid.

Referring to that word "independence" reminds me that I must emphasize that I am not speaking on behalf of the British Government, but on behalf of CSI.

On the basis of eyewitness evidence and of firsthand accounts, we testify to gross violations of human rights inflicted by and/or encouraged by the government of Sudan, including widespread and systematic slavery of men, women and children.

Government troops and government-backed Popular Defense Forces, or PDF, regularly raid black African communities to capture the slaves and other forms of booty. The slaves, in most cases children and young women, are taken north where they are forced to provide domestic and agricultural labor and sexual services against their will, for nothing other than a minimum of food for survival.

Those who are Christians are generally given Muslim names and forced to observe Muslim rituals. Some boys are forced to attend Koranic schools or PDF training camps where they are trained to wage war against their own people.

We offer sources of evidence from three regions in Sudan. First, in Northern Bahr-El-Ghazal. We have stayed on three occasions in the town of Nyamllél and walked to surrounding villages and to the market town of Manyel, where Arab traders bring back slaves to sell them to their families.

We have met many people who have been enslaved as chattel slaves who have escaped or been brought back by the Arab traders. We have taken their testimonies which are published in the accompanying documentation.

We have also spoken to the Arab traders, who have described in detail how they bring back women and children from the north to sell them back to their families, for the sums of money, averaging 5,000 Sudanese pounds per slave. The average price per slave is five head of cattle.

We have also seen the evidence of barbarities perpetrated during the slave raids by government and PDF forces against black African towns and villages.

We have seen the scars caused by torture of men and women, especially the elderly, who are not taken as slaves. We have seen the evidence of looting, pillaging and the destruction of buildings, including homes, churches and clinics, and the burning of crops.

In the second area, in the Nuba Mountains, we have met women and children who have been detained in so-called peace camps organized by the government or in government garrisons. Some had been captured in military attacks on their villages. Others have been forced to go to government-controlled areas to seek food or medicine for survival. Once there, they were forced to renounce their Christian names, to adopt Muslim names and practices, and were subjected to sexual abuse and forced labor.

Again, detailed case studies of these are published in our accompanying documents which have been circulated.

In the third area, the Eritrea-Sudanese borderlands, we have met boys and young men belonging to the Muslim Beja people, who

gave evidence of their abduction and enforced conscription in the government army to fight against the peoples of the South and the Nuba Mountains. We have personal testimonies from those who have been captured for this purpose but who have managed to escape.

In all places we have visited, both Christian and Muslim community leaders, civil administrators, professional personnel, and military commanders have given us detailed accounts of violations of human rights by the government of Sudan as part of their policies of subjugation of the people of the South and the Nuba Mountains, including systematic slavery, enforced labor, the use of hunger to force people to leave their homes to seek food, and the manipulation of aid as a means of enforced Islamization of non-Muslims.

These policies need to be seen in the wider context of other violations of human rights perpetrated by the regime, including ground and aerial offensives against civilians. Overall, 1½ million people have died and over 5 million have been displaced in the recent years of this civil war.

And it must also be remembered that the government is oppressing many Muslim people in the North, both the Muslim Beja people and other Muslims who oppose the regime in Khartoum. During our visit to Northern Sudan, and also to Cairo, we have taken evidence from many Muslims who have suffered unlawful arrest, detention, maltreatment, and severe torture at the hands of the regime in Khartoum.

I finish, if I may, by offering three conclusions and four recommendations.

The first conclusion. The government's policy toward the people of the South and the Nuba Mountains is tantamount to genocide by means of terror, war, slavery, the mass displacement of the population, and the manipulation of aid. And in particular, widespread systematic slavery continues on a large scale in government-controlled areas of Sudan.

Second, the raids by government troops and government-backed PDF militia against African towns and villages of the South and the Nuba Mountains are accompanied by atrocities, by the capture of men, women and children for slavery, by torture, rape, looting, and destruction of buildings and property. Those not taken into slavery are generally killed and/or tortured.

And, third, humanitarian aid fails to reach hundreds of thousands of victims of war and famine. The government continues to refuse to give access to the United Nations and to NGO's, to SPLA-administered areas in the Nuba Mountains, and to many areas in the South.

This denial of access to aid organizations causes massive suffering and is used to create hunger as a weapon in the Government's policy of enforced migration which facilitates its program of enslavement and forced labor.

Recommendations. We believe the time has come for the international community to take a firmer stand against the government's policies of slavery and genocide in the broader sense involving destruction of life, culture, language, community, religion and ethnic identity.

C.S.I. therefore calls on the international community and in particular on the member States of the U.N. Security Council to build on the recent U.N. Security Council resolution and in the event of failure by the government of Sudan to comply with the conditions of that resolution, to consider a range of sanctions from denial of visas, to the imposition of oil and arms embargoes.

We also call on the international community to prevail upon the government of Sudan to cease hostilities against civilians in the South and the Nuba Mountains, to honor its voluntarily accepted human rights obligations to all its citizens, to allow access to human rights monitors to all areas of Sudan under the direction of the U.N. Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in Sudan.

These monitors could investigate the extent of slavery and other violations of human rights. If the regime in Khartoum has nothing to fear, it should have no reservation about allowing such access to all parts of Sudan by humanitarian aid organizations and to allow the international community to direct aid to the no-go areas.

Finally, Madam Chairman, CSI also urges the international community to support the IGADD Declaration of Principles calling for the right of self-determination, secular government, and democracy; and to support Sudan's democratic opposition groups which represent over 90 percent of the population; and to encourage the National Democratic Alliance as it seeks to develop policies to promote peace and justice for all people in Sudan including the abolition of slavery.

Madam Chairman, unless the international community succeeds in preventing the government of Sudan from continuing its brutal programs and policies, the tragedy which is already of catastrophic proportions will escalate even further and mean yet more horrific suffering for the peoples of Sudan.

This tragedy will certainly create a bottomless pit of need for humanitarian aid and may also cost the international community a high price in terms of political instability.

Thank you very much.

(The prepared statement of Baroness Cox appears in the appendix.)

Mr. SMITH. Baroness Cox, thank you very much for your testimony.

Dr. Biro.

STATEMENT OF GASPAR BIRO, SPECIAL HUMAN RIGHTS RAPPORTEUR TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Dr. BIRO. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I wish to begin by emphasizing how honored I feel to be before this distinguished body and to provide testimony regarding my findings on the situation of human rights in Sudan, with special regard to contemporary forms of slavery and practices similar to slavery.

Mr. Chairman, since 1993, when I had undertaken my mandate as the Special Rapporteur of the U.N. Commission on Human Rights, I received numerous reports and information and collected dozens of eyewitness testimonies indicating that contemporary forms of slavery, including the slave trade, forced labor and ser-

vitute are widespread and systematic practices condoned and tacitly approved by the government of Sudan.

I would like to share with you some of the evidence that I discovered supporting this conclusion.

Different paramilitary units are fighting together with the army in Southern Sudan and the Nuba Mountains. These paramilitary units include the Popular Defense Forces (PDF), the PDF created in November 1989, groups of volunteers called Murahaleen and Arab tribal militias armed and controlled by the government of Sudan.

Numerous reports and testimonies received during my missions to Sudan and some neighboring countries with hundreds of thousands of Sudanese refugees indicate that members of these groups are carrying out systematically abductions of civilians during or after military operations. They are also providing armed guards for places where the victims are temporarily held and are also in charge of their transportation to the final destinations.

A high-ranking PDF commander from Kadugli, the Nuba Mountains, confirmed to me, for example, during an official meeting in 1993, that his troops are given orders to collect and transport civilians from the rebel-held areas to the government of Sudan-run refugee camps after taking over these villages from the rebels.

There is evidence also of cases when army officers captured and brought with them to Northern Sudan, Southern children who then serve as servants in their households.

The vast majority of the victims are women and children belonging to ethnic, racial and religious minorities from Southern Sudan and indigenous African tribes from the Nuba Mountains area. Women and girls are used as concubines or are forced to work for soldiers. Several cases of rape were reported even in camps for displaced run by the government of Sudan or organizations working with the government of Sudan in the Kordofan area. Boys and young men are used mainly as servants.

There are reports, and my own findings in the Nuba Mountains confirmed these reports, that a number of people are obliged to work on large agricultural schemes run by individual landowners close to the government of Sudan. The most exposed of all these categories of victims are members of the Dinka tribe living in Northern Bahr-al-Ghazal, especially the Dinka-Gogrial.

I received during my September 1993 visit to Wau, the capital of the former Bahr-al-Ghazal State, dramatic eyewitness accounts on these practices. In the camps for displaced Dinka situated around Wau, I have talked to people, mainly women and children and elderly, who were in the worst shape I have ever seen human beings in my life.

Inhuman and degrading treatment of the victims by their captors is widespread. Many victims of the mentioned violations and abuses are forcibly converted to Islam and are given Arabic names, but even with that, in many instances, their treatment is not improved.

Local and central authorities are all well aware of these phenomena. In a number of cases the relatives of those abducted or local chiefs are making serious efforts to retrieve their relatives, sometimes with success. Local authorities are usually contacted but do

not intervene, even if the owner is identified and his name is indicated to them. In a few instances, deals were reached between the owner or the captor and the claimants, and victims were released for compensation in money or goods.

It is to be noted, however, that according to the Sudanese Criminal Act of 1991, abduction (Art. 161), kidnapping (Art. 162), forced labor (Art. 163), unlawful confinement (Art. 164), and unlawful detention (Art. 165) are considered crimes. I am not aware, however, of any trial by a Sudanese court in such cases during the past years.

It is also to be mentioned that Sudan is for decades a signatory party to both the 1926 Slavery Convention and the Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade and Institutions and Practices similar to Slavery 1956.

Taking into account all the circumstances, I cannot but repeat my conclusions from the report to the U.N. General Assembly in November 1995, reiterated in my latest report released yesterday in Geneva.

The abduction of persons, mainly women and children, belonging to racial, ethnic and religious minorities from Southern Sudan, their subjection to the slave trade, including trafficking and sale of children and women, slavery, servitude, forced labor and similar practices, are taking place with the knowledge of the government of Sudan.

The manifest passivity of the government of Sudan in this regard, after years of reporting and calls upon it by the U.N. organs and international non-government organizations affiliated with the United Nations and the subsequent lack of any measures to protect Sudanese citizens from these practices lead to the conclusion that abductions, slavery and institutions similar to slavery are carried out by persons acting under the authority and with the tacit approval of the government of Sudan. The fact that the abductions take place mostly in a war-affected area is to be considered as a particularly aggravating circumstance in this case.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

(The prepared statement of Dr. Biro appears in the appendix.)

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much, Doctor.

And I would like to now ask Dr. Vigilante if he would present his testimony.

STATEMENT OF KEVIN VIGILANTE, M.D., CLINICAL ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF MEDICINE, BROWN UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Dr. VIGILANTE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman, for having me here and for holding these hearings. They are critically important.

Today, rather than giving extensive testimony, I am going to show a brief video that I took when I was in Sudan approximately 12 months ago.

I am just going to say a few words by way of preface. I went as a representative of the Puebla Institute, now part of Freedom House, to investigate reports of slavery in the forced incarceration of children and other reports that these children were being sent to the battlefield.

My sources were children themselves who had escaped, parents and families of these children, clergy and international NGO's who worked there. And I spoke to members of the Sudanese Government as well.

As I alluded to, I snuck a video camera into the country and in safe houses and basements was able to gather about 6 hours' worth of testimony of which we are only going to see a few minutes here.

And I also ventured out my last day there about 400 kilometers into the desert to see a camp that did hold at one point 228 kids who subsequently have disappeared. We do not know where they went.

By way of that introduction, perhaps we can show the tape and then if I could make a few comments after the tape, and then respond to any questions.

Thank you.

Mr. SMITH. And please do.

And without objection, your full testimony will be made a part of the record.

Dr. VIGILANTE. Of course, one of the invariable rules of the universe is that these things do not come off on the first try.

While we are waiting, maybe I can make a couple of comments.

I think that what I felt I was able to document when I was there is there are really three forms of slavery. One comes out of the tribal tradition, that is exploited by the government. The government in the 1980's armed Arab tribes quite heavily in their battle against the black African tribes, particularly the Dinka, and certainly encouraged them to keep the spoils of war, including children that they took in that conflict. And these children are now enslaved in great numbers by their Arab masters.

The second version of slavery occurs directly at the hands of government agents, the Popular Defense Forces, in particular, who were alluded to previously. These Muja Hadeen or warriors of the Jihad, are poorly paid or not paid at all, and, once again, take children and women as part of their compensation.

(Video.)

Dr. VIGILANTE. I apologize for the quality of the audio there. I know it is very difficult to understand, but the point was that early on there was testimony from a number of children who had been taken from their parents and put in these high-security camps, and one child said that he was slated to go off to battle, and it was only by intervention of a military officer that he did not.

These kids are rounded up in caches, whereby a truck comes into a marketplace and they round up all the black African-appearing children.

And I want to make a comment about this, because Ms. McKinney asked before, what is the role of color in this whole conflict? Because if you talk to leaders of the Sudanese Government, let me tell you, they are very sophisticated. Turabi was educated in Oxford. The Minister of Information, a fellow named Shingeti got a Ph.D. from Boston University a few years ago.

And they really know how to talk to westerners and put the spin on their story. And they will say to you, "Look, we're not racist. Look, I'm black. Look at the color of my skin." And they are saying,

"Why would we be racist against other people of our own country, who are also black?"

But Sudan is a unique racial environment. The Nile, over centuries, has mixed genes from one end of the country to the other. So that you have a gradual gradation of color from light to very dark. And it blends almost imperceptibly. But at the extremes, you can clearly see differences. And after a very short time there, it was very easy for me, as a foreigner, to know who was a Dinka, who was a Shilluk, who was a Nuer, who was from the Arab north, by just looking.

And if I can make those types of perceptual judgments, it is easy for the natives to do, and it did not take me long to realize that there is a whole hierarchy in that country based on race and tribal associations. And that the people of the South, the black Africans, are the people who are victimized by racism and by slavery. And I think people who deny that are not being truthful about their attitudes toward race in the country of Sudan.

I will just close there and be available for questions later.

(The prepared statement of Dr. Vigilante appears in the appendix.)

Mr. SMITH. Dr. Vigilante, thank you very much for your testimony.

Mr. Lado.

STATEMENT OF AUGUSTINE LADO, PRESIDENT, PAX SUDANI

Mr. LADO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Madam Chairman, members on the distinguished panel, my colleague members on the panel, and the audience.

I am really very grateful that finally the issue of slavery in Mauritania and Sudan has received a hearing in this institution.

Three years ago we made an informal visit to a number of Congressmen's offices to cry out about this issue of slavery, we, as Pax Sudani. And I must also say that the Sudanese have always actually been speaking out in various forums, about the fact that slavery exists in their country.

The difficulties that we have faced until very recently is that we simply have not been very successful in getting a receptive ear. This hearing hopefully will generate a momentum for the ongoing abolitionist movement in this country.

Now, to get right to the issue, I have produced my statement and rather than going through the full text, I will simply overview and provide the discussion that we have had so far in context.

I think by the time we leave here, we will not walk out contesting the issue of slavery. It is a very, very clear-cut situation. And as a Sudanese, I would like to say that this system (slavery) has really completely ransacked and devastated families. It has destroyed villages. It has destroyed ethnic groups. It has destroyed nationalities. All in the South Sudan, in the Nuba Mountains, in the Ingessana Hills. We are dispersed throughout the world, you know, largely because of this issue of slavery.

The other point to make is that the connection between slavery, the institution of slavery, the perpetrators of slavery, and the Africans who are being enslaved, has had a very long and extensive

historical antecedent and I have provided some highlights in my report.

All these African groups, whether they be Dinka or Shilluk or Nuer, and so forth, and I come from right south of the country from Kajo-Kaje—we do not know of any of our oral traditions that speak to a culture of slavery. So simply to say that Africans are also involved in slavery as some of the allegations that are coming forth is simply not true. The process of enslaving has always come from the north and continues to hit very, very forcefully and brutally down south, and if not really stamped out, it will destroy the entire continent.

The other point that I also want to make is that the connection between chattel slavery and institutional forms of slavery has to be emphasized. It has to be emphasized because it is at the institutional level that the government becomes wholly responsible and connected. You know, there are acts of sale of human beings. I cannot emphasize it enough. The evidence has already been provided.

But the government, and actually I must say it is successive governments over the years in Sudan have created a context that allow for this system to flourish. And that context is revealed more recently in the declaration of Jihad (or Islamic holy war) against the non-Muslim in the country. But also against Muslims who simply happened to not believe in the faith of the ruling group.

And that is also reflected in the forced conversion of non-Arabs into Arab. And that is also reflected in race. So these three factors, collectively conspire to create an ideology that has sustained slavery over the years.

And I think this is very important because we can only talk about ending slavery if we understand it in its comprehensive context. And my colleagues on the panel have already indicated instances in which African Sudanese are targeted for slavery, and the hierarchy of this slavery process. And the fact of the matter is that, you know, if you are an Arab, a non-black Arab, who is a Muslim, there is simply no question of slavery.

In fact, that is the enslaving group. And as the combination and permutation proceeds, a non-Arab who is a non-Muslim, is clearly the target for the slavery. A Muslim who is black, who happens to live in Africa and believes in indigenous cultures—I mean in languages, is also a target of slavery. And we see that in the Nuba Mountains where the entire region has been sealed off and it is targeted for elimination.

Before I move to the recommendation, I also want to emphasize the connection between slavery and genocide, because I think Lady Cox brought that forth, but I also want to emphasize that.

In terms of specific acts, we know that right from the 1960's in Sudan, there were two clear genocidal incidences. The Juba massacre and there was a massacre in Wau. And in the 1980's, 1987, there was the Diein massacre, in which nearly 2,000 Dinka men, women and children were killed and nearly 7,000 were captured and sold into slavery.

And the Jubaleen massacre, a massacre in which Africans working on Arab farmlands were absolutely forced to work on Sunday, which they, as Christians, regard as their day of rest. And they were subjected to severe torture and massacre.

Now, all those acts of genocide have actually had a consistency over the year in the regions. So when we talk about the current slavery that is going on in Sudan, it is perpetuated by this psychology, this ideology that basically makes one particular group sub-human clearly and therefore a target of enslavement.

Now, the question then is what should be done? I think what should be done is, we have consistently argued that the situation now calls for much more vigorous action on the part of the world community, and most specifically this country, because it clearly has leadership, it clearly has the force, and it could actually have the will. We know that the country, Sudan, has actually been listed on the list of terrorist nations, and it is because of this institution that Congress moved swiftly to pass a resolution to put the country on the list of terrorist nations.

And it is with that kind of force and swiftness that we believe that the issue of slavery should be given attention. It should be given attention because the terrorism that the current regime is involved in externally is also being actually imposed on the people internally with impunity.

And I want to just say one thing about the comprehensive sanctions. There was a response by the Assistant Secretary of State this afternoon, saying how sanctions would hurt the civilian population, how the problem of war, you know, the situation is so complex. I must emphasize that millions of our own people have perished over the years. Thousands more are in conditions of slavery. How much more suffering can the world expect of the population in order to justify imposing comprehensive sanctions?

The other side of the matter too is that if the world remains passive and aloof and distant on the issue of sanctions, we know that the Sudan Government cannot continue to provide the fuel, you know, the wherewithal, the fire power, the economics, to sustain the slavery within the country without external support.

And it is in this context that comprehensive sanctions would really begin to address the issue of the slavery in Sudan more comprehensively.

I will end here and I look forward to answering questions.

(The prepared statement of Mr. Lado appears in the appendix.)

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much, Mr. Lado. Your comments on sanctions I think were very well taken. And I know this particular member supports them. I think that, until the international community gets very serious and begins linking U.N. rights with trade, the prospects for curbing this abusive behavior are very slim indeed. So I think we need to put our money where our mouth is. If it means, as we saw with apartheid, that by braving a short-term economic deprivation we have an opportunity to eradicate overwhelming evil, then I think that is where many of us who are very strongly in favor of human rights and linking human rights with trade come down. There is a short-term pain. There is no doubt about it, for some. So I appreciate your comments.

In looking over the recommendations that you all have made—and, Dr. Biro, I know that based on what I have been reading about what you have been doing—slavery and the abuses have gotten worse since your mandate was established in 1993.

And I wonder if you could tell us, first, what has been the reaction by the international community? I remember my disappointment, when I was in Geneva working with our then Ambassador Armando Valladores on human rights matters, at the seeming indifference. Some in the international community mouthed the words, but when it came down to actually doing something, they preferred endless dialog with the offending nation as opposed to some significant action.

What has been your response when you make your reports vis-a-vis Sudan and atrocities being committed there, the slavery. How does the international community respond to the reports that you make?

Dr. BIRO. You are perfectly right, Mr. Chairman. Since I am dealing with this mandate, the situation is continuously deteriorating, not only with regard to slavery and similar practices, but the overall situation, regarding human rights.

There are so far six reports on the situation, which I have presented to the Commission on Human Rights and to the General Assembly. There have been five resolutions adopted following the debate on these reports; three by the General Assembly and two by the Commission on Human Rights. My conclusions and recommendations were incorporated into these resolutions.

These conclusions and recommendations partly are addressed to the government of Sudan and partly to the international community. My recommendations and the calls upon the government of Sudan by the international community are so far totally ineffective. There is a complete disregard on behalf of the government of Sudan to any international criticism, comment, and recommendation made in order to improve the situation.

A practical step, if I may say so, was undertaken last March when the Commission adopted one of my recommendations regarding the placement of full-time human rights monitors in such locations as would facilitate an improved flow of information.

The General Assembly resolution from November 1995 supported fully the Commission on Human Rights Resolution. Unfortunately nothing happened until this moment. For bureaucratic reasons, for financial reasons, I do not know. I cannot find out. The fact is that in one year we were not able to advance at all in implementing this operation.

I would like to emphasize that this is a modest operation, a small-scale operation. We would place three monitors only in some of the neighboring countries where there are many Sudanese refugees, and there is a continuous flow of Sudanese refugees coming out from Sudan—for the purpose of reporting on what is happening, gathering information, reports, et cetera.

According to my experience, the presence of U.N. experts, employees, dealing with human rights and humanitarian questions in the South regarding other parties to the conflict than the government of Sudan has a beneficial role, a preventive role. For instance, the use of child soldiers was characteristic until 1993–1994 by the SPLA in the South.

Now, after reporting continuously on this phenomena, SPLA leaders signed last year an agreement containing a unilateral undertaking with the Operation Life Line Sudan and UNICEF work-

ing in Nairobi through which undertaking among others they expressed the wish to abide by the provisions of convention on the rights of the child.

As one practical consequence of this unilateral undertaking, UNICEF is getting involved in the family reunification process, of unaccompanied minors in the South; some 800 children reportedly have been reunited during the past few months with their families.

The other scope of this human rights field monitoring operation was to build up for the future the framework of a technical assistance operation program, including human rights training programs, for example, which is needed, and requested by many people in southern Sudan.

So these are only a few aspects which are really practical, and refer to action very much needed, and which I think it would work very efficiently, but so far we are blocked and we cannot start this operation, as I said before, for bureaucratic reasons.

The situation, however, in some aspects, is worsening. According to a recent report, which I received a few weeks before, and includes the results of research done in November/December 1995, in 20 camps for displaced persons in Kordofan area and the Nuba Mountains, a number of 9,034 children are being kept in these camps and are subjected to enforced Islamization.

And this is only one report on one particular area, but there are many other reports from Southern Sudan and the North, indicating similar situations.

I hope that this monitoring activity would bring some practical results. It would be outside the scope of my mandate to go further and to propose in my reports at least sanctions, embargo, et cetera.

I would stay with this monitoring operation and I would like to underline again the efficiency and the need for this operation.

Mr. SMITH. I have some additional questions, but I would like to yield to Dr. Vigilante.

Dr. VIGILANTE. Well, there are a number of recommendations that Freedom House would like to put forward if I could read them into the record.

Mr. SMITH. That would be fine.

Dr. VIGILANTE. We feel the President should ensure that a directive is immediately issued to the Immigration and Naturalization Service acknowledging mounting persecution against Christians and non-Muslims in Sudan as well as other countries, and instructing INS officers to process the claims of escapees from such persecution with priority and diligence.

The INS has shown a general indifference toward Christians fleeing Sudan or seeking asylum because of religious persecution. A Sudanese Catholic, who I will name M for his own safety, has been detained in the United States for the last 3 years while his case is being processed. Mr. M worked with aid workers, missionaries, and particularly with Mr. Mark Genner, who is a translator in Southern Sudan.

When Sudanese authorities executed Mark Genner in 1992, Catholic Bishop Paride Taban advised Mr. M that his life was in danger and should flee Sudan. An INS court has denied Mr. M's request for asylum partly based on his failure to explain the doctrine of transubstantiation. He is currently appealing this decision.

That this Christian should be encountering such difficulties in obtaining asylum in the United States is an outrageous injustice.

Second, U.N. Ambassador Madeleine Albright, apropos of what Dr. Biro was saying, should closely monitor and press for the effective implementation of a potentially important new program in Sudan by the U.N. children's agency, UNICEF. Under international pressure from the publication of the Puebla Report and the Special Rapporteur's findings, Sudan allowed UNICEF to initiate last fall a family reunification program for boys who had been abducted and detained in the cultural cleansing camps for juveniles described in my testimony.

UNICEF has experienced many delays in proceeding with the program and is confining its work to only one camp. The United States should ensure that UNICEF's work in this regard is thorough and expedient and work to expand the project to retrieving and reuniting with their families sold into slavery.

Last, the Administration should ensure that the issue of slavery of the basic type practiced in Sudan today is raised at all future international and U.N. forums where the protection of women, children and minorities is raised.

Last fall, at the U.N. Fourth World Women's Conference held in Beijing, the Administration passed by an important opportunity for the issue of slavery in Sudan to be addressed. Though women are one of the principal victims of the slave trade in issue of discussion or even a key word in the document adopted at the World Conference on Women. In over 120 pages of the Platform for Action, slavery is only referred to as sexual slavery; nothing was mentioned concerning the very real slave trade that takes place in Sudan today.

Thanks.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much.

Just for the record, this subcommittee has jurisdiction over the refugee budgets. Just yesterday we passed a conference report and we worked hard over the last year to ensure that an adequate amount of money was authorized, and we have also worked with the appropriators. It is an essentially straight line from last year. When everything else is going down, we got a modest increase to \$671 million for refugees.

I greatly fear that this Administration, and some in Congress on both sides of the aisle, are looking to close our doors to honest refugees. It does not surprise me one iota because we have found that the Administration has shown an insensitivity to the Sudanese Christians who are being persecuted, but we have found that to be regrettably part and parcel of the way this Administration, and perhaps the previous ones as well, have treated Christians and others who are fleeing religious persecution.

Much of yesterday's bill was filled with important directives and policy statements on refugee policy because this Administration and some Democrats and Republicans want to close our doors.

We have a major challenge facing us on the immigration bill. Some would like to cap refugees at 50,000, which would be an absurdity when so many people are seeking freedom.

So we will work on that, and I thank you for this recommendation.

Dr. VIGILANTE. Thank you for your work.

Mr. SMITH. Congressman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, if you could respond.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you.

Baroness, I have a few questions for you, but first I would like to thank you for the testimony that we have heard here today. I think it is very important for all of the Congress to know the sad situation that is going on, reality that the major media has really ignored for far too long, and we thank you for having the courage to bring it to light here.

Baroness, in your testimony, you had stated that U.N. organizations operate in places like Sudan only with the permission of the host government.

Do you think that the United States and the United Kingdom should seek a change in that policy? And if you could give us some insight into that.

Baroness COX. Thank you very much, I think this is a very important challenge that confronts nations such as our own.

You are probably aware that it is the principles on which major aid organizations such as the United Nations, UNHCR, UNICEF, the International Committee of Red Cross operate, that they can, according to their principles, only go to areas with the permission of a sovereign government. That means when you have sovereign governments that are repressing an ethnic or religious minority, then they do not give those invitations and those people are entirely cut off, not only from aid but also from the advocacy that goes with the aid.

Now, in Sudan, that has two, at least two, very serious consequences. One is that in those areas, for example, in Southern Sudan, where the regime designates certain air strips as no-go areas, and also the Nuba Mountains. The people there are often displaced by the war, often their crops have been burnt, and they are suffering from starvation. And in the places where we go and camp, are literally dying like flies of hunger and disease. You know, people would die in front of our eyes. In those villages, we found people already dead, or the survivors just eating grass to stop the cramps in their stomach from hunger. Many are dying of a treatable disease with no medicines available.

Very often they may be forced off their land, as part of the politics of hunger. And they may be driven for the sake of their children, to government garrisons or to the peace camps in the North in order just to get the means of survival.

Now, that fits with the regime's policy of enforced Islamization and also sometimes enforced Arabization because conditions for receiving the aid which they need to survive include renouncing their Christian names, and their religion and adopting Muslim names, Muslim practices. Also sometimes they are forced to have sexual relationships with the Arab soldiers or Arab owners, which, of course, is part of the ethnic assault on their African identity.

Now, one of the things that concerns me about the policies which we in the West have been working with is that we have no accountability from the point of view of the money which we give toward aid organizations. Thus if we allow aid which we fund from Britain and from the United States to be used by the government it ought

not to be intercepted and used by Arabic and Muslim aid organizations which are tools of the government; otherwise we are actually condoning or conniving with this policy.

We have been in the camps, for example, where we have seen aid which originated from Western donor organizations having been intercepted and abused in this way.

I would like to emphasize the principle of accountability that if we give money, if we give aid in kind, or if NGO's do so, then we should see it right through to the feeding center, we should see it right through to the clinic, and not allow it to be taken and used by other intermediate aid organizations.

So the accountability is crucial and also I would emphasize we should be challenging the principle of no-go areas which lead to starvation and lead to displacement.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. You had mentioned that some of those shipments of humanitarian goods are stopped and diverted.

What are some of the other problems and obstacles that humanitarian aid organizations have encountered in trying to provide relief in Southern Sudan?

Baroness COX. Well, the main problem is this problem of access to the areas. Clearly there are logistical problems in many parts which are created by natural conditions of access in terms of weather during the rainy season, reaching people in need and so on.

But I think those problems could be overcome now. I think the SPLM/A has a very administrative system in areas within the South. If access was allowed to all the areas where the people are in need, where there are air strips, where there are roads, and could reach all in need, it would greatly reduce both the displacement and also the deaths from starvation and treatable disease.

Just one other point. This policy of no-go areas imposed by the regime actually increases the enormous numbers dying of starvation and disease because if you have an area which is an open area, and people from the surrounding areas know that there is aid, medicine, food available there, they will come in order to get what they need to survive, and then it suddenly goes off the accepted list and becomes a no-go area. Many of those people are just stranded. Very often they are too weak to go back to their original land and so they just die where they are.

And so that is another aspect of this no-go area that has got to be challenged by nations such as our own.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Did you see the welcoming committee that you had in front of the Longworth Building this afternoon, chanting your name?

Baroness COX. No.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Do you get those kinds of receptions? Do you know of protests from organized groups against your humanitarian mission in Sudan?

Baroness COX. Well, one of the problems perhaps of going to areas which are denied access by sovereign regimes is you are not the most popular person with the sovereign regime. But on the other hand, you have the great privilege of being with people who are in desperate situations and one of the—if you can call it—the most poignant aspects of our work is when we go to those no-go

areas and people come to you as you arrive and they say, "We're go grateful you've come. We thought the world had forgotten us." And indeed the world had forgotten them. It is one reason why we are very grateful to you for holding this hearing here this afternoon that we can speak about some of those people who are so forgotten and so neglected.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Well, we thank you and we thank all of the panelists who appeared before us for telling the world what we all need to hear and see, even though we want to ignore it and we want to not see it and we want to not hear it. It is there and we have the power to help those people. I hope that we will.

We thank you for all the good work that all of you have done.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Wolf.

Mr. WOLF. I do not have any questions. I want to thank both of you, the two chairmen, Chairwoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, who has been a hero on these issues, and I am pleased that you are involved and Congressman Smith, who I have traveled with to a number of places; to have both of you doing this hearing is very, very impressive. I am more optimistic today than I have been any other time because we have had a hard time getting the Congress to really focus. You have had a good hearing. Both of the panels have been excellent. So I want to thank both of you.

I want to thank the previous panel. I do not know if they are still here. I also want to thank this panel, Mr. Lado, Dr. Vigilante, for taking the time. Dr. Biro, for your courageous work. Baroness Cox, who I have the greatest respect for. All of your good work. CSI, Christian Solidarity International, for your good work for sponsoring this. Freedom House for the good effort because if it were not for your two groups, frankly I do not know that very much would be done.

Last, I want to go on record as saying I am very disappointed in the Clinton administration, big hat, no cattle, talk a lot of activity on this thing, do fundamentally almost nothing. And I am hopeful and prayful that if there is a change in the Administration, I would hope that this Administration will not wait until there is a change, would take some action with regard to this issue. But I want to pledge that if President Dole is elected, one of the first times I am going to ask to meet with him and ask Ileana and Chris Smith to go with me, whereby we talk to Mr. Dole on this issue so that if there is a Dole administration that his State Department will be aggressive on this issue. If there is not a Dole administration and it is Clinton again, then I hope whoever he brings in to this State Department is aggressive on this issue. I think Mr. Lado said it right. How many times do we have to wait, more people dying, more people in prison and more people in slavery. I mean the thought of slavery in Mauritania and Sudan in modern day, it is hard to even get people to believe that because they thought that happened years and years ago.

So I am committed to staying with this issue as long as I can and the fact that we have two new people that are involved I appreciate it very much. And frankly, and I mean this quite seriously, if Dole is elected president, the first meeting that I ask to speak with him is to speak with him on this issue. And I know that Mr. Dole is very, very sensitive. He has been sensitive to the Arme-

nians and in Negorokarakabak. He has been sensitive in the Bosnia thing. He has been sensitive with regard to Cuba. And I know he will be sensitive on this issue.

Again, I thank you very much. I thank the chairman. I thank you.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Congressman Wolf.

Mr. Wolf really has been a leader on issues of human rights, particularly in Sudan and Ethiopia. He was one of the few who actually went there during some of the famines, and he has been a conscience for the Congress. And I do thank him for his work.

I have a question for you, Mr. Lado, on your call to action in one of your specific recommendations.

One of the answers arrived at rather belatedly with regard to Bosnia was that when the two factions—actually three factions—decided they would not get along, the international community imposed partitioning along ethnic lines. Now, some would argue that that is a reward, particularly to the Serbs, for the terrible fruit of their ethnic cleansing, which was a despicable reminder of what the Nazis did. And you are recommending partitioning as a way of providing a safe haven for the Southern Sudanese.

How has that call been received? I was wondering if the other panelists might want to respond to that as well. Is it perhaps the only way of protecting the South from this cultural imperialism in the imposition of the Muslim religion on them?

Mr. LADO. Well, I would say in terms of reception, the regional mediating organization, IGADD, has actually encoded the principle of self-determination for the people of South Sudan, the Nuba Mountains and the Ingessana Hills, as one of the most fundamental bases upon which a long-lasting peace and justice in Sudan can actually be accomplished.

Our call for a partitioning of the country is a way of ensuring a governance mechanism which ensures that future slavery will not take place in that nation. It is motivated by the fact that, as I had indicated in my statement, in my presentation before, slavery has always been the underpinning cause for the wars in Sudan. And it has always dated back to the Arab invasion into the country.

And as I said, the match of this war and imperialism has actually been one way, you know, down south. And so the call really in one respect is self-preservation. First, the dignity of the people who are targeted for slavery is completely jeopardized and second, there is genocide in the very overt and in a covert way, covert in the sense of cultural genocide.

And so, you know, our call is motivated by the fact that slavery existed in historical times, during imperialism and colonialism. It existed in successive Arab regimes, you know. It is spreading in the present regime at an alarming rate, as I indicated in the testimony.

And therefore we believe that a call for a partitioning of the country would actually at least deliver the people of those regions out of bondage.

The international community still needs to be sensitized to this issue.

Mr. SMITH. Would it take a peacekeeping force to establish this buffer zone?

Mr. LADO. Well, I think that first this government, the Congress, would continue to support the regional initiative i.e. the IGADD because the call for self-determination is, as I indicated, included in that (IGADD Declaration of Principles), and that since it is the regional mediating body of Africans, it is a very genuine and noble cause. And we believe that through that process some good may actually come.

However, if as it has been shown by the Sudanese Government in the past that they have been very intransigent (if it is a pariah state) and that they are willing to do anything with impunity, if peace efforts fail through those regional mechanisms, then we had indicated in our earlier recommendation that a peacekeeping body, an international body, would have to get into Sudan to deliver the people from bondage. Just as in the case of Somalia, you know.

Mr. SMITH. Baroness Cox.

Baroness COX. Thank you. Let me just add very quickly to that and support it, but just to say that in my recommendations, I think it would be very helpful if the international community supported the principles of the IGADD initiative, which include the principle of self-determination. And also it would be very helpful if the international community supported the Sudanese democratic opposition groups. And they come together under the umbrella of the NDA and the NDA has already agreed on a program for self-determination to be decided by the peoples of Sudan themselves after a 4-year period.

So I think really it is for the peoples of Sudan to decide that future for themselves and for us to support them in their own democratic programs toward that decision.

Dr. VIGILANTE. I think that the IGADD agreements are really the foundation for progress in terms of self-determination. You know, it is hard to know how long this current regime is viable. It does not have large popular support of the country and in some ways things seem to be crumbling around them and yet, you know, they are durable. And when they are gone, it is hard to know what will follow, whether things will be better or not.

So I am reluctant to blankly advocate partitioning, but I think at least a dialog based around self-determination is the kind of dialog that should go forward.

Mr. SMITH. Dr. Biro.

Dr. BIRO. The support and the call for a peaceful and democratic dialog has been constantly one of my recommendations, and I was calling also for support from the international community for this process. But on the other hand I fully agree with Baroness Cox.

Mr. SMITH. What are the estimates on the number of children who are in these camps being brainwashed? How long do they normally stay in a camp? Nine thousand was one estimate that I think was offered earlier. And when UNICEF was able to retrieve some of these children, how long had those kids been in? I mean did they get some long-term internees, or is it something that happens overnight?

Dr. BIRO. It is very difficult to know because the nature of those camps differs from case to case. There is, for instance, one camp for children in Soba, which is not far from Khartoum which seems to be like a transition camp mainly for children who are rounded

up from the streets of Khartoum—some kids are street kids, but some of these children are living with their families. They are taken first to this camp in Soba and they may be there for a number of weeks, and then some of them are sent to other camps in a remote part of the country, like the one I visited in Abu Dhom, 100 miles north of Khartoum.

Dr. VIGILANTE. And, you know, there are various estimates of how many camps there are, from orders of magnitude of scores of camps to hundreds of camps. And they vary in different sizes. And they come in and go out of existence in a fairly fluid way. The particular one that I went to was empty at the moment. But clear, there were guards there, so they had plans for it for the future.

But two kids that I know that were in a camp, when retrieved by their mother through very persistent activity, they were wearing the damaria, which is the traditional garb of the PDF. They had numbers on them. And one child's number was 4,000 something, something, something.

So, you know, does that indicate that there were 4,000 kids through that one camp? It is hard to know, but conservative estimates are many tens of thousands of children are involved.

Mr. SMITH. Dr. Biro.

Dr. BIRO. Regarding the number, it is difficult indeed to estimate the total number of children in these camps, but it is not impossible. My estimate is that the number is higher than 10,000.

Mr. SMITH. Than 10,000?

Dr. BIRO. Than 10,000. It is higher.

Mr. SMITH. No, I said tens of thousands. Many tens of thousands.

Dr. BIRO. It is higher than 10,000. This is a very careful estimate.

Mr. SMITH. Boys and girls?

Dr. BIRO. I am sorry?

Mr. SMITH. Boys and girls?

Dr. BIRO. There are separate camps for boys and separate for girls.

Mr. SMITH. Mostly boys though?

Dr. BIRO. Mainly boys. Regarding the period spent by a child in a camp, the official response from the government of Sudan, which I received when I asked this question, was 1 year: "These children are kept 1 year and are given vocational training," it was stated. But no response regarding what happens after. Persistent reports indicate that children between the ages of 10 and 15 are sent to the battlefield after a short training period. Whereas I was told by sources from the South, young men in the Sudanese army are simply cannon fodder because they are virtually untrained.

So the existence of some of these camps for children is acknowledged, or was acknowledged before by the government, but there is a practice of closing a few camps when myself or human rights groups are reporting on specific camps, found out in some cases that some camps were closed down, but other camps are opened in other places. This is what I know.

Mr. SMITH. Do we have any evidence that torture is used? In the video, we saw kids being hit with what looked like some kind of whip.

Dr. BIRO. I would say rather harsh punishment. Solitary confinement, punishments as used in the military—lashing, for instance—is routinely practiced.

Mr. SMITH. Do any kids die?

Dr. VIGILANTE. I have reports of kids dying in camps, yes. Yes, I do have reports of two children dying in a camp in Dordip. And the treatment is apparently extremely harsh. I talked to a kid and his father, and beatings were a regular occurrence. Malnourished. Cold. Not very much sleep at night.

Plus going under the very real psychological trauma of being stripped of your name and given a new identity, cultural identity. And then disappearing.

Mr. SMITH. But does it last? I mean here are kids that have been ripped away from their parents.

Dr. VIGILANTE. Right.

Mr. SMITH. They may have a strong faith in Christ, for example. Do they act as if they are cooperating inwardly or is the brainwashing so complete that they really do become another person?

Dr. BIRO. It is a very strong ideological indoctrination, religious teaching, together with military training.

Mr. SMITH. Do they turn their kids against their parents?

Dr. VIGILANTE. Well, you know, one thing you have to realize. This is a very primitive place where things are not done with great uniformity or efficiency. So you may find one environment that is run a certain way and another one that is very different, depending on who happens to be there.

I think some of the children that I interviewed who came back, who got out, I would say they kind of went along and survived, just went along to get along, but reverted to their normal selves when they got back. But some of the kids were not so fortunate as to get out.

Mr. SMITH. Baroness Cox.

Baroness COX. Just one variation on the theme of maltreatment of children. Not so much the children taken to the camps, but children put into chattel slavery. Our estimate of women and children from Southern Sudan in chattel slavery is in tens of thousands. We have had evidence from some of the children who have been taken and enslaved in that way, and they were used for a variety of purposes. It is slave labor. They are often maltreated. They are often given hardly enough to survive on in terms of food and nourishment. They are beaten. They may be used for domestic labor, especially girls, but they are also, even from the age of nine upwards, used as concubines. The boys are often used to look after cattle or to work in pretty harsh conditions in agricultural labor, or slave work.

Many of these again are also rooted out from their basic Christian tradition and background. They lose their Christian names and are given Muslim names, and forced to adopt Muslim practices. We have quite a few case studies in the testimony which we have left with you which described the suffering of some of these children who have managed to escape.

So I think there are two variations on the theme of maltreatment of children. Those who are used in the camps, may be used for military purposes and to fight against their own people in the South.

Those are obviously boys. And both boys and girls are used as chattel slaves.

Mr. SMITH. Has the Khartoum Government acceded to the Convention on the Rights of the Child?

Dr. VIGILANTE. They signed it, yes.

Baroness COX. Oh, yes.

Mr. SMITH. How then is that enforced? I mean here it seems—

Dr. VIGILANTE. Total hypocrisy. It is total hypocrisy. I mean, you know, there are different kinds of camps there. You know, when I went, and I pressed this issue with the Minister of Information there—and he said, “Yes, well, of course we have camps for displaced people, and they are out in the outskirts of Khartoum. And you can go visit them.” And you can go visit those camps. There are hundreds of thousands of people in the outskirts of Khartoum living in the most absolute squalor that you can imagine. And you can get into those camps. That is where the NGO’s work.

But these other camps that we are referencing right now are high-security camps in remote areas that you cannot get to except under the most extraordinary circumstances, and I think there was a presumption of guilt that there is something to hide. And they will not admit to the existence of—they would not admit it to me when I pressed the Minister of Information about these camps. He said, “No, no, no, no, no. We don’t have those kinds. We have some vocational training schools where we try to get kids,” but it does not jive with the evidence.

Mr. SMITH. Yes.

Mr. LADO. Yes, I mean to include one suggestion, a recommendation for the record, and that is that when I went through the research on this whole issue of anti-slavery movement, one of the foremost people in the movement, Greenidge, had indicated back in 1954 that in the whole campaign against slavery, he realized (and the movement realized), that the hardest area to crack of the world and one yet to convince is the Arab world.

There has been very critical evidence that the people, our people, some of them were actually sold into slavery in Libya, Saudi Arabia and other parts of the Arab world. And so I think that one of the recommendations would be for the international community to fully investigate each allegation of slavery in the Arab world and bring an action in the United Nations.

Because, you know, as much as in this country, for instance, the one way to combat drugs and cocaine has always been to go to the supplier, the source, and to Latin America or whoever is supplying, and try to cut it off. And we believe that once that evidence is found in the Arab world, that has been providing the funding and the wherewithal to sustain this issue of slavery, and indeed the international community takes action, that really we will not be speaking here today, and we probably will not be speaking about slavery in Africa in the future.

Mr. SMITH. Would you support or think it would be advisable if Justice Goldstone’s mandate were expanded to include right now Rwanda and Bosnia? War crimes are his focus. Would this be an appropriate area for a tribunal investigation?

Mr. LADO. Precisely.

Mr. SMITH. You would think that would be a—

Dr. VIGILANTE. Concur.

Dr. BIRO. As far as I am aware, there is an open-ended working group to be set up soon in the U.N. system trying to elaborate a draft proposal regarding the creation of a permanent court, a permanent international court of justice regarding crimes against humanity.

Mr. LADO. I think the tribunal would be particularly important in the case of Sudan because of the genocidal side, you know, of the slavery that, as I indicated, it has to do not just with acts, individual cases of sale of people, but it has had to do with wiping out an entire village, entire community, and ethnic groups. And so individuals who have been foremost connected with such acts of genocide need to be brought to trial.

Mr. SMITH. Is there anything else you would like to add? I am pretty much out of questions.

Baroness COX. I would like to make one general point, if I might. I think that maybe countries such as your own and my own have had certain reservations about criticizing the regime of Khartoum because we are afraid of being labeled anti-Islamic. I think we need to blow that smoke screen right away. The regime in Khartoum is persecuting Muslims in its own land. For example, it has announced a jihad against the peoples of the Nuba Mountains who are Christian, Muslim and Animist. So it has announced a jihad to some extent against its own people and is carrying out this attempt at genocide of people in the Nuba Mountains.

We were also working earlier this year with the Beja people who come from Northern Sudan. They are Muslim people. They are exceedingly intense in their criticisms and in their hatred of the present fundamentalist Islamic regime in Khartoum.

So I think we in the West who may be worried about being criticized for being anti-Islamic need to make these distinctions between a fundamentalist Islamic regime, which is using that as an ideology to perpetrate its political policies and its policies of genocide and barbarities which we documented and not be afraid of that smoke screen that is put up by them as saying that we are actually anti-Islamic. It has nothing to do with that. It is a straightforward violation of human rights by a regime which is condemned from the very systematic and consistent evidence you have heard this afternoon.

Mr. LADO. I just wanted to add one thing. I guess in the manner of a pitch kind of thing for the members of the audience.

And that is that there is an emerging abolitionist movement in this country and abroad, you know, in Europe and even in Canada, represented by various members on the panels.

Various groups are very actively and vigorously working on this issue of slavery, you know, in Sudan and in Mauritania. Pax Sudani, we have been focused on the issue of slavery. We recently formed a coalition with Mauritania, which is now CASMAS. The CSI has also been very foremost. And so I believe that the members of the public would actually help us better in fighting this issue by joining hands and contacting us.

I have the address of Pax Sudani and contacts and so forth on the statement, but I would also be happy to take addresses and so forth.

And the other, in connection with that, we plan to hold meetings and symposia and rallies to try to sensitize the various communities in this country at the grass root level and all I am asking at this point is to have continued relationships with individual members in this organization so that, if for instance, we would like to invite a member for a panel speaker, and so forth, that at least we would have favorable attention.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you. And, Doctor, you might want to give your number to the cameras and maybe they will carry it. Your phone number. Give your phone number.

Mr. LADO. OK. The phone number is Area Code (216) 687-4731. That is basically my office number at Cleveland, but I will use it for this whole effort.

Mr. SMITH. I would like to thank this panel for your tremendous testimony. It is compelling. We will make this available to the widest number of members, some who have been here and many others who are not. Most importantly, it energizes our organization to hopefully not just redouble but quadruple our efforts on behalf of those who are suffering the unspeakable cruelty of slavery and other human rights abuses.

It also gives additional fire power to our organization when it comes to refugees. I, again, continue to be appalled at the Administration's view that we just ought to close the doors and deny these genuine refugees their ability to find safe haven here. So that is something that we now have additional ammunition for.

Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights, John Shattuck, will soon be before our Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights to speak on the Country Reports on Human Rights Practices. It will be within about 2 weeks or so. This gives us additional information. His representatives are here and I hope he comes prepared to talk about Mauritania and Sudan at great length, because he will be quizzed at great length about those issues.

And the bottom line, as Mr. Wolf said, is that regardless of who wins this presidency, if we are still here, Mr. Wolf and I and others will continue to raise this issue in Congress to the best of our abilities. I have traveled with CSI. I can tell you that they do a marvelous job. I have been to Romania and to China with CSI in the past so it is good to have you here testifying.

And I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for your great testimony. We are going to act on it.

Thank you.

Baroness COX. Thank you.

Dr. VIGILANTE. Thank you.

Mr. SMITH. This hearing is adjourned.

(Whereupon, at 6:17 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned, to reconvene subject to the call of the chair.)

Opening Statement, Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Chair
Subcommittee on Africa
Committee on International Relations
Hearing on Slavery in Mauritania and Sudan
March 13, 1996

Thank you, Chris. I am glad our two subcommittees have been able to work together to bring public attention to the persistent reports that slavery continues to exist in Mauritania and Sudan.

"Slavery"! What a shocking topic for a Congressional hearing in the year 1996!

We think about slavery as something that we read about in history class. Something that existed back in distant past -- something that belongs to a different era. The topic is one that you think of as a subject for a historians' society meeting, rather than a human rights issue of the 1990s.

And yet, we are told that slavery still exists and that human beings are still being bought and sold in Sudan and Mauritania.

If slavery exists in these countries, then we must do everything in our power to bring it to an end. There can be no tolerance for slavery anywhere in the world.

The United Nations reported over a year ago that there is information that shows a massive increase in the number of cases of slavery, forced servitude, slave trading and forced labor in Sudan.

If there is slavery in Sudan, then there ought to be international action -- effective international action -- to impose severe and universal sanctions against Sudan.

We should impose a broad range of sanctions against Sudan or against any other country that tolerates slavery or that engages in slave trading.

With regard to Mauritania, the State Department's human rights report seems to have changed dramatically from last year. For instance, last year's human rights report on Mauritania reported that with regard to the camps for Malian refugees in Mauritania, quote "informed estimates are that 10 percent of the 80,000 refugees in camps are slaves."

This year's report says nothing whatsoever about those slaves -- as if they simply disappeared.

Similarly, the Department's report states that quote "tens of thousands of persons whose ancestors were slaves still occupy positions of servitude" unquote. I do not understand the State Department's distinction between being a slave and occupying a position of servitude.

To say, as this year's human rights report does, that these people remain in servitude because of their lack of knowledge about their own status is to confirm that they are still slaves and are treated as slaves by their masters.

This is an important issue and one that deserves Congressional action.

I look forward to hearing from the Clinton Administration and from the distinguished panel of experts that have been invited to share their expertise with us.

SLAVERY IN MAURITANIA AND SUDAN

STATEMENT BY

WILLIAM H. TWADDELL,
DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR AFRICAN AFFAIRS

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS & HUMAN RIGHTS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA

MARCH 13, 1996

Mr. Chairman and Madam Chairman, I am here today to discuss with you the extent of our knowledge about a question of great concern to all who are interested in freedom and human dignity: the question of slavery today in Mauritania and Sudan. Our current views on this issue were submitted to the Congress last week in our Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1995. The following is a more expanded review of the situation in these two countries.

Mauritania

Slavery at the Time of Independence, 1960

Slavery existed for centuries in Mauritania and was a common practice throughout North and West Africa, including nomadic desert tribesmen and agricultural and herding families living north, south and east of the Senegal River. When Mauritania became independent in 1960, it proclaimed a constitution which stated that "men are born free and equal before the law."

At the time of independence, Mauritania was estimated to have 1.5 to 1.8 million inhabitants. It was thought to consist of one-third ethnic Maures, one-third mixed Maure-black or racially black people most of whom were legally slaves or descendants of slaves, and one-third members of four black ethnic groups--Halpulaar, Soninke, Wolof and Bambara. While there have never been genuinely reliable statistics on Mauritania, what is more important than the numbers is the fact that it has never been disputed that slavery was still practiced in Mauritania at the time of independence. Although Mauritania became a French colony in 1920, French authorities had never supplanted traditional legal codes which permitted slavery. Some writers have spoken of "degrees" of slavery. Some slaves lived with their masters and were totally subject to their will. Others, sometimes called "part-slaves" held a status somewhat like that of serfs in Europe in the Middle Ages, living in their own dwellings, often in villages, but providing herding or tilling work to a master. There were also former slaves who had obtained their freedom in various ways, but who held only a very low social status and were often the victims of discrimination.

In 1961, upon its admission to the United Nations, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania subscribed to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. During the early years of independence, however, the government of Mauritania gave priority to building the basic infrastructure of the new state, including its government and economy, rather than systematic measures aimed at abolishing the practice of slavery.

In 1980, after a series of protests by slaves and ex-slaves in several cities, Chief of State Haidallah began a campaign to rid the country of slavery entirely. This campaign included the government decree of July 5, 1980, which declared the emancipation of slaves.

Thus, from a formal point of view, there is no question that citizens of Mauritania are now both constitutionally and legally free. What is at question today is whether these constitutional and legal guaranties have been fully implemented throughout Mauritanian society.

This is a harder question to answer unequivocally, but it is one to which the United States has devoted considerable attention over the last 16 years. In our search for evidence on this question, we have noted the following measures undertaken by the Mauritanian government:

--government ordinances and regulations have been promulgated calling for the enforcement of the decree of 1980.

--the government radio has been used to broadcast news of the emancipation of the slaves, and to acquaint former slaves with their rights.

--beginning in the early 1980s, and continuing into the 1990s, there were a number of cases in which judges who failed to apply the new law were sanctioned or removed from the bench.

--a non-governmental organization called El Hor ("The Free Man"), formed in 1978 by former slaves, has been allowed to function throughout this time, working to publicize liberation, and to assist former slaves in their problems in dealing with their former masters. The creation of two additional organizations in 1995 ("SOS-Esclaves" and "The National Committee for the Struggle Against the Vestiges of Slavery in Mauritania") demonstrates both that the social consequences of centuries of slavery continue to be felt, but also shows that the government is not posing obstacles to actions seeking to remedy this deplorable heritage.

--a law adopted in 1983 specifically allows former slaves to own land or other real property.

--beginning in 1984, former slaves have been appointed to high positions in the Mauritanian government, including ministerial positions.

--outside organizations have been invited to Mauritania, or allowed to come at their own request, to investigate the question of slavery. These include:

--The U.N. Economic and Social Council's Subcommission on Discriminatory Measures and the Protection of Minorities (1982, 1984, 1986).

--The Human Rights Group of Edinburgh, Scotland (1980).

--Amnesty International (1987)

--The International Commission of Jurists (1988)

--The Chairman of the African Jurists Association (1988)

--The International Labor Organization (1992)

--A French human rights group, Agir Ensemble Pour les Droits de l'Homme (1994)

--The International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)(1994)

--The Anti-Slavery Society (1984)

- Anti-Slavery International (1992)
- Freedom House (1995)
- The Interafrican Union for Human Rights (1995)
- The American Friends Service Committee (1996)

Persistence of Slavery

Despite the apparent willingness of the Mauritanian authorities to allow interested organizations and individuals to come to Mauritania to investigate the question of slavery, and despite a body of evidence which indicates that the government has taken measures to eradicate the practice and its social consequences, we continue to hear reports that slavery exists--not merely the vestiges of slavery, but slavery itself.

Journalists and other investigators have reported that sales of slaves continue.

Some organizations have reported that not all Mauritians are aware that slavery has been abolished.

The government has been accused by some of being too passive in its efforts to educate the people concerning their rights and legal status, and that it has been lax in enforcing its own laws.

American Embassy Investigations

Our Human Rights report for 1995 states "such practices as coercive slavery and commerce in slaves appear to have virtually disappeared." And: "Reports of involuntary servitude are rare and unconfirmed."

The American Embassy in Nouakchott devotes a significant proportion of its small staff's time to following the question of slavery.

We have worked with American and international organizations interested in this question, and welcome opportunities to consult with them and to share information. It is our hope that as the country continues to progress, and in particular as it develops and improves its economy, increased prosperity, literacy, and education will create the conditions under which the last vestiges of slavery will truly become only a historical memory. The fact that cases relating to slavery continue to be brought before the courts indicates that not all former masters have accepted the law of the land. We will continue to urge the government of Mauritania to exert additional effort and resources to programs designed to educate its citizens about their rights conferred by their own laws. As for our own position, wherever evidence of the continuing practice of slavery surfaces, we strongly condemn the practice.

Sudan

Both slave raiding and slavery have deep malignant roots in Sudan. Southern Sudan began to be seriously impacted by such practices following the 1821 imposition of Turkish/Egyptian rule in the north. Cairo formally ended state participation in the slave trade in 1854; and in 1860, under European pressure, Egypt also prohibited the slave trade. However, private armies of slave traders continued to despoil the south. Organized slave trading came to an end in the late 19th century; and in 1924, the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium formally abolished domestic slavery.

The institution of slavery persisted in some areas, however, despite this 1924 ban. The Baggara Arabs in southern Kordofan continued yearly raids on the Dinka, some of whom they seized as slaves. Despite being outlawed, such practices persisted in large measure because northerners continued to view southerners as inferiors; and northerners possessed the arms to impose their dominance. Africa Watch reported in 1990 that kidnapping, hostage-taking, and other Arab militia activities in the south approached the reemergence of slavery.

The 17-year civil war in Sudan has produced widespread human suffering, including more than 1.5 million people dead, 3 million displaced within Sudan, and about 600,000 refugees, most in neighboring countries. There is also a large refugee population within Sudan from Ethiopia and Eritrea.

In addition to the calamity directly caused by the war, there has been a continuing, widespread pattern of abuse of fundamental human rights, including the practice of slavery. Since 1991, the human rights situation in Sudan has been of sufficient concern to require the attention of the UN Human Rights Commission (UNHRC). In 1992, the UNHRC mandated the appointment of an independent expert to report on human rights in Sudan. The United States strongly backed this initiative from its inception and continues to support the work of the Special Rapporteur, Gaspar Biro, who is testifying before this panel today.

There is a difference in the scope and magnitude of human rights abuses committed by the Government of Sudan (GOS) versus that of opposition factions also engaging in such abuses. With regard to slavery-like practices, all sides involved in fighting the war practiced forced conscription (or impressment) into their military forces, but it is GOS forces and their allies that stand accused of engaging in the practice of slavery.

What the United States Is Doing:

In 1993, 1994, and 1995, the United States introduced and supported resolutions of the UN General Assembly criticizing the human rights practices of the GOS and southern opposition factions, each resolution using increasingly harsh terms. The United States has also taken the lead regarding consideration of such abuses by the UN Human Rights Commission (UNHRC), which adopted resolutions on the human rights situation in Sudan in 1994 and 1995. The 1995 resolution included specific provisions on slavery and recorded that "the phenomena of slavery and practices associated with slavery continue to exist in Sudan." The resolution also cited "the passivity or collusion of the Government in the face of activities, especially affecting displaced families in the south, that include the sale and trafficking of children, their abduction and forced internment at undisclosed locations, ideological indoctrination or cruel, inhuman and degrading punishments."

The United States will again exercise this leadership role starting next week at the 1996 UN Human Rights Commission session in Geneva. On the issue of slavery, the United States will introduce a resolution on the human rights situation in Sudan that will include a provision on slavery based on the most recent findings of the Special Rapporteur. The provision will again urge the Government of Sudan to investigate reports of such practices without delay and to take appropriate measures to halt such abuses.

The Government of Sudan has not taken effective measures in response to reported incidents of slavery and related practices. Its failure to investigate such matters has led some to the inference that the government tacitly allows such practices. The United States looks forward to the 1996 Report of the Special Rapporteur to the UNHRC on this issue, which is expected at any time.

The United States has recently used other avenues to voice its concerns regarding slavery in Sudan. In a speech on November 28, 1995 to the UNGA Third Committee, the U.S. Permanent Representative Madeleine Albright stated as follows:

The Government of Sudan remains an egregious violator of internationally recognized human rights. Over the past year, we have seen increasing reports of slavery and forced labor of women and children belonging to racial, ethnic, and religious minorities. We have information that atrocities against indigenous peoples have intensified. And we hear nothing of investigations.

The 1995 country report on Sudan, released March 6, also contains a section on slavery:

Although the law prohibits forced or compulsory labor, slavery persists. According to the report by the U.N. Special Rapporteur, reports and information from a variety of sources after February 1994 indicate that the number of cases of slavery, servitude, slave trade, and forced labor have increased alarmingly. The taking of slaves, particularly in war zones, and their export to parts of central and northern Sudan continued. There also continued to be credible, but unconfirmed reports that women and children were sold and sent abroad to work as domestics, agricultural laborers, or sometimes concubines. In some instances, local authorities took action to stop instances of slavery, in other cases the authorities did nothing to stop the practice.

Both the Government and rebel factions continued to forcibly conscript young men and boys into the military or rebel militias. For example, in February a group of national service trainees were unexpectedly taken to Khartoum and flown to Juba, where they were expected to serve in combat. Young men and boys faced significant hardship and abuse once conscripted for military service. The SPLA reportedly held thousands of children in camps against their will as a reservoir of recruits (see Sections 1.g. and 5). The rebel factions continued to force southern men to work as laborers or porters or forcibly conscripted them into their fighting forces.

The Special Rapporteur received testimony on regular abductions which took place in Gogrial during joint incursions by the army, the PDF, and the armed militias. In addition, during April and May of 1995 it is reported that a train proceeding from Babanusa to Wau was used to transport civilians abducted during raids in the area carried out by government forces. According to testimony, PDF troops took thousands of cattle and abducted some 500 women and 150 children. (p. 23)

The United States recently decided to suspend its diplomatic presence in Sudan for reasons related to the security of its diplomatic staff. The U.S. Ambassador to Sudan is now resident in Nairobi, with a small support staff. While the Ambassador and other U.S. diplomats will travel into Sudan, the ability of the United States to independently monitor or investigate human rights abuses within Sudan will be significantly reduced. For this reason, the United States will rely even more heavily on the reports of the Special Rapporteur.

The United States will continue its efforts, through international fora and direct channels, to urge the government of Sudan to take the reports of slavery seriously, investigate such reports of such practices on a timely basis, and put a halt to any and all such activities in areas subject to its jurisdiction.

STATEMENT OF
MR. SAMUEL COTTON, MSW, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE
COALITION AGAINST SLAVERY IN MAURITANIA AND SUDAN

BEFORE

THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS AND HUMAN
RIGHTS AND THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA

MARCH 13, 1996

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

I am Samuel Cotton, a Ph.D. candidate in Social Policy at Columbia University, and the Executive Director of The Coalition Against Slavery in Mauritania and Sudan. CASMAS and I are grateful for this opportunity to testify before the Subcommittee about the buying, selling and breeding of black Africans in the Islamic Republic of Mauritania by Arab Moors (Beydanes).

Between December 23, 1995 and January 17, 1996, I conducted ethnographic research in Senegal and Mauritania on the practice of slavery, utilizing camera, audio, and video recording devices. Interviews of black Mauritians in the refugee camps of N'Dioum, Buki-Diawe, Wourossogui, and Horkadiere, provided testimony which supported the charge that slavery is still a way of life in Mauritania and has simply shifted from an overt to a covert practice.

Mauritanian refugees living in Dakar, Senegal, who maintain contact with black Mauritians who travel frequently between Mauritania and Senegal, also report that the practice remains massive and rampant. Recorded interviews in Ouagou Niayes Two, a section of Dakar, with Mr. Omar Ba and Mr. Bocar Ba are part of this testimony.

In addition, Garba Diallo, a Mauritanian scholar at The International People's College in Denmark, conducted research which indicated that slaves are brought across the Senegal River from Mauritania to Senegal. His research was corroborated by my findings in Senegal.

In a section of Dakar, called Ouagou Niayes Two, interviews indicated that there were slaves at the home of a Mauritanian Moor. The house was located, and in the white Moor's absence, one of the blacks were interviewed. The following indicators were present: living in a house owned by a white Moor, native of Mauritania, isolated and not permitted to interact with the surrounding black community, working for no wages, and Arab in culture. These indicators are used by researchers to operationalize slavery in Mauritania, and are the product of cumulative research by human rights organizations. The person interviewed met all of these criteria. In addition, anecdotal data gathered from interviews with Africans in Senegal indicate that Moors traveling with their slaves to Senegal and using them as cheap labor in their businesses and homes is common.

I arrived in Mauritania, on January 2, 1996 and departed January 12, 1996. I conducted interviews with the leaders of two anti-slavery organizations: Messaoud Ould Boulkheir, president of El Hor, and Boubacar Messaoud, president of S.O.S. Slave. Both organizations are highly respected by both Negro Africans and Haratines and are at the forefront of the struggle to rid Mauritania of slavery. El Hor and S.O.S. Slave are not recognized by the government of Mauritania because a coalition is forming between these two organizations and Negro African political organizations. This coalition represents a convergence of political thought between Haratines and Negro Africans who have been historically inimical toward each other. Harmony between Negro Africans, free slaves, and slaves would result in 70 to 80 percent of the population, which is African, becoming unified on the issue of slavery against an approximately 20 percent ruling Arab elite.

Both leaders stated that slaves are kept in bondage by a combination of physical restraint, psychological domination, religious manipulation, and the lack of government interest in creating programs that would enable slaves to make the transition to freedom. Boubacar Messaoud added that "slavery is massive in Mauritania, especially in the countryside and that there is a traffic in slaves between Mauritania and the Arab Emirate States."

To protest the practice of slavery, anti-slavery organizations are publishing the cases of runaway slaves in newspapers now that the press has been granted more freedom. This might help the committee to appreciate that slavery and abductions of runaway slaves and their children are common occurrences in Mauritania. And in many of these cases, government authorities play a part.

One case, concerns a Fatimetou Mint Rabi Ould Ely, a 15 year old daughter of a former black slave. Her mother's name was Delyla Mint Mohamed Mbarek; Delyla died in 1980. Fatimetou was living with her uncle until February 1995 when the authorities came and picked her up by force. The Governor of Guidimagha, Yahya Ould Sidi Moustaph, sent his assistant Mohamed Ould El Gouth who is in charge of Economic Affairs. Mohamed came to the village of N'Doumely, with a military escort, presented papers to her uncle and told him that he was sent by the Governor to pick up Fatimetou Mint Rabi Ould Ely. Mohamed then took Fatimetou away.

The family of Fatimetou pressed charges to get her back since slavery is outlawed. The uncle, after fighting through a quite a bit of government red tape, learned that Fatimetou had been sold to Abdel Wehab Ould Ahmed Jiddou who had brought Fatimetou from one of his uncles. When Abdel was questioned, he refused to tell the authorities what he did with Fatimetou. Consequently, Fatimetou has disappeared into slavery. It is important to remember that Fatimetou was a Haratine, or free slave. This statement has not yet addressed the population of slaves (abid) who are the chattel property of Arab Berbers.

Haratines and runaway slaves state that the government of Mauritania does not penalize slavers, nor has it created any concrete programs aimed at ending the practice of slavery. And for these reasons the Arab population carries on the business of slavery as they have for centuries.

The difference is that today, the buying and selling of slaves takes place in the houses of Moors and are private arrangements between Arab families. Open slave markets are clearly a thing of the past.

"Marriages" are arranged and a strong black male is placed with a strong black female, and the Arab families arranging this "marriage" divide up the children that are born. Black women are bred many times by different slave men, and the children become the property of the master. When asked in an interview why her master holds her children, the slave woman Aichanna Mint Abeid Boili stated, "because my belly belongs to my master."

I interviewed four runaway slaves and one freed slave: one male and four females. All of the slaves interviewed cite the names of their masters and where the masters reside. In addition, all the slaves interviewed have family members who remain in bondage. The people I spoke to, both slave and free, can be contacted through the anti-slavery organizations of El Hor, or S.O.S. Slave based in Nouakchott.

Brahim Ould Maboune:	Runaway - Family in bondage.
M'Barka Mint Bilal:	Runaway - Family and two children still in bondage.
Jebada Mint Maouloud:	Runaway - Family and a child still in bondage.
Shaba Mint Bilal:	Free - Her hands were tortured, and as a result, she is worthless to her master. Her mother is still in bondage.
Aichanna Mint Abeid Boilil:	Runaway - Family and five children still in bondage.

It is important that the United States' State Department listen to the people in bondage and not the oppressive government of Mauritania. The shift in the language of the State Department from stating that slavery exists, to stating that slavery is over and only the vestiges of slavery remain is disturbing. Then there are the attacks in the press on the Mauritanian refugee Mohamed Athie by the United States' Ambassador Dorothy Sampas in an effort to improve the image of the Mauritanian government. A government practicing a system of apartheid and guilty, as recently as 1991, of the murder of 1500 of its black citizens, and the ethnic cleansing of approximately 100,000 peaceful black citizens. These actions raise both ethical and moral questions for the United States.

If slavery is over in Mauritania, when did this great event occur-- who observed the freeing of over 90,000 people? How, and with what methods, were the slaves informed that they are physically and spiritually free? Where are the interviews that indicate slaves are remaining in bondage only for economical reasons? What provisions for their physical needs were made--food, clothing, and shelter? How were they protected from their masters recapturing them and returning them to slavery? What governmental or international organization monitored and evaluated the success of what would have to be a stupendous undertaking?

Why didn't the Mauritanian government allow the political parties of the Negro Africans and the anti-slavery organizations of the Haratines monitor this major event since slavery is at the top of their agenda.

There aren't any valid answers to these questions, because no empirical data, nor any studies conducted by experienced investigators, such as the London based Anti-Slavery Society, exists which support the statements of the State Department or Ambassador Dorothy Sampas.

The United States was once a slaving nation and participated in the emancipation of millions of Africans. America has historical experience in this area and clearly recognized the need for concrete measures when it created the Freedman's Bureau of 1865. Does the State Department really believe that a system of slavery that began before the American slave trade and has continued to this very day, will not require concrete and measurable interventions.

It is important for me as an African American, and as a citizen of the world, that my government does not continue to wink at this atrocity. I and the oppressed and enslaved people of Mauritania hope, that the appearance of a break in relations between Iraqi Ba'athists and the Mauritanian government, is not the price that Mauritania has paid the United States. The price to look the other way while the Mauritanian government continues to permit its citizens to retain their cultural institution of enslaving black Africans.

STATEMENT OF CHARLES JACOBS, ED.D., RESEARCH DIRECTOR
AMERICAN ANTI-SLAVERY GROUP,
SOMERVILLE, MASS.

BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA

AND

THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 13, 1996

Madame Chairwomen and Mr. Chairman;

I am Charles Jacobs, Research Director of the American Anti-Slavery Group, an organization of Africans and Americans -- black, white, Christian, Muslim and Jewish -- who have for three years endeavored to place the issue of the present-day traffic in black slaves on America's national agenda. It is a great privilege to have the opportunity to come before you today on behalf of the modern day slaves of Mauritania and Sudan.

Your decision to hold hearings on this matter is a source of hope to us and to those in bondage, some of whom I promise, even now, are hearing of our discussions today. Our hope is that these investigations translate speedily into forceful, pragmatic steps to come to the aid of those whose lives are not their own, who awake each day as the owned property of another, and whose cries for help have gone unheard.

Though you are constantly, and properly beseeched by persons and groups in danger and in need, we ask that you give special consideration to a class of people most Americans thought had long ago vanished: black chattel slaves.

The American people prides itself on its concern for human rights. We have spent blood and treasure both -- to comfort, aid and protect victims of cruel abuses of power.

Moreover, America is a nation which risked its very existence over the issue of one man owning another.

And so it was not surprising that some cases of human bondage have prompted U.S. action.

* Last year when it was discovered that natives of Thailand were enslaved in California -- trapped behind barbed wire fortresses, forced to make clothing for little or no money, unable to leave until they paid back what their masters paid for them -- Secretary of Labor Robert Reich, lead an immediate and intensive campaign to aid the slaves and punish their masters.

* Given American history, it was not surprising that Congress would act against slavery, even when it takes place on foreign soil. And two years ago Congress made it a crime for American citizens to travel to foreign lands and pay to have sex with children who are kidnapped or sold into brothels as sex slaves.

* And, given American history, it was not surprising that President Bush acted on behalf of Haitians in the Dominican Republic who are rounded up and forced at gunpoint to harvest the sugar crop. (This slavery, by the way, continues today and needs more attention.)¹

Yet today as we are gathered in this capitol of freedom black people are being kidnapped and captured in slave raids; they are bought and sold; they are given as wedding gifts; they are inherited; they are tortured and branded; and they are bred: the children of raped slaves belong to the master. Yet there has been to date no action on the part of our Government to come to their aid.² This is not only surprising, it is also incomprehensible.

Equally incomprehensible is the failure of Western human rights organizations to have marshalled public support for these black slaves. Today you are hearing directly from people who have seen slavery and who have interviewed slaves and escaped slaves in Mauritania and Sudan. But in fact evidence of slavery in Sudan, Mauritania and Libya, compiled by the most prestigious and reliable sources has been available for years. If the existence of chattel slavery in the last decade of the 20th Century is tragic; so is the failure of the human rights community to have developed an adequate activist constituency that could come to their aid.

I am by profession a management consultant and only three years ago became active in this campaign. But uncovering the existence of present day black slavery did not require any special training

or even foreign travel. Reams of incontrovertible evidence -- documents, photos, news reports -- are easily compiled with phone calls and letters to any number of NGO's, particularly those focussed on Africa. The news that in this, the last decade of the 20th Century, black women and children are bought and sold for \$15 dollars was sitting quietly in everyone's files. The shame of the slave trade is matched by the shame of silence on the part of many of those who knew.

Of course there were and are a relatively small group of people and organizations who have tried to act on the existing evidence. I've listed them below.³ But my research found that in the world of international human rights organizations, black chattel slaves had been a well-kept secret. Apart from the African exile groups themselves, who have received help from only a few NGOs, no one had taken on as a primary project the plight of the black slaves.

The following organizations have researched this topic and have published irrefutable evidence of slavery in Mauritania and Sudan: the United Nations, the U.S. State Department, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch/Africa, the London-based Anti-Slavery International, which is the world's oldest human rights organization, and the International Labor Organization (ILO).

In addition, one could always collect occasional news reports by journalists who had travelled to Africa. But in general, the media, which rightly prides itself in ferreting out cases of injustice and which has caused the world to act on behalf of many besieged and oppressed people has failed the African slaves. While there have been lengthy documentaries on other cases of modern day slavery, viz., the Haitian sugar slaves, the Indian carpet weaving children, and the sex slaves of Asia, I am aware of no documentary on modern day black slavery.

The failure of the media to report the existence of slavery in Africa has been a disaster for those in bondage. African slaves have simply not appeared on the West's map of concern. Each time one of us appears in on radio talk shows or at public events we are met at first with utter shock and disbelief.

I leave it to today's other witnesses -- several of whom have risked their lives to find and to tell this story -- to give you a detailed picture of the workings of the slave trade. I want to confine my remarks to:

- a. a schematic outline of human bondage in Mauritania and Sudan;
- b. a description of what we have done to bring attention to these abuses, and;
- c. suggestions for U.S. policy.

Black slaves in the Islamic Republic of Mauritania and in Sudan.⁴

The countries which stretch across the north of the African continent straddle an Arab-African divide. The slaving of black Africans -- a cause and a consequence of the conflicts between these two civilizations -- existed for centuries. In at least two cases, it continues today.

The Black Muslim Slaves of Mauritania:⁵

In Mauritania, slavery has simply never ended, though it has been abolished on paper several times since 1960. In 1993, the U.S. State Department estimated that up to 90,000 blacks still live as the property of Arabo-Berbers. There are estimates that 200,000 freed slaves continue to serve their former masters because of psychological or economic dependance.

Black Africans in Mauritania were converted to Islam hundreds of years ago, but while the Koran forbids the enslavement of fellow Muslims, in Mauritania race outranks religious doctrine. These people are chattel. They are used for domestic labor, farming, and as concubines. They may be exchanged for guns, camels, trucks or money. They are a source of personal status. And they are bred: Their children are the property of the master.

The black Muslims slaves of Mauritania are denied rights extended to their co-religionists in the poorest of Muslim countries: they may not marry without the master's permission. They may not pray or go to mosque without consent.

Treatment of Slaves:

I refer you to a report by Human Rights Watch, Africa, published in 1990, in which it is explained that slaves who offend their masters, or who are recalcitrant, may be subjected to a variety of tortures:

For any simple offense, the slave is tied up and left in the sun without food or water for a period of time. However for a more serious "offense" Human Rights Watch Africa describes these treatments:

a. The Camel Treatment: a camel is denied water for days so that its stomach shrinks. The offending slave is tied to the underbelly of the camel and the animal is given water. As the stomach rapidly expands, the slave is pulled apart.

b. The Insect Treatment. the slave has his hands bound. The master places small dessert insects into his ear canals which are capped off with stones. His head is bound. The insect treatment has driven men mad.

c. Burning Coals: The offending slave is buried chest-deep in sand. Burning coals are placed in a whole dug near his genitals which slowly roast.

Sudan:

Sudan is Africa's largest country, spanning the Arab-African divide. A decades-old civil war between Arab and African intensified when a coup in 1989 installed an Islamic Fundamentalist Government, backed by Iran and Iraq. The black Africans in the south are Christian, animist and some are Muslims. Islamic law forbids Muslims from enslaving other Muslims, however, just as in Mauritania, in Sudan race supersedes religious doctrine and black Muslims are enslaved as part of the war.

The policy of the government in Khartoum has been described as a Jihad (Holy War) to Arabize and Islamicize the black south. Some commentators fear that a success in Sudan will open all of black Africa to radical Islam.

As a result of the war, Arab militias, armed by the government of Khartoum raid African villages, shoot the men and enslave the women and children. These are either kept as individual booty by the militias, sold north, or, as a recently declassified U.S. State Department document contends, 'trucked into Khadaffy's Libya. Some have said these slaves are shipped to Chad, Mauritania and other places in the Gulf.

The United Nations Special Rapporteur, Gaspar Biro, states that a modern form of slave market exists in the Sudan. A reporter for the Atlanta Constitution has described scenes in which Arab merchants approach starving mothers in slave camps and offer to "buy" one of her children in exchange for enough food to keep the others from starvation.

Christian Solidarity International, whose representatives have testified to Congress last year, identifies a different sort of wholesale slavery taking place in Sudan. Groups of captured Christian and animist black children are taken to cultural cleansing camps given Arabic names and forcibly converted to Islam. Some are sent to fight against their own people on the south.⁷

The U.S.-based "New Abolitionist Movement:" -- a short history.

On March 20, 1993, The American Anti-Slavery Group was founded in Washington, D.C. Our goal was to place the plight of Africa's slaves on the American national agenda. Our strategy was to reconvene the anti-apartheid coalition. We reasoned that freedom in north and west Africa should be valued no less than freedom in

South Africa.

To that end we have published about slavery in over 200 black newspapers; we have sent document packages and letters with photographs of slaves to leading African-American organizations, to the entire Congressional Black Caucus, to women's groups, to journalists who write about human rights, to human rights groups and to church groups.

We have published and been written about in the national press, including *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Washington Times*, *National Review*, *Village Voice* and *Reader's Digest*.

We inspired and participated in a three part PBS series expose of the slave trade. We are on talk radio shows around the country each week.

We sponsored the first Abolitionist Conference in this country in over 130 years held at Columbia University. Since that conference, several of the original activists have formed other grass roots groups -- in New York, Chicago, Detroit, Miami, Boston, and Washington. We work in full cooperation.

We announce today that we are joining in a lawsuit initiated by the Independent Women's Forum based in Washington D.C. on behalf of African female slaves who are raped in captivity. We note that Bosnian women who were raped and tortured can now sue Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic in the United States for crimes against humanity. That suit would be a model for our action.

This year we will be concentrating on bringing Abolitionist Conferences to college campuses and communities across the country. AASG's concerns have widened and now include other cases of modern day human bondage.

Recommendations for U.S. policy:

1. The eradication of slavery should be an important goal of the United States Government in all of its activities. It is extremely important that the United States of America, which fought a Civil War over the issue of human bondage, state clearly and forcefully to the world that the practice of slavery is wrong, and that those who engage in it will be called to task, shamed and pressed to end this barbaric phenomenon. We have done as much against the practice of torture.

2. We agree with the language in HR #49 initiated by Congressman Barney Frank (D.--MA) and co-sponsored by Rep. Eleanor Holmes Norton and Rep. Robert Torricelli (D.--NJ) requiring the U.S. to act against slaving nations. It would require the State Department to issue in its yearly human rights reports, a special section on slavery where it exists. It also requires the U.S. to

act in consort with regional bodies, and with appropriate United Nations organizations, to draw up a multinational plan to put an end to slavery where it exists.

3. Specifically in the case of Mauritania:

The U.S. should follow the long term United Nations agenda to encourage the Mauritanian government to monitor slavery, collect data, and embark on rehabilitation programs. Mauritania should be pressed to enforce its own law, and this includes punishments for slaving. In brief, the program should be: investigate, release, rehabilitate.

However, we note that the Mauritanian government refuses to allow research by NGOs and continues to deny the problem.

With regard to aid: The United States should set minimum targets for an abolitionist program and condition aid upon reaching those targets.

4. Specifically in the case of Sudan:

The U.S. should make sure it is doing all it can to provide help to those enslaved, and to bring upon the GOS international condemnation and shame for countenancing and encouraging this ancient scourge. The GOS should be ostracized from international organizations and meetings of civilized nations.

END NOTES

1. Please see my recently published "Slavery: Worldwide Evil," *World & I*, April, 1996.

2. It should be noted that Rep. Barney Frank (D.--N.J.) introduced legislation last session and again in this session requiring the U.S. to act against slaving nations. This Resolution (#49) is co-sponsored by Congressman Torrecelli and Rep. Eleanor Holmes Norton. I want to publicly thank Congressman Frank who has been from the start of our effort been a source of moral support.

In addition, Congressman Dick Zimmer (R.--NJ) has introduced a bill to cut U.S. aid to the Islamic Republic of Mauritania which according to a State Department report published in 1994, has up to 90,000 slaves.

3. Apart from the Africans themselves -- local resistance groups in Sudan and Mauritania and their brothers abroad -- I want to mention the Puebla Institute in Washington, D.C., Christian Solidarity International in Geneva, Gaspar Biro of the United Nations and John Prendergast's Center of Concern ... and there are others.

The one and only U.S. womens' group to join our efforts against slavery is the Washington D.C.- based Independent Women's Forum, whose Executive Director, Barbara Ledeen, has worked tirelessly for this cause.

4. Please see our attached New York Times op-ed, "Bought and Sold," as a short primer on this topic.

5. There are three population groups in Mauritania:

a. The Arabo-Berbers who rule the country are Arabized Berbers who speak a Berber dialect of Arabic called Hassanyia.

b. The free blacks in the south consisting of such groups as the Wolof, Soninke and Fulani.

c. The Haratines: slaves and former slaves who have been culturally cleansed and Arabized, their African ethnicity and identity partly or wholly erased. Racially mixed, they speak Hassanyia. They are trained to identify with their masters and have been often used to fight against the free blacks and to oppose anti-slavery movements. The government rightly fears that an alliance of Haratines and free blacks would overthrow Arabo-Berber rule.

It is important to note that all Africans in Mauritanian converted to Islam hundreds of years ago: the slaves are black Muslim slaves.

6. Attached

7. British film of such a camp, showing black children in chains being beaten to learn the Koran, was shown on PBS's Tony Brown's Journal.

American Anti-Slavery Group
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THE NEW YORK TIMES OP-ED WEDNESDAY, JULY 13, 1994

Bought and Sold

By Charles Jacobs
and Mohamed Athie

LAST MONTH, Amnesty International's American branch decided it was time to abolish slavery. Presented with evidence of human bondage in North Africa, the members voted to add to an already crowded mandate the emancipation of chattel slaves.

It may be hard to believe that in 194 a new abolitionist movement is needed. Today, in the former French colony of Mauritania, where slavery as ended — on paper — in 1980, the air Department estimates that 1000 blacks still live as the property of Berbers. Perhaps 300,000 freed slaves continue to serve their former masters because of psychological or economic dependence.

Black Africans in Mauritania were converted to Islam more than 100 years ago, but while the Koran forbids the enslavement of fellow Muslims, in this country race outranks religious doctrine. These people are chattel used for labor, sex and breeding. They may be exchanged for camels, trucks, guns or money. Their children are the property of the master.

A 1990 Human Rights Watch/Africa report said that in Mauritania routine punishments for the slightest fault include beatings, denial of food and prolonged exposure to the sun, with hands and feet tied together. Serious infringement of the master's rule can mean prolonged tortures known as "the camel treatment," the "insect treatment" and "burning coals" — none of which is fit to describe in a family newspaper.

In the east, in the Sudan, slavery is taking a comeback, the result of a 2 year old war waged by the Muslim north against the black Christian and animist south Arab militias, armed by the government. raid villages justly those of the Dinka tribe. (The author, Charles Jacobs is research director of the American Anti-Slavery Group. Mohamed Athie formerly a consultant at the Mauritanian Embassy in Washington, is chairman of the organization.)



Young slave girls in Mauritania, 1992

the men and enslave the women and children. These are kept as personal property or marched north and sold.

Many of the children are auctioned off. Gaspar Biro, a United Nations human rights monitor, returned from the Sudan in March reporting that abducted children are often sent to camps that become 20th-century slave mar-

kets. The price varies with supply. In 1989, a woman or child could be bought for \$90. In 1990, as the raids increased the price fell to \$15. Not only are their bodies in bondage but also they are stripped of their cultural, religious and personal identities.

An investigator from Anti-Slavery International interviewed Abuk Thuc Akwar, a 13 year old girl who, along with 24 other children, was captured by the militia, marched north and given to a farmer. "Throughout the day she worked in his sorghum fields and at night in his bed. During the march she was raped and called a black donkey," the investigator wrote in a 1990 report. The girl escaped with the help of the master's jealous wife.

Another report described Kon, a 13 year-old boy who was abducted by Arab nomads and taken to a

chant's house. There he found his Dinka men hobnobbing, their Acholis tendencies cut because they refused to become Muslims. Threatened with the same treatment, the boy converted. After six months, he escaped. Kon was lucky: slaves caught fleeing are often castrated or branded like cattle.

Human rights groups are the first to admit their failure to organize support for Africa's slaves. Anti-Slavery International is courageous but small and underfinanced. People at Africa Watch privately despair about Mauritania. "No one is interested in a French speaking country of only two million.

In North Africa and Sudan, a market for black slaves.

and no oil," said one researcher.

Most distressing is the silence of the American media, whose reports counted for so much in the battle to end apartheid in South Africa, and of mainstream African-American organizations. The Congressional Black Caucus has yet to take a stand on the issue. Does freedom count for more in Johannesburg than in Nouakchott and Khartoum?

We hear of "compassion fatigue" especially when it comes to Africa, but it is hard to believe that people can be aware that slavery is alive and well and turn away. Far better to think that as the plight of slaves becomes known here, Americans will once again speak out in the name of human freedom.

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"When one man is enslaved no man is free." - John F. Kennedy

The Anti-Slavery Report

Special Issue:

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

February 1996

Black Slaves: They're not history

Alang Ajak, a six year old girl, was taken captive by Arabs in Sudan who raided her village in 1991. Last April, she was interviewed by Shyam Bhatia, correspondent from the *London Observer* who had gone to Khartoum (Sudan's capital) to cover the "Third Popular and Islamic International Conference" March 30-April 2 of last year. Bhatia wrote in the *London Observer* (reprinted in the *Washington Times* 4/27/95)

"Alang Ajak's worst nightmare came true the night when she was dreaming of her dead parents. It seemed that an intruder had grabbed her by the throat and was pressing burning metal into her flesh. As she opened her eyes she realized it was no dream. She was the latest victim of slave-branding, a phenomenon endorsed by some Sudanese Arabs who have revived slavery after more than 100 years." Sudanese told Bhatia that the town of Shendi, a 19th Century slave-trading

center, now serves as a transit point for young boys and girls who are shipped to the Persian Gulf. Alang might have wound up serving a rich Gulf family, but as fate had it she was kept in Sudan. The man who bought the 6-year old decided to give her as a gift to his son, Abdul Rohman, whose wife, Zeinab, decided to brand the girl, "in case you get lost."

"After they marked me like an animal," Alang explained, she planned to escape. Alang of course risked torture — the usual punishment for trying to flee — and she escaped.

AASG "Online"
 Starting in March we can be
 reached at our e-mail
 address:
aasg@user1.channell.com



Alang Ajak shows where her master branded her

BREAKING THE MEDIA BLACKOUT ON HUMAN BONDAGE IN AFRICA In Sudan and Mauritania, African men, women and children are captured, bought, sold, exchanged for camels, inherited, branded and bred. Yet this might qualify as the world's best kept dirty secret. Apart from an AASG exposé on PBS, there has been no national TV coverage.

Even people most knowledgeable about human rights abuses are generally ignorant about chattel slavery. In June 1994, of the 500 members of Amnesty International gathered for their annual convention in Chicago, only about 15% knew that chattel slavery still exists. And if slavery is a secret among this sophisticated group, then surely the general public remains in the dark. Why? The brief answer is that the media has thus far neglected to shine its powerful light on human bondage in Africa. When AASG has publicly criticized the media for this, media apologists cite dangerous, inaccessible locales to explain why there's been so little coverage — particularly in Africa.

This SPECIAL BLACK HISTORY MONTH ISSUE is dedicated to two reporters who put themselves at considerable risk to document slavery in Sudan. Tim Sandler of the *Boston Phoenix* took a six-seater propeller-driven plane flown by a bush pilot into an active combat area to speak to escaped slaves. Shyam Bhatia of the *London Observer* ducked out of an International Islamic Conference in Khartoum to meet with former slaves. Bhatia was nearly arrested by state security forces on his plane out of Sudan. Sandler and Bhatia demonstrate the power the media can have to educate the public if evils most of us thought had long ago ceased. They are credits to their profession, we hope their examples inspire others.

The Anti-Slavery Group is the newsletter of American Anti-Slavery Group, Inc.
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United States Department of State

Washington, D. C. 20520

American Anti-Slavery Group
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May 4, 93

Dear Mr. Wolf:

Thank you for your letter of May 5, regarding human rights abuses in Sudan. The Embassy in Khartoum provided the information you requested, which is enclosed. Assistant Secretary Moose provided much of this information in his testimony on May 4 to the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Africa.

Sincerely,

Robert A. Bradtke
 Acting Assistant Secretary
 for Legislative Affairs

Enclosure:

As stated.

The Honorable
 Frank R. Wolf,
 House of Representatives.

Sudanese government personnel appear to be perpetrating widespread human rights abuses in parts of the Bahr El Ghazal and the Nuba Mountains. There are recent, credible reports of massacres, kidnapping and forced labor, conscription of children, forced displacement and Arabization, and other abuses in these regions. There is evidence that some abuses, notably kidnapping, may be carried out by poorly-controlled militias without the approval and perhaps against the wishes of the authorities. Other abuses, however, are occurring with a frequency and on a scale that make it difficult to think that they are happening without the knowledge of the authorities.

Reliable information on the western "transition zone" -- south Kordofan, including the Nuba Mountains, and Bahr El Ghazal -- is hard to obtain. Access to the area is restricted. Recently, however, there has been evidence from credible, well-informed sources of widespread GOS abuses in this zone.

According to several sources, forces of the Government of Sudan regard the entire Bahr El Ghazal south of Babanusa, outside of government-held towns, as an "operational area." Anyone found there is considered a SPLA member or supporter and killed or captured. For example:

-- In late 1992 and in February-March 1993 two military trains, each with about 3,000 troops aboard, proceeded from Babanusa to Wau. Some of the troops were from the army, but most were members of former Arab tribal militias, which the Government of Sudan/National Islamic Front (GOS/NIF) has incorporated into the Popular Defense Forces (PDF).

The first train advanced preceded by foot soldiers who killed or captured the civilians on their path. They burned houses, fields, and granaries, and stole thousands of cattle. Hundreds are estimated to have died.

-- The March 1993 train carried horses that extended the soldiers' range. In five days, they reportedly killed almost a thousand persons between Manwal Station and Aweil and captured 300 women and children. The burning of granaries and fields and theft of cattle caused many who escaped the troops to die later of starvation.

The sources state that when military convoys moving in the Bahr El Ghazal lose vehicles to SPLA mines, the troops typically burn the first village they find and kill its inhabitants.

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Credible sources report heavy fighting from December 1992 to March 1993 in the Nuba Mountains, particularly in the Tulisci Range. Fleeing Nubans speak of widespread destruction of villages and killings near Dilling and Kadugli -- including a massacre at Belenya, which reportedly was razed.

Credible sources say GOS forces, especially the PDF, routinely steal women and children in the Bahr El Ghazal. Some women and girls are kept as wives; the others are shipped north where they perform forced labor on Kordofan farms or are exported, notably to Libya. Many Dinka are reported to be performing forced labor in the areas of Meiram and Abyei. Others are said to be on farms throughout Kordofan.

There are also credible reports of kidnappings in Kordofan. In March 1993 hundreds of Nuer displaced reached northern Kordofan, saying that Arab militias between Abyei and Muglad had taken children by force, killing the adults who resisted. The town of Hamarat el Sheikh, northwest of Sodiri in north Kordofan, is reported to be a transit point for Dinka and Nuba children who are then trucked to Libya.

While PDF kidnapping of women and children seems recurrent, it is not, however, condoned by all GOS authorities. When the March train from Babanusa arrived in Wau, authorities forced the PDF to release the 300 women and children they had captured. Later that month, army forces at Aweil searched a train of PDF returning from Wau. They found and freed women and children who were being held in boxcars. In early 1993 the PDF captured near Meiram five children between 7 and 12. When a relative learned of their whereabouts and contacted the police, the children were released.

Credible sources say that when the March military train to Wau reached Meiram, soldiers raped scores of displaced women. Thousands of displaced are currently reaching northern Kordofan from Bentiu and the Nuba Mountains. Medical workers note an unusually high rate of pregnancies among the women, who say the PDF raped them.

There are credible reports of widespread conscription into government militias of children 10 or 11 and above from "peace camps" (resettlement camps) in the Nuba Mountains. In late January, 1993, soldiers in El Obeid impressed into the PDF scores of boys 13 and above. (The families, however, later secured the release of the children who could prove they were enrolled in school.)

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Credible sources state that since November 1992, thousands of displaced Nubans, particularly from the Tulisci, Habila, Koalib, Mendi, Tima, Lagawa, Sellara, Dilling, Kadugli, and Miri areas have been passing through El Obeid. Some are fleeing on their own, but others are being moved by the authorities. The governor of Kordofan has publicly said that the Government has moved many civilians from "unsafe to secure areas." Some 2000 Nubans from En Nahud were left in rags last November outside El Obeid, without money, food, or shelter.

X-X
Credible sources describe different forms of forced Arabization. Under a policy sometimes known as "the marriage of fifty," Arab soldiers are encouraged to wed southern women they capture. Soldiers who have children from these marriages get special premiums. In displaced camps in Meiram and Abyei, some Islamic charities reportedly offer to feed, clothe, and educate destitute Dinka children -- but in return, parents may not have contact with their offspring. Some areas are closed to Christian charities, even indigenous ones, while Muslim charities operate freely.

There are reports that thousands died of starvation in Meiram displaced camp last year, while local authorities would not release donated relief food stored in Babanusa. There are consistent, credible reports that the PDF routinely steals large amounts of relief food donated for the displaced. Credible sources state that if the populations in the displaced camps at Meiram, Abyei, and Daeim do not receive food urgently, thousands more will die this year.

Some casualty figures and other details may have been exaggerated by frightened and shocked witnesses, but the general tenor of the above reports appears credible. It tracks with fragmentary reports of abuses in the Nuba Mountains and Bahr El Ghazal that have become available from other sources over a period of months.

To be fair, it must be said that many of these abuses, including the massacres, kidnapping and forced Arabization, have occurred time and again in these areas for years. Moreover, the reaction of the authorities in specific cases of kidnapping and enslavement suggest that the latter may be the fact of poorly-controlled militias acting without official approval -- although, if this is the case, the authorities are derelict for not energetically curbing PDF excesses. Other abuses, however, are occurring with a frequency, and, in the case of the massacres in particular, on a scale that make it difficult to think that they are happening without the knowledge of the Government of Sudan.

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Statement of Mohamed Nacir Athie
Executive Director of the
International Coalition Against Chattel Slavery

Before the
Subcommittee on Africa
and the
Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights
of the
Committee of International Relations
United States House of Representatives

March 13, 1996

We the abolitionist movement request the passing of H.R. 1561 that contains the provision to cut \$3 million to the terrorist government of Colonel Maaouya Ould Sid'Ahmed Taya.

Other provisions should be added, specifically one which condemns the slave state of Mauritania.

We also encourage the US government to take this evidence to the United Nations, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund so that diplomatic and financial sanctions be brought against Mauritania.

The organizations of African Unity, the Arab League and the Islam Conference must also take formal action and act forcefully against the enslavement of blacks in Mauritania and Sudan and other parts of the Islamic world, in particular the Persian Gulf countries.

We need help and we need justice. The first step is to simply condemn and sanction the Mauritanian government. The second is to call upon international organizations such as the UN to do their job in addressing this issue.

We Mauritians want the peaceful return of our refugee brethren backed with international guarantees.

We call upon the Congress of the United States to provide emergency humanitarian aid to those who have been deported.

Under pressure from the French government and the Mauritanian government, the UNHCR has stopped all humanitarian aid to the Mauritanian refugees. We believe this is a shame. Their intention is to force close to 100,000 rightful citizens of Mauritania to return without even basic rights.

The United Nations should call an international conference on slavery today, now, without delay.

Such a conference will raise awareness around the world about the nightmare of chattel slavery that the black people of Africa are enduring in African-Arab countries.

We do not forget about those who have been tortured and killed. We cannot forget those who have been hung in the concentration camps of Inal just for celebrating Independence Day.

In the US State Department's country report on Human Rights Practices for 1991 it is reported that at Inal: "some of the detainees were tied by their testicles to the rear of a four wheel drive vehicle and dragged at high speeds through the desert. Several of the detainees, including Captain Lome Abdoulaye, a former senior officer in the Mauritanian Navy, died as a result of this particular treatment." (State Department, 1991)

There is much more to say on the evils of the government of Colonel Maaouya and the reign of terror in Mauritania. However, let me conclude here by saying that someday black Mauritians will have justice. That day will be when Haratines and black Africans, who constitute the majority in my country, understand that they have everything to gain in joining forces and permanently establishing peace. That day we will have freedom and justice in our country, Mauritania.

Testimony Of The
HONORABLE MERVYN M. DYMALLY

before the

Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights,

the

Subcommittee on Africa,

and the

House Committee on International Relations

Wednesday, March 13, 1996

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee, first let me thank you very much for giving me this opportunity to address you. My name is Mervyn Dymally, former Member of Congress and former Chairman of the Subcommittee on Africa. I am the Legislative Advocate for the Republic of Mauritania.

The Mauritanian government is pleased to have this opportunity to address this question of the vestiges of slavery in the Republic of Mauritania. Let me say at the outset that no one in Mauritania denies the fact that at one time slavery existed. Ever since independence, Mauritania has moved toward the abolishment of chattel slavery as it was known prior to independence. On several occasions, there have been presidential orders, and amendments to the Constitution on this subject. The current government has made it abundantly clear that slavery will not be tolerated any more in Mauritania.

Beginning last year, a campaign was initiated across the country, mostly concentrated in the African American media, appealing to African Americans about the question of slavery in Mauritania. Every year since 1993, I have visited Mauritania on at least two occasions, sometimes as many as four times a year. Every time I visit I raise this question of slavery with the U. S. Embassy, with the Palace, and on two occasions with the President. Each time I have gotten full assurances about the strong commitment to abolishing every vestige of slavery in Mauritania.

To show their commitment to the abolishment of this issue, the Mauritians have sent, since 1993, three delegations here; two of which I was intimately involved. I took a delegation, headed by the President of the Senate, who in American terms would be considered Black, to Arizona to meet Reverend Leon Sullivan and the leadership of the African/African American Summit. The purpose of the visit was to convince Americans that they were deeply committed to the elimination of every vestige of slavery. Subsequently, a delegation came to Dakar, Senegal for the African/African American Summit. The President of the Mauritanian Senate addressed the problems and possibilities of democracy in Mauritania. Basically, what the President of the Senate said was that colonialism left Mauritania in a desperate state of poverty and illiteracy. Ever since independence, even

under the military rule, the country has moved forward to eliminate these two phenomena, including all vestiges of slavery.

More recently, the government received a loan from the World Bank to construct 600 schools in Mauritania -- an issue in which the President has taken a personal interest. The Mauritians believe that the one way to eliminate any vestige of slavery is through education and economic development; and they are moving swiftly in that direction.

In the United States, the Mauritanian Friendship Society has issued four reports. Last week copies of the recent report were circulated to authors of HR 142 by Mr. Bereuter. I have made copies available to the Members of the Subcommittee. That report was written by an NGO in Mauritania and circulated by the Friendship Society with a brief preface.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, the Mauritanian government invites Members of Congress to travel to Mauritania at any time. They have also asked anti-slavery groups to provide evidence of specific time, place and names where they believe there is evidence of slavery in Mauritania. So far no one has responded to that challenge.

In January of this year I visited Mauritania on two occasions. The first time I missed a meeting with the Rector of the University because he was in Paris. But both he and I considered the meeting so important that I journeyed there the following week just to meet with him. I subsequently came back to the United States attempting to seek some funds, to no avail, to sponsor a Conference on Democracy and Economic Possibilities in Mauritania. Last week I received a letter from the Rector that he is proceeding to raise the necessary funds for the conference. It is our intention to invite pro Africa groups and Members of Congress to attend that conference.

Mr. Chairman, in my brief statement to you, I wish to give you some assurance that the Mauritanian government considers it a very serious matter, and is deeply committed to eradicating all vestiges of slavery. Now that is not to say that it is within the realm of possibility that the practice may not exist in some far removed place or there may not be appearances of

slavery. That is a possibility. But let me conclude by quoting the recent Country Reports of the United States Department of State.

"Some freed slaves have either stayed with or returned to their former masters and continue to provide labor in exchange for room and board and other basic necessities. Others live independently but continue a symbiotic relationship with their former masters performing occasional paid or unpaid labor in exchange for food, clothing and medicare. There are no reliable statistics for the number of haratines who continue to work for the same families for which they worked before the emancipation of 1960, whether as paid or unpaid labor. Reports of cases of involuntary servitude are rare and unconfirmed."

Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you very much for this opportunity, and I am disposed to answering any questions now or in the future. Thank you very much.



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campaigning and practical action.*

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CHRISTIAN SOLIDARITY INTERNATIONAL

THE BARONESS COX

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Joint Subcommittee Hearing with The Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights and The Subcommittee on Africa

SLAVERY IN SUDAN

Wednesday March 13 1996

Board of Management: David Atkinson MP (President), Mervyn Thomas (Chairman), Rt Hon Lord Archer of Sandwell, Lord The Baroness Cox, (Hon Brian Edwards, Franklin Evans, Rev. Terry Harland, Rt Hon Richard Harr, Graham Huxwell, Ernest Lindsay, Hon. Sir M. Kerwin, Rev Hans Stuckelberger (Rt President, Switzerland), Rachel Tingle, Rev John Wilkerson.

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SLAVERY IN SUDAN.

Introduction.

This evidence is based on first-hand experiences obtained during 8 visits to Sudan in 1993-6 with Christian Solidarity International (CSI), a Human Rights organisation working for victims of repression, regardless of their creed, colour or nationality.

CSI focuses on people who are cut off from other humanitarian organisations. Many major organisations, such as UNHCR, UNICEF, ICRC can only visit places with the permission of a sovereign government. Being independent, CSI can reach people who are bereft of aid, and also of the advocacy which often accompanies aid.

In Sudan, Operation Life Line Sudan, and other organisations are providing help in areas approved by the Government of Sudan. But many locations are designated 'No Go' areas by the Government, including several airstrips in Bahr-EI-Ghazal and the Nuba Mountains. CSI has made these a priority. We have also recently visited the Beja people - Muslims from Northern Sudan, who have been subjected to serious violations of Human Rights by the Government. Many are displaced, living along the borders between Sudan and Eritrea, in conditions of destitution, without medical or food aid.

CSI has made 8 missions to Sudan in the past 4 years; 6 to Southern Sudan, including 2 to the Nuba Mountains; 1 to the North, to meet the Government and to visit areas under its control; and 1 to the Eritrean-Sudanese borderlands.

On the basis of eye-witness evidence and first-hand accounts, we testify to gross violations of Human Rights, encouraged or directly inflicted by the Government of Sudan. They include:

1. **Military offensives against civilians in the South and the Nuba Mountains**, by ground attacks and aerial bombardment; resulting in the murder of innocent women, children and elderly people; the destruction of towns, villages, livestock and crops.

2. **Enslavement** of women, children and men from the South, possibly numbering tens of thousands.

3. **Forced displacement** of millions of Sudanese people, by expropriation of land, by military aggression. 1.5 million Sudanese people have died from war, hunger and disease during recent years, and over 5 million have been displaced from their land.

4. **Enforced Islamisation**: there are many first-hand accounts by people who have been forced to flee to the North or to garrisons held by Government troops in the South and the Nuba Mountains, who have had to renounce their Christian names and accept Islamic names and practices, as a condition of receiving aid essential for their survival or the survival of their children.

5. **The abduction of boys and young men from the Nuba Mountains and from the Beja people and their enforced conscription into the Government army** to fight against the people of the South.

6. There is also well documented evidence of other violations of Human Rights, including the **arrest, imprisonment and torture** of Sudanese citizens in the North who do not support the policies of the Government. They include members of political opposition groups and of ethnic groups such as the Beja people. The majority of these are Muslims from Northern Sudan, who do not support the fundamentalist beliefs and policies of the ruling regime. Many have suffered severe torture. Although violations of Human Rights have also been perpetrated by some of the factions in the South against other Southerners, we are pleased to note that the people of the South have managed to reduce their inter-factional fighting.

The major Sudanese democratic opposition groups have also made concerted endeavours to develop an agenda for democratic policies for the future of Sudan, under the aegis of the NDA, incorporating the principles agreed by the IGADD initiative. In addition, the SPLM/A leadership is preparing to convene a Conference on the development of Civil Society. These initiatives should be of great value in laying the basis for democracy at such time as the democratic opposition groups, which represent over 90% of the Sudanese people, resume their rightful positions of political authority.

SPECIFIC EVIDENCE OF SLAVERY

The delegation have stayed in several locations in Bahr-El-Ghazal, including Tirole, Marial, Mayen Abun, and Nyamlell & have visited other places such as Manyiel. They found evidence of widespread, systematic slavery. Caroline Cox and John Eibner have:

1. taken evidence from men, women and children who have been captured and taken into slavery;
2. talked to families whose children are currently enslaved in Northern Sudan and heard graphic accounts of barbarities perpetrated during the raids by Arab PDF (People's Defence Forces) against black African towns and villages.
3. met Arab traders who described the way in which African slaves are brought back from the North & sold to their families or, if they have no surviving family members, to the local community administrators.
4. taken evidence from local community leaders and made resources available to them for the redemption of a number of enslaved children.

I. EVIDENCE FROM PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN ENSLAVED.

(i) Aluat Majok, a young woman who had been captured as a child in a raid in 1988 & brought back in May 1995, together with a baby son (Bikit Osman) conceived during sexual relationships imposed by her master.

She had been kidnapped during a raid in 1988 & described her experiences:

"When the Arab militia came, their first target was the cattle but they also abducted many people, killing any who resisted & concentrating mainly on women & children. My master took 2 boys as well as her; I tried to escape but was beaten, so I surrendered. They came on horseback.

My master's name is Osman Issa; the 2 boys who were captured with me are still there."

She then gave further details of her experiences: she had been taken to her master's home in the village of Abu Jabra, where she had been used as a domestic servant, pounding dura & collecting firewood; but when her master's wife went out to the market, she was summoned to his room & *"he took advantage of me."*

She was very lonely, being ignored by the family & eating alone, whatever they chose to give her.

She had to learn Arabic & adopt Muslim practices. She was given the Muslim name of 'Fatima' & she complied with Muslim practices out of fear but did not want to participate in Islamic practices.

She tried to escape twice, but was caught & severely beaten. But when her master's wife found she was pregnant & saw the baby, she asked her how she had become pregnant. When Aluat Majok said that it was her master who was the father, his wife became very angry & tried to get her out of the house. In this way, she managed to establish contact with one of the Arab traders (pseudonym 'Ibrahim' - to protect identity: cf CSI August 1995 report), who brought her & her baby back to the South, selling them to her family for 5 cows.

Now, she has been welcomed warmly by her family, but having had sexual relations with her Arab master, she will not be able to marry a young Diinka husband. As many men have been killed, she may find an old man who will be willing to marry her - but any prospects of a 'normal' marriage are hopelessly blighted.

(ii) Two boys, Bol Kuol (aged approximately 13), & Deng Kuol (approximately 6). The older boy had been kidnapped with his mother, who was pregnant with his younger brother, who was born in captivity. The boys were given Arabic names: Anma & Mohammed.

The older boy described their experiences:

They were kidnapped in 1988 from the village of Akwal Malwal during a battle. Initially, he & his mother fled but returned when they thought it was safe to do so but ran into another attack. They were kidnapped & his father was killed. The attack was carried out by Arab militia - some on horseback, others on foot. When they were caught, his mother had to walk; he was put on his master's horse. His master's name is Mohammed Issa. When they arrived in the North, they were treated like cattle, living in a cattle camp at Nubi; they were not provided with accommodation in a house - only plastic sheeting. They were forced to adopt Islamic practices, although his mother 'acted stupid' & pretended she did not understand what was required of her. They also had to speak Arabic & now his Arabic is better than his Dinka; his small brother only speaks Arabic. They were frequently addressed as 'Abeed' ('Slave?')

They eventually managed to escape to Mutari, where they met some of the contacts of the trader 'Ibrahim', who helped them. The price for their freedom was stipulated by 'Ibrahim' as 5 cows or 1 automatic rifle for each (of the 2 boys & their mother). Many members of their family had been killed in the raid & their surviving relatives have only been able to find 3 cows, so they cannot be reunited until the remainder of the ransom is found. If they have to return to the North, they fear they would be killed.

(NB The local civil authorities have to comply with the system & not allow the complete release of returning slaves until then full ransom is found, because they fear that if they do not meet demands, the supply of women & children being brought back from the North will dry up. If there are no relatives to try to raise the ransom, the local authorities will endeavour to find resources to purchase the freedom of returnees (cf previous CSI report, where a local SPLA Commander had 'bought' the freedom of one girl whose family had perished during the time of her captivity).

(iii) **Aker Deng aged approximately 14, was captured, with another girl, by Mohammed Edber in 1988.** They were beaten & forced to look after cattle. She stayed in her master's house & if ever anything was lost, she was blamed & was beaten by her master or his son Ibrahim. She was not given clothes, only rags & fed on sorghum, which was not always 'properly washed'. She was called by an Arabic name 'Naima' & required to go to the mosque; if she refused, she was beaten. She said that she did often refuse & was always beaten. She was brought back in March 1995 & her brother paid 5 cows for her freedom (2 which the family owned & the rest were given by other people).

N.B. We were told that the price can vary: the average is 5 cows per person, but in some cases it can rise to a maximum of 15.

(iv) **Young woman with a baby who had been born as a result of forced sex with her Arab master.** While in captivity, she had been forced to adopt Islamic practices; when she refused she was beaten & was afraid her owners would kill her if she refused to go to the mosque. She was not given enough food or water. She had been returned recently, but there was no-one to pay the price for her freedom.

On Wednesday, October 25, we walked for 3 hours to the market town of Manyiel, where Arab traders often set up their stalls & sell merchandise (such as clothes & salt) to the local Dinka Africans. Manyiel is a small, pleasant town in the district of Ayat. It is also known as a place where some Arab traders bring back women & children from the North, who have been captured & taken as slaves in raids by Arab PDF forces & murahaleen on African towns & villages in the South.

2. EVIDENCE FROM FAMILIES WHOSE CHILDREN ARE CURRENTLY ENSLAVED IN NORTHERN SUDAN AND FROM OTHER VICTIMS OF RAIDS BY THE PDF.

(i) **Joseph Bol, from Nyamlell:**

On March 25 1995, GOS militia attacked & took us by surprise. The people scattered & fled. Those children who were unable to run fast enough were captured. His child, Joseph Atok, aged 6, was captured &, according to accounts from some who escaped

en route, was taken with the others to Arieth in the North. He sent his brother-in-law to find his child. It took him a month to track down the stolen children, in a village called Abu Simson, & his child's owner, a man called Abul Gassim Mohammed. The master demanded a price of 5 cows or the equivalent in money, but he does not have the resources to meet these demands:

"I have nothing. My tukul was burnt, everything I had was taken...The owner told my brother-in-law to go & find the cows & then to come back for my child. But don't have anything or any way in which I can raise the money I need...I have no hope of being able to buy my child's freedom...I am confused & I don't know what to do."

(ii) 50-year old Akuac Amet, Nyamillel:

"I was caught in my home by the Arabs on March 25. They beat me unconscious with a big club. Now my legs are paralysed and I can only crawl. They then shot my four sons who were tending cattle and abducted my 14-year-old daughter Ajak. The raiders left with all of my property. My husband died in the great famine. I am now completely destitute. The owner of this tukul is helping me to survive."

When we revisited Akuac Amet on this visit, we found her dying in the tukul of the woman who had given her refuge after her ordeal. This woman is called **Adut Wol Ngor** & she is currently caring for 62 victims of the March raid. She recalled that day in words very similar to those we heard during our August visit:

"The enemy came early on March 25; this woman was too old to run; so they caught her & beat her so badly it was impossible to know if she was alive or dead. The enemy returned & killed her 4 sons & kidnapped her daughter. She can be returned, if the money can be found - but there is no-one to pay the money...I came & took care of this old lady & have looked after her..."

About 300 people were killed...the enemy divided into 2 groups - some on horseback, some on foot...We ran with the children to try to hide them in the long grass but they found us & drove the older children away. Any who refused to go, they killed them...Those who went, were tied with a rope & pulled like cows behind horses. Some children were as little as 7 years old. Some died of thirst...they were not given any water..."

The families of those who were captured are still trying to find the money to pay for their children...if they have no money, they can be told that their children are still alive, but are unable to buy them back."

When asked by a reporter how many Arabs participated in the attack, she replied:

"If you wanted to live, you didn't stay to count the horses...but there were several hundreds."

She also expressed gratitude to CSI for con-ing:

"We are happy you have come to meet us, to see how we are suffering; how our children have been taken by the enemy & how we are having to live without our children...& how we have to eat fruit & grass...We are grateful to you for coming to see our situation...Thank you for coming to us...We pray that God will bring our children back to us..."

(iii) Akuil Garang, a woman aged approximately 30:

2 of her children were burnt alive in their hut during the raid; when she tried to run away, she was attacked & suffered spear & gunshot wounds; she fell down, & they took her 3rd child (aged 6, called Atong) while she was unconscious. One of 'Ibrahim's' representatives has told her that her child is still alive & she should find the money to go to fetch him home. She commented:

"But how can I ever get Atong back? I can never get the money I need to pay for him...I have nothing. We are looking for food to eat...& they ask us for these impossible sums of money...It is too much for me."

(iv) Machuar Bol Akon, a man in his 30's:

He described how everyone tried to run away when the Arabs came, & attempted to hide the children in long grass. But his 2 children (Akon Machar Bol & Kur Machar aged approximately 6 & 12) were discovered & taken & his wife was killed. When she tried to protect them, the militia beat her to death & then took the children from her. He survived, because they ran in different directions. He has since heard that his children are alive & being kept in the North, in Meiram.

(v) Noon Anguon, a sub-chief:

He was sitting under a tree when the Arabs came & they shot at him before he could escape:

"When they attacked, they didn't differentiate between men, women & children, between soldiers or civilians...They shot me & left me for dead. My children escaped, but they took all my property, livestock (30 cows) & goods & they burnt my home & my crops. I am now lame, because of my wounds & I cannot make a living; & I have no cattle left."

(vi) Bak Garang Lual, who had been a gate-keeper at the compound of the NGO German Agro-Action.

He was in the compound when the militia burst in and he was shot in the shoulder. He escaped, but four women and one man who were caught in the compound were killed. He said he was the only one at the compound who survived.

(vii) Deng Deng Dong, aged 12:

He speaks some English; his father was the local schoolteacher, but was killed in the raid. He described the day:

"When the militia attacked, I was with my mother & we were in front of my father. He stayed back, to make sure no-one was left behind. He was killed, & so was my uncle. The raiders shot them dead. Those who ran quickly, got away; those who were slower, didn't...That was the last time I saw my father alive. I cry when I think of him because I have lost my very best father...I can't get him back again."

(viii) Apin Apin Akot came to meet us. We previously met him & his family at Sokobat, a village 2 hours' walk away from Nyamllell. His wife, Acai Ancook Barjok was captured with 2 of the children - Afaar Apin Apin (aged approx. 4 years) and Akel Apin Apin (aged 9 years) earlier this year. In our previous report, we recorded his story:

"The Arabs came at dawn and captured us; on the way they 'did what they wanted with us'. They tied babies onto horses and our daughter has a paralysed leg as a result (cf photo). We walked on foot for 2 days. We were taken to Meyram to a camp, where they built a fence around us, and kept us there. We were beaten every day, any time they felt like it. They took the girls to work. I was there for three-and-a-half months. They took some of the girls and women to Amar (a place where slaves are traded with a camel-owning tribe. I don't know what happened to them. I was lucky not to be taken there. Sometimes we had to work as domestic slaves or as water carriers. I had to work in the home of a man called Nuwer Omer. For food, we were only given unground sorghum - no milk, no oil, nothing else. This man had 5 slave children. He still has one of our children - a daughter aged 9, called Akel Apin Apin, because my husband did not have enough money to pay for her release. My husband, Apin Apin Akot, managed, at considerable risk of being caught and tortured, to obtain concrete information about where we were. He paid an Arab informer (name supplied but not published here, to protect sources) a bribe of £50,000 (Sudanese) for the information and he took him to the man who was keeping his children. He asked for the release of all his family, but the owner said that the £100,000 (Sudanese) - the equivalent of 25 cows - which was all he had managed to collect, was not enough and he therefore kept our elder daughter, until her father could raise another £50,000 (Sudanese)."

The father had to walk 6 days to reach Meyram and a further day to find his family at Dhelim, where slaves were kept, out of sight of authorities. He said that he saw 'many, many' slaves in Dhelim.

Having lost all their possessions, it is hard for them to raise the money to purchase the freedom of their 9-year-old daughter still in captivity.

3. EVIDENCE FROM ARAB TRADERS.

(i) Arab traders selling clothes in the market at Manyel, including Jacob Bar-El-Habib & Ali Martingale from Matarig.

They say it is a 6 days' walk to the North in the dry season & they have to avoid checkpoints as they would be arrested by GOS forces who would not permit such relationships with African Southerners. They claim, however, that they are "forced to come South by famine, & need relationships with people in the South in order to survive...this is the only way we can get food & water."

They described the present GOS Policy of encouraging attacks by Arab raiders on African Southerners:

"The GOS arms militias with AK47s to fight the people in the South & to act as escorts for the military trains taking supplies to Wau, to maintain GOS garrisons in the South. The militia raid villages to capture Women & children & to loot whatever property they can get. There have been many raids. Omer El Bashir & the GOS have made public the fact that they are arming these militias...on one occasion it was said on Omderman Radio that about 3,000 had been recruited to fight the Egyptians...but many of them were sent here. So the militia are certainly armed by the GOS & encouraged to develop the slave trade."

They described the fate of those abducted into slavery:

"They take the women & children to some town near the border, such as Dhayem (?) or further North...they have to work, looking after cattle, cultivating crops or as domestic servants. For many it is a 'normal life' but inevitably some are maltreated. The children don't understand what is happening but the adults are very unhappy. It is inevitable that one must pay to bring people out of captivity."

They then described the ways in which some of those who have been adducted into slavery are brought back by Arab traders:

"Some colleagues bring back children & women who have been taken by force...if they find children in the North, they bring them back & sell them to their families....this is an expensive business, incurring a lot of costs, such as the provision of food & water on the journey: possibly £30,000 Sudanese (\$); if they are sold for £50,000 (\$), the gross total is £80,000(\$)."

These Arab traders dissociated themselves from the trading of women & children for money, saying:

"This is not a good business. It is done by bad, inhuman people. Our conscience would not allow us to deal in such business. We & the Dinkas are one people; we are brothers & we must stick together. Historically, we have always come here & had good relationships"

They are strong supporters of Sadiq-El-Mahdi's party; they are practising Muslims & claim they have never experienced interference when praying or had any problems practising their religion while in the South.

(ii) Arab trader, Eleu Atak, who is one of 'Ibrahim's contacts & helps to arrange the sale of slaves back to their families.

He claimed:

"I am delighted to free slaves because I feel these people are my brothers."

When asked if he had any message for his Arab brothers who captured the slaves in the first place, he replied:

"I would tell them that taking children by force is not a good thing. People are one; we are all brothers. One should not take other people's children."

When asked about his share of the money obtained through any transaction related to selling children back to their families, he replied:

"It all depends on how many people are involved. We have not fixed a percentage. Soon 'Ibrahim' will come & we will sort it all out."

4. EVIDENCE FROM LOCAL COMMUNITY LEADERS.

Discussions with local leaders in Bahr el Ghazal and the Nuba mountains.

(i) Local Roman Catholic catechists.

"The Northern Muslims bring clothes and food to Abyei, Babanussa and other towns just to the north of here. The essentials are then distributed by GOS officials to attract the children to government-held areas. Once they go to the North for food and clothing, the children are put into trucks and taken to Islamic schools.

The GOS also pays Northerners to capture our children and take them to Islamic training camps.

We receive this information from our church contacts in the North.

If any part of the church feels pain, all the churches should come to help. Our pain is that our children are being captured or enticed to go to the North where they have to become Muslims to survive. The churches outside Sudan should help to stop this.

We older people can resist this Islamisation; but the children can be manipulated by food and clothes.

Thank you for coming to help us. You are our representatives. Please go and tell the world that we are Christians and wish to remain so."

(ii) Discussion with the local SPLA Commander of Aweil West County.

Main Issues Discussed:

- The SPLA has been fighting a political war for years, to try to achieve a united Sudan, with freedom and equality for everyone. But everyone must understand that Unity is conditional on genuine freedom and equality for all Sudanese people. The NIF regime came to power illegally through the military coup of 1989.

- The GOS have armed the Murahaleen to raid and abduct women and children and to take them to the North; some end up in the northernmost parts of the country.

- Some boys end up in GOS military training camps, such as those at Abu jabra, Halit, Babanussa, Mugalet and Meyram.

- Our Dinka people made a local agreement with the Rezeigat Arabs in 1990, which has created an opportunity to bring back our enslaved children for money or for cows...but we don't have enough of either.

- Our arrangement with the Rezeigat Arabs doesn't encourage more slavery, because the agreement works like this: some of these Arabs have decided that the practice of slavery is bad, and have decided voluntarily to help us get the children back. Perhaps 'voluntarily' is an overstatement. The Arab militiamen suffered when the SPLA fought back and succeeded in freeing some of the children. The Arabs then thought that this was becoming a risky business and decided to make an agreement. This agreement fixes the price of a returned slave at five cows. If the Arabs were to arbitrarily raise the price, they would be breaking the agreement and would suffer the consequences.

- Hundreds of children from Aweil West County are still in slavery. Mawal Akon and Won Jok are 2 locations further to the east where there have been recent slave raids like the one that took place here in Nyamlell last March.

- The Misiriyah Arabs were largely responsible for the raid on Nyamlell, but we know that some Rezeigat Arabs were also involved.

- We know from our own people who travel in the North and from both captured and allied Arabs that the GOS is supplying weapons to the Arab militias.
- Please convey this message to Western governments: Islam is being forced on us; our children and adults who go to the North are forced to become Muslims
- We are also facing great hunger because the militias disrupt and prevent us from cultivating and burn our crops. Many are dying of hunger and disease.

CONCLUSIONS.

- 1) The institution of slavery continues on a large scale in GOS-controlled areas of Sudan. The number of chattel slaves held in northern Sudan is estimated to be in the tens of thousands.
- 2) GOS-backed Arab militias regularly raid black African communities for slaves and other form of booty. The slaves, in most cases children and young women, are taken North where they are forced to provide domestic and agricultural labour and to provide sexual services against their will - for nothing other than a minimum of food for survival. They are generally given Muslim names and forced to observe Muslim rituals. Some boys are forced to attend Koranic schools or Popular Defence Force training camps, where they are indoctrinated to become militant Muslim zealots and trained to wage war against their own people.
- 3) The raids undertaken by the GOS-backed militias against the African villages of the South are accompanied by atrocities, torture, rape, looting and destruction of buildings and property. Captives who are deemed unfit to serve as slaves are generally killed and/or tortured. Men are systematically massacred.
- 4) Arabs of some of the Rizeigat clans who are opposed to the GOS have ceased their raids and have signed and honoured a local agreement with some of the Dinka chiefs calling for the return of slaves to their families in the South.
- 5) Slave raids, together with conventional warfare and the denial of humanitarian aid, are among the means used by the GOS to transform the ethnically diverse country into an Arab, Islamic state, against the wishes of the vast majority of its black African population. The devastating effects of this policy are tantamount to genocide, with over 1.5 million dead and over 5 million displaced out of a total black African population of between 6 and 8 million people. This policy of forced Islamisation and Arabisation appears in recent years to have been most violently and systematically pursued in northern Bahr El Ghazal and the Nuba Mountains.
- 6) Humanitarian aid fails to reach hundreds of thousands of victims of war and famine. The GOS continues to refuse to give access to the UN and NGOs to SPLA-administered areas in the Nuba Mountains and to other areas such as Chukudum, Nimule, Pariang, Ikatos and Kongor. Attacks by GOS-backed militias have also recently disrupted the distribution of humanitarian aid in Panliet, Thiekthou and Panthou in northern Bahr El Ghazal.
- 7) The GOS is using the 'politics of hunger' as well as slavery to drive African Southerners to the North and be subjected to enforced Islamisation.
- 8) The imbalance of military power in favour of the GOS perpetuates the war and is a disincentive for the GOS to agree to make peace.

RECOMMENDATIONS.

There is an urgent need for the international community to take a firm stand against the practice of slavery and all other components of the Government of Sudan's policy of genocide, involving not only destruction of life, but also culture, language, community, religion and ethnic identity.

This policy continues to create misery of unimaginable proportions and to give rise to dangerous political instability in Sudan and throughout the wider international arenas. CSI therefore calls on the international community, and in particular the member states of the United Nations Security Council, to prevail upon the Government of Sudan to cease hostilities against the people of the South and of the Nuba Mountains; and to honour its voluntarily accepted human rights obligations to all its citizens, by:

- 1) **Insisting on access for human rights monitors to visit all areas of Sudan**, under the direction of the UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in Sudan, to investigate the extent of slavery and other violations of human rights and to cooperate with the GOS in establishing a mechanism for the return of slaves to their families and appropriate compensation.
- 2) **Insisting that all parts of Sudan should be open to access by humanitarian aid organisations.**
- 3) **Applying pressure on the GOS to desist from supporting further slave raids and undertaking other military offensives against the people of the South and the Nuba Mountains, if necessary by imposing an arms and oil embargo upon the GOS.**
- 4) **Supporting the IGADD peace process**, especially the Declaration of Principles calling for the right of self-determination, secular government and democracy.
- 5) **Establishing a regular dialogue with representatives of Sudan's democratic parties** and supporting policies designed to promote peace and justice for all people in Sudan.
- 6) **Insisting that the GOS desists immediately from further military offensives against civilians.** In the event of continuing hostilities, the international community should impose an arms and oil embargo against the GOS.

Unless the international community prevails upon the Government to stop trying to impose a military 'solution' on the political problems of the South and the Nuba Mountains, the tragedy which is already of catastrophic proportions, will escalate even further and mean yet more horrific suffering for the people of Sudan. It may also cost the international community a high price in terms of political instability and will certainly create a bottomless pit of need for humanitarian aid.

Caroline Cox and John Eibner, March 1996..



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SLAVERY IN SUDAN.

Evidence to Congressional Sub-Committee Hearings, March 1996.

This evidence is based on first-hand experiences obtained during 8 visits to Sudan over the past 4 years: 6 to Southern Sudan, including 1 to the Nuba Mountains; 1 to the North, to meet the Government and to territories controlled by them; and 1 to the Eritraen-Sudanese borderlands.

The visits are sponsored by Christian Solidarity International (CSI), a Human Rights organisation working for victims of repression, regardless of their creed, colour or nationality. We focus particularly on people cut off from the major humanitarian organisations, such as UNHCR, UNICEF, ICRC which can only visit places with the permission of a sovereign government. Being independent, we can go to people bereft of aid and advocacy.

On the basis of eye-witness evidence and first-hand accounts, we testify to gross violations of Human Rights, inflicted and/or encouraged by the Government of Sudan. They include:

1. Widespread & systematic slavery of men, women and children. Government troops and Government-backed Popular Defence Forces (PDF) regularly raid black African communities for slaves and other forms of booty. The slaves, in most cases children and young women, are taken North where they are forced to provide domestic and agricultural labour and sexual services against their will - for nothing other than a minimum of food for survival. Those who are Christians are generally given Muslim names and forced to observe Muslim rituals. Some boys are forced to attend Koranic schools or PDF training camps, where they are trained to wage war against their own people.

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Sources of evidence:

1. In Northern Bahr-EI-Ghazal, we stayed on 3 occasions in the town of Nyamlllel, and walked to surrounding villages and to the market town of Manyel, where Arab traders bring back slaves, to sell them to their families.

(i) We have met many people who have been enslaved, who have escaped or been brought back by Arab traders, and taken their testimonies, which are published in the accompanying documentation.

(ii) We have spoken to the Arab traders who have described in detail how they bring back women and children from the North to sell them to their families, for sums of money averaging £5000(Sudanese), or for goods such as livestock (average price per slave is 5 head of cattle).

(iii) We have seen the evidence of barbarities perpetrated during the slave raids by Government and PDF forces against black African towns and villages: scars caused by torture of men and women, especially the elderly, who are not taken as slaves; looting, pillaging and destruction of buildings, including homes, churches and clinics; and the burning of crops.

2. In the Nuba Mountains, we met women and children who had been detained in the 'Peace Camps' organised by the Government, or in Government garrisons. Some had been captured in military attacks on their villages; others had been forced to go to Government-controlled areas to seek food or medicines for survival. Once there, they were forced to renounce their Christian names, to adopt Muslim names and practices, and were subjected to sexual abuse and forced labour. Detailed case studies are published in the accompanying documents.

3. In the Eritrean-Sudanese borderlands, we met boys and young men belonging to the Beja people, who gave evidence of their abduction and enforced conscription to the Government Army to fight against the people of the South and the Nuba Mountains. We have personal testimonies from those who have been captured for this purpose but who managed to escape.

In all places we visited, Christian and Muslim community leaders, civil administrators, professional personnel and military commanders gave detailed accounts of violations of Human Rights by the Government as part of their policies of subjugation of the people of the South and the Nuba Mountain, including systematic slavery and forced labour, the use of hunger to force people to leave their homes to seek food, and the manipulation of aid as a means of enforced Islamisation.

These policies need to be seen in the wider context of other violations of Human Rights perpetrated by the regime, including ground and aerial offensives against civilians. Overall, 1.5 million people have died and over 5 million have been displaced in the recent years of this civil war.

It must also be remembered that the Government is oppressing many Muslim people in the North: the non-Arab Muslim Beja people and Arab Muslims who oppose the regime in Khartoum. During our visit to Northern Sudan and also to Cairo, we have taken evidence from many who had suffered unlawful arrest, detention, maltreatment and severe torture at the hands of the regime in Khartoum.

Conclusions:

1 The Government's policy towards the people of the South and the Nuba mountains is tantamount to genocide, by means of terror, war, slavery, the mass displacement of the population and the manipulation of aid. In particular, **widespread, systematic slavery continues on a large scale in Government-controlled areas of Sudan.**

2. **The raids by Government troops and Government-backed PDF militia against African towns and villages of the South and Nuba Mountains are accompanied by atrocities, torture, rape, looting and destruction of buildings and property.** Those not taken into slavery are generally killed and/or tortured.

4. **Humanitarian aid fails to reach hundreds of thousands of victims of war and famine. The Government continues to refuse to give access to the UN and NGOs to SPLA-administered areas in the Nuba Mountains and to other areas in the South.** This denial of access, combined with the Government's manipulation of aid in the areas it controls, causes massive suffering and is used to create hunger as a weapon in its policy of enforced migration, facilitating its programme of enslavement and forced labour.

Recommendations.

The time has come for the international community to take a firmer stand against the Government's policies of slavery and genocide, in the broader sense, involving not only destruction of life, but also culture, language, community, religion and ethnic identity.

CSI therefore calls on the international community, and in particular the member states of the United Nations Security Council, to prevail upon the Government of Sudan:

1. **To cease hostilities against the people of the South and of the Nuba Mountains.** If the Government continues to undertake military offensives against the people of the South and the Nuba Mountains, we call for an arms and oil embargo upon the Government and for air exclusion zones to protect the civilian population from aerial bombardment.

2. **To honour its voluntarily accepted human rights obligations to all its citizens.**

3. **To allow access for human rights monitors to all areas of Sudan, under the direction of the UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in Sudan.** These monitors could investigate the extent of slavery and other violations of Human Rights. If the Government in Khartoum has

nothing to fear, it should have no reservations about allowing such access.

4. To allow access to all parts of Sudan to access by humanitarian aid organisations.

CSI also urges the international community to **support the IGADD peace process, especially the Declaration of Principles calling for the right of self-determination, secular government and democracy; to establish regular dialogue with representatives of Sudan's democratic opposition**, which represents over 90 percent of the population; and to encourage the NDA as it seeks to develop policies to promote peace and justice for all people in Sudan.

Unless the international community succeeds in preventing the Government of Sudan from continuing its brutal programmes and policies, the tragedy which is already of catastrophic proportions, will escalate even further and mean yet more horrific suffering for the people of Sudan. This tragedy will certainly create a bottomless pit of need for humanitarian aid and may also cost the international community a high price in terms of political instability.

Caroline Cox, March 1996.

Dr. Gaspar Biro
 United Nations Commission on Human Rights
 Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Sudan

March 12, 1996

House Committee on International Relations
 Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights

Subcommittee on Africa

Mr. Chairman,

Since 1993, when I have undertaken my mandate as a Special Rapporteur of the UN Commission on Human Rights I received numerous reports and information, and collected dozens of eyewitness testimonies indicating that contemporary forms of slavery, including the slave trade, forced labor and servitude are widespread and systematic practices condoned and tacitly approved by the Government of the Sudan (GOS).

I would like to share with you some of the evidence that I discovered supporting this conclusion.

Different paramilitary units are fighting together with the army in Southern Sudan and the Nuba Mountains. These paramilitary units include the Popular Defense Forces (PDF), created in November 1989, groups of volunteers called murahaleen and Arab tribal militias, armed and controlled by the GOS. Numerous reports and testimonies received during my missions to the Sudan and neighbouring countries with hundreds of thousands of Sudanese refugees indicate that members of these groups are carrying out systematically abductions of civilians during or after military operations. They are also providing armed guards for places where the victims are temporarily held and are also in charge of their transportation to their final destinations. A high ranking PDF commander from Kadugli (Nuba Mountains) confirmed to me for example during an official meeting in 1993, that his troops are given orders to collect and transport civilians from the SPLA (Sudan Peoples Liberation Army) held areas to GOS run refugee camps after taking over villages from the rebels. There is evidence also on cases when army officers captured and brought with them to Northern Sudan Southerner children as servants in their households.

The vast majority of the victims are women and children belonging to ethnic, racial and religious minorities and indigenous African tribes from Southern Sudan and the Nuba Mountains area. Women and girls are used as concubines and are forced to work for soldiers. Several cases of rape were reported even in camps for displaced run by GOS or organizations working with the GOS in Kordofan area. Boys and young men are used mainly as servants. There are reports, and my own findings in the Nuba Mountains confirmed these reports that a number of people are obliged to work on large agricultural schemes run by individual landowners close to the GOS. The most exposed of all these categories of victims are members of the Dinka tribe living in Northern Bahr al Ghazal, especially the Dinka-Gogrial. I received during my September 1993 visit to Wau, the capital of the former Bahr al Ghazal state, dramatic eyewitness accounts on these practices. In the camps for displaced

Dinka, situated around Wau. I have talked to people, mainly women, children and elderly who were in the worst shape I have ever seen human beings in my life

Inhuman and degrading treatment of the victims by their captors is widespread. Many victims of the mentioned violations and abuses are forcibly converted to Islam and are given Arabic names, but even with that, in many instances their treatment is not improved

Local and central authorities are all well aware of this phenomena. In a number of cases the relatives of those abducted or local chiefs are making serious efforts to retrieve their relatives, sometimes with success. Local authorities are usually contacted but do not intervene, even if the owner is identified and his name is indicated to them. In a few instances deals were reached between the owner or the captor and the claimants, and victims were released for compensation in money or goods. It is to be noted that according to the 1991 Sudanese Criminal Act abduction (art. 161), kidnapping (art. 162), forced labor (163), unlawful confinement (164) and unlawful detention (165) are considered crimes. I am not aware however of any trial by a Sudanese court in such cases during the past years. It is also to be mentioned that the Sudan is for decades a signatory party to both the 1926 Slavery Convention and the Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery (1956).

Taking into account all these circumstances, I cannot but repeat my conclusions from the last report to the UN General Assembly in November 1995: the abduction of persons, mainly women and children belonging to racial, ethnic and religious minorities from Southern Sudan, their subjection to the slave trade, including traffic in and sale of children and women, slavery, servitude, forced labor and similar practices are taking place with the knowledge of the GOS. The manifest passivity of the GOS in this regard after years of reporting and calls upon it by United Nations organs and international non-governmental organizations affiliated with the UN, and the subsequent lack of any measures to protect Sudanese citizens from these practices lead to the conclusion that abductions, slavery and institutions similar to slavery are carried out by persons acting under the authority and with the tacit approval of the GOS. The fact that the abductions take place mostly in a war-affected area is to be considered as a particularly aggravating circumstance.



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TESTIMONY OF DR. KEVIN VIGILANTE, M.D., REPRESENTATIVE
PUEBLA PROGRAM ON RELIGIOUS FREEDOM
of
FREEDOM HOUSE
before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
SUBCOMMITTEES ON INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS AND HUMAN
RIGHTS
and
ON AFRICA

March 13, 1996

Freedom House congratulates the Sub-Committees on International Operations and Human Rights and on Africa for holding hearings on one of the most shameful, yet hidden, human rights atrocities of our times -- the practice of slavery. I am Dr. Kevin Vigilante, a physician and physician and a member of the medical faculty of Brown University where I care for HIV infected women, who led a fact-finding investigation to Khartoum and northern Sudan a year ago for the Puebla Program on Religious Freedom of Freedom House.

Sudan, Africa's largest country, has been plagued with instability, famine and civil strife since gaining independence from England and Egypt in the late 1950s. In 1989, Gen. Omar Hassan al-Bashir seized power from the democratically-elected civilian regime and developed a partnership with Islamic extremist Hassan al-Turabi and his National Islamic Front. Turabi is determined to make Sudan Africa's first true Islamic state and has been encouraging a "holy war," or *Jihad*, against the largely Christian and animist population in southern Sudan. Sudan ranks at the very bottom of Freedom House's 1996 Freedom in the World Survey. Sudan is characterized by the total or near complete absence of civil liberties and political rights.

The rebellion is fighting the government's attempt to divide the southern region, the homeland of the country's sizeable Christian population, and impose Sharia, Islamic law, on the non-Muslim population. The government's scorched-earth and forced-starvation tactics as it prosecutes its war over one-sixth of the country, in the southern non-Muslim part, has resulted in the deaths of over 1.3 million people, and the displacement of more than three million, mostly Christian and non-Muslim people. More Christians and non-Muslims have died in Sudan than all the people in Bosnia, Chechnya and Haiti, combined.

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To eradicate the Christian and non-Muslim population, the Sudanese government and its agents have bombed, burned and looted southern villages; massacred civilians; enslaved women and children; kidnaped and forcibly converted Christian and other boys and sent them to the front as cannon fodder; relocated entire villages into concentration camps, called "peace villages," withheld food aid to starving Christian and animist communities until they converted to Islam. Individual Christians, including clergy, have over the past few years, also been assassinated, imprisoned, tortured, and flogged for their faith.

Today Freedom House's focus will be on two unique aspects of the persecution of Christians and others -- slavery and the slave-like practice of abducting non-Muslim children, intern them in high security camps where they are forced to convert to Islam and then prepared for battle. I'll refer to these camps as cultural cleansing camps because the children's cultural identities are stripped away inside the camps.

I investigated these abominable practices on my trip to Sudan and interviewed former slaves and children retrieved from cultural cleansing camps and their families. I wish to note that though Muslims living in non-Muslim areas are also affected, slavery in Sudan is disproportionately directed against Christians and other non-Muslims.

"Turabi's dream is to repopulate the south with Muslims," explains Aldo Deng-Akuey, the former deputy speaker of the Sudanese National Assembly, who knew and worked closely with Turabi until he defected in December 1995, in this month's issue of the *Reader's Digest*. "Slavery is a weapon that serves their political objective. Land is the prize," he stated. UN Rapporteur Biro observed in the October report that "since February 1994 there has been an alarming increase in the number of reports and information emanating from a large variety of sources on cases of slavery, servitude, slave trade and forced labor." Slavery not only exists in Sudan, but it is increasing and becoming institutionalized.

In Sudan, it is possible to buy a human being for as little as \$15. Small villages in southern Sudan are raided and the local men are killed, property either confiscated or destroyed. The women and children are abducted and transferred north to be sold into slavery as servants, housekeepers and concubines. In a 1994 report to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, special rapporteur Gaspar Biro cited the locations of camps where "people from northern Sudan or even from abroad" reportedly come to buy captured Christians and animists as slaves. To prevent the captured Christians from escaping, they are branded or mutilated. A Southern Christian boy told me that he was enslaved by an Arab master who cut the achilles tendons of male slaves who did not convert to Islam. The boy converted to Islam as to avoid this fate and he later managed to escape. A young Christian girl I interviewed displayed a large scar on her thigh that she said was the mark of a brand she received while enslaved for a Muslim master in northern Sudan.

The slave industry in Sudan even earns a profit by selling children back to their families. The going rate is five head of cattle per child, sometimes ten for a boy. A typical example of this, reported by Brian Eads of the *Reader's Digest*, involved Kuany Akot, whose village was raided when he was a baby. His father was killed and his mother was sold as a domestic servant

Kuany was renamed Mohammed and raised as a Muslim in the same household where his mother worked. When Kuany was five, his mother arranged for a Muslim slave trader to take him south where her family would pay for his release. The slave trader agreed and received five cows (about \$400) from Kuany's aunt and uncle.

Bishop Macram Mas Gassis, the international spokesman for the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Sudan, has reported that almost 30,000 children in the Nuba mountains -- the site of his own diocese -- have been sold into slavery with the explicit approval of the Sudanese government. Bishop Gassis has been active in raising money in Europe, where he is in exile, to buy back the children of the villages in El Obeid, his diocese.

Fighting in the south has resulted in the mass migration to Khartoum of hundreds of thousands of people. They squat in shanty villages surrounding the city, and the Puebla Program estimates that from these villages and downtown streets, thousands of children have been snatched by government forces.

In early 1995, when I and the Puebla delegation, which was also sponsored by Dorkas Aid International, made our investigation, we were the first human rights group to enter northern Sudan in over a year. Our team documented widespread government-sponsored abductions and disappearances of children, and a campaign of "cultural cleansing" targeted at African Christians and animists. The children, many with families, had been snatched by government agents from public places in the capital and other northern cities and summarily detained in juvenile camps. Some of the Christian children who had been retrieved by their families described high-security, closed camps in remote areas, where they were given new Arabic names, indoctrinated in Islam, and forced to undergo military-style of training. The ultimate fate of the incarcerated children is uncertain, but the evidence strongly suggests they were going to be pressed into battle. Within the camps, disease was rampant and food scarce. The government refused access to international relief and church groups that sought to provide assistance to these children.

I returned with numerous statements from the children who had been retrieved and their families. While government officials in Khartoum told me that the round up of children and the internment of them in juvenile camps were welfare measures taken for the children's own good, as these children were homeless and living on the street, we found that many of the children had families caring for them. A few examples follow:

During a *kasha* (a government roundup) in 1993, Mary's two sons, aged six and nine, were taken by the military. After three months of searching for the two boys, Mary, an African Christian, found them at a camp near the town of Fau. She was allowed to walk through the camp only once to try to find her children. Mary found her children who were both dressed in *damu'ia*, the characteristic dress of those undergoing Popular Defense Force training. The two boys described being treated harshly, given new Arabic names, and being forced to learn Islam.

A 13-year-old African Christian boy was stopped by police on his way home from school on December 27, 1993. When the boy failed to produce his school ID card, he was taken by security forces to a camp at Soba, near Khartoum. Later he was transferred to another camp. Abu

Dom. The boy described this camp as a religious training center with a fence. He was forced to perform manual labor and to recite the Koran. His father was finally able to locate and retrieve him with the help of a friend in the police.

A 13-year-old Christian Dinka boy from the city of Aweil told about his capture in 1992. At that time he lived with his parents at a displaced persons camp in Omdurman:

"In 1992 while my father was in the hospital my mother sent me to the market for tomatoes where I was captured. I showed them the money I was given and tried to explain myself but no one listened to me. I was put into a police truck with many other black boys and taken away. We spent seven days in Khartoum where we were beaten often. Then we were taken to Fau [the childrens' cultural cleansing camp]. I was beaten again when I tried to escape from the camp. We were treated very badly at the camp. We were awakened at 4:00 in the morning and forced to pray aloud, memorizing Koranic verses by heart. All day we alternated between Islamic training and military marching. If one made a mistake, he was beaten and the rest were punished with him."

A 17-year-old Dinka Christian boy from Rumbek was caught in a *kasha* with other boys at the cinema Watania Gharbi. They were assembled with over 500 other youths at Dar Bashair (Abu Dijana and Ebeid Khatim camps) and then taken to Durdeib, a military camp in Port Sudan. The young Dinka reported that they were promised training in mechanics and carpentry, but only offered Islamic, Arabic language and military training. Gifts were offered to entice the boys to convert to Islam, but if they refused, more forceful measures were used. The boys were informed that they must be made Muslims by any means. This young man spent 14 months at the Durdeib camp and then transferred to the Fau camp to help with military training of boys. Soon after arriving at Fau he escaped.

The government maintains a policy of extreme secrecy concerning the camps, virtually sealing them off from the outside world. Though the government had refused my request for permission to visit the camps, I managed to visit a detention camp for children in Fau near Wad Medani. Located in the desert about 180 miles east of Khartoum, the camp, which could accommodate approximately 200 boys, consisted of crude huts with no access to running water or sanitation facilities. I interviewed camp guards and local villagers who informed me that the children had been taken away several months prior, but I was unable to determine where the children had been taken. They had joined the ranks of the thousands of disappeared African children in Sudan.

UN Special Rapporteur Biro concluded in his Oct. 1995 report that "the total passivity of the government after having received information for years regarding this situation can only be interpreted as tacit political approval and support of the institution of slavery and the slave trade." In its fact-finding in northern Sudan, Puebla found that not only is the government indifferent to the pleas of families trying to retrieve their abducted children but has made threats against them and raised other obstacles in the face of their efforts to find their children. Imprisoning children in juvenile camps is a naked policy of cultural cleansing to change the identity of those targeted from being Christian or animist to Muslim. The responsibility of

Khartoum for the enslavement and cultural cleansing of Christians and others can no longer be evaded.

In conclusion, Freedom House makes four observations and recommendations.

1. The President should speak out forcefully against the scourges of chattel slavery and slave-like practices in Sudan. The silence of the West in the face of mounting evidence of ongoing slavery must be broken. The Administration has dramatically and effectively turned the world spotlight on Sudan over the issue of terrorism; it should now give the same priority to the grave human rights abuse of slavery.
2. The Administration should ensure that the issue of slavery of the basic type practiced in Sudan today is raised at all future international and United Nations forums where the protection of women, children and minorities is raised. Last fall at the UN Fourth World Women's Conference held in Beijing, the Administration passed by an important opportunity for the issue of slavery in Sudan to be addressed. Though women are one of the principal victims of the slave trade in Sudan, chattel slavery was not an issue of discussion or even a key word in the document adopted at the World Conference on Women. In over 120 pages of the Platform for Action, slavery is only referred to as "sexual slavery" and nothing was mentioned concerning the very real slave trade that takes place in Sudan today.
3. The President should ensure that a directive is immediately issued to the Immigration and Naturalization Service acknowledging mounting persecution against Christians and non-Muslims in Sudan, as well as other countries, and instructing INS officers to process the claims of escapees from such persecution with priority and diligence. The INS has shown a general indifference towards Christians fleeing Sudan, who are seeking asylum because of religious persecution. A Sudanese Catholic, whom I'll name Mr. M for his own safety, has been detained in the U.S. for the last three years while his case is being processed. Mr. M worked with aid workers, missionaries, and particularly with Mark Genner as a translator in Southern Sudan. When Sudanese authorities executed Mark Genner in 1992, Catholic Bishop Paride Taban advised Mr. M that his life was in danger and should flee Sudan. A INS court has denied Mr. M's request for asylum partly based on his failure to explain the doctrine of "transubstantiation." He is currently appealing this decision. That this Christian should be encountering difficulties in obtaining asylum in the U.S. is an outrageous injustice.
4. UN Ambassador Madeleine Albright should monitor closely and press for the effective implementation of a potentially important new program in Sudan by the UN childrens' agency UNICEF. Under international pressure from the publication of the Puebla report and the Special Rapporteur's findings, Sudan allowed UNICEF to initiate last fall a family-reunification program for boys who had been abducted and detained in the cultural cleansing camps for juvenile eniles described in my testimony. UNICEF has experienced many delays in proceeding with the program and is confining its work to

only one camp. The U.S. should ensure that UNICEF's work in this regard is thorough and expedient, and work to expand the project to retrieving and reuniting with their families children sold into slavery.

A Testimony on

ARAB SLAVERY IN SUDAN

By

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Presented before a Joint Hearing of the Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights and Subcommittee on Africa, both of the House Committee on International Relations, March 13, 1996

Introduction

To most people in the Western world, slavery is a thing of the past. Although its legacy continues to be debated in this country, it is generally believed that this despicable system would not have any place in the twentieth century. But in the Sudan and Mauritania, the slave trade and slavery of Africans by Arabs not only exists to this day, it is raging at an alarming rate. In the Sudan, slavery constitutes a silent (and I must say, hidden) tragedy whose genocidal effects surpass the recent atrocities in Rwanda, Somalia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina combined. The practice of slavery actually never stopped in Sudan. Since their invasion of Sudan, Arabs have always pillaged our villages for young men, women and children who are then sold into slavery. They employed, scorched-earth attacks (or *ghazwas*), including burning down whole villages (usually in the middle of the night), destroying farmlands, crops and livestock. Through the deracinating machinery of Arab slavery, which reached a peak in the nineteenth century, whole African societies were decimated. Many millions of Africans perished and millions more were sold into slavery in the Arab world. What is happening in Sudan today is a continuation of this brutal and heinous system of Arab slavery and cultural hegemony and imperialism to which the world has turned a deaf ear and blind eye.

As we speak today, our villages in South Sudan, the Nuba Mountains, and Southern Blue Nile Province are being burned down by Arab troops, boys and girls are being kidnapped by Arab militias (or so-called Popular Defense Forces), women are being raped by government soldiers, and old men and women are either shot in cold blood or left to perish from starvation and disease. The situation is especially horrific in the Nuba Mountains and northern Bahr el-Ghazal regions which have literally been sealed off from the rest of the world by the present Khartoum regime of Lt. General Hassan el-Bashir. These African regions, which immediately border the Misseriya and Reizigat Arabs of Kordofan region (who have in the past and present times been notorious for their slave-raiding operations), have been sorely depopulated. Their property -- animal and other material wealth-- has been ransacked and either looted or destroyed. A large number of Arab merchants (or *Jellaba*) have moved into and occupied the fertile farmlands of Bahr el-Ghazal and the Nuba Mountains, forcibly displacing the Africans from their ancestral lands. In addition to physical and cultural loss, the ownership and sale of Africans, the denial of their fundamental human freedoms, and their forcible relocation into desert lands in northern Sudan by Arab slavers have inflicted incalculable damage on their psyche, dignity and self-esteem.

Historical Antecedents

Slavery is as much an intricate part of Arab Sudanese's present as it is of their past. The Arabs have built empires, kingdoms and chiefdoms (or sultanates) with African slave labor. Although a full historical account of the institution of slavery in Sudan is beyond the scope of this presentation, a few highlights should suffice to establish the point for our purposes here.

The Turko-Egyptian conquest of the Sudan led by the Egyptian viceroy, Mohammed Ali in 1821, was undertaken primarily to supply slaves from the African populations of the Nubian and other kingdoms in the Sudan. After the abolition of slave trade and slavery in Egypt in the 1870s, the Egyptian Khedive, Ismail Pasha, enlisted the services of European army commanders,

including Sir Samuel Baker, Charles George Gordon, and Romolo Gessi Pasha to suppress the slave trade in the Sudan. This strategy backfired, however, as it was construed by Arabs and Muslim slavers as an act of foreign aggression designed to undermine the spread of Islam in the Sudan. Thus, the ensuing revolt led by Mohammed Ahmed el-Mahdi, which culminated in the creation of the Mahdist state in 1885, was as much a resistance against Western imperialism as it was a resistance against abolitionism.

The Condominium Treaty of 1898, which provided for joint Egyptian and British rule in the Sudan, had as one of its goals, to put an end to slave trade and slavery. Whereas the trafficking in human cargo across borders was significantly suppressed, slavery and slave trade within the country continued unabated. Senior British officers in the Sudan Civil Service maintained double standards. On the one hand, they reported to their Foreign Office in Britain that they had effectively suppressed the slave trade and slavery in the Sudan. On the other hand, they permitted Arabs in the Sudan to raid and burn down African villages to capture slaves. Senior British officers, cognizant of public outcry in Britain, camouflaged slavery in the Sudan, referring to slaves as "servants," and to Arab slavers as "masters." For instance, Slatin Pasha, who served as inspector-general of the Sudan, maintained the view that slaves were "godforsaken swine who do not deserve to be treated like free and independent men." In a stern warning to one of his subordinates, he stated "if in an official document I find again that he calls Sudanese servants 'slaves', a finger from his right hand will be cut off."

Since the Sudan gained political independence from the British in 1956, the policies of the successive Arab regimes have ranged from tacit condonation to overt support and involvement in slavery. During the first civil war (1955-1972), the Sudan government forcibly recruited a large number of Africans from the Nuba Mountains and Northwestern Bahr el-Ghazal regions into the national army. These "slave army" were deployed on the front-line to fight the Southern Sudan Liberation Movement (SSLM) that sought cessation from the rest of the country. During the brief period of relative peace (1972-1983), slave trade and slavery continued, Misseriya and Reizigat Arabs in Kordofan mounted constant raids on the Dinka and other African ethnicities in Bahr el-Ghazal and Nuba Mountains for slaves and cattle. The Khartoum government, then under President Jafaar al-Nimeiri took no measures to punish the perpetrators and bring an end to slavery in the regions.

Slavery increased in scale and intensity at the outbreak of the second civil war, following the unilateral repeal, by the Nimeiri regime of the Addis Ababa Agreement which gave the people of Southern Sudan a regional self-government. After a series of successes by the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) over the national army, the ostensibly democratic government of Prime Minister Sadiq el-Mahdi pursued a policy of genocide by extermination of the Dinka and other African tribes in Southern Sudan and Nuba Mountains who were sympathetic to the SPLA. The government exploited age-old ethnic animosities by rearming the Rizeigat and Misseriya Arabs of Kordofan with sophisticated weapons to raid, loot, and destroy Southern Sudanese homelands, pillaging for slaves, cattle and other booty. Further, the government refused to fully investigate and bring these Arab militia for flagrant atrocities committed against the African in these regions. In 1987, Drs. Ushari Mahmoud and Suleyman Ali Baldo of the University of Khartoum documented the Diein massacre, in which 1,500 Dinka were burnt to death in train wagons and

another 7000 or more taken as slaves by the Reizigat and Misseriya Arabs. Instead, the government of Sadiq el-Mahdi responded by arresting these two scholars and human rights activists and detained them for several years without trial.

The current government of Lt. General Omer Hassan el-Bashir has declared an Islamic Holy War or *Jihad* on non-Muslim Africans in the Sudan. This tactical move was intended to achieve several purposes, among them are the following: (1) By framing the current civil war as an attack by non-Muslims against Muslims, the Sudan government thought it would attract military support from the Arab and Muslim world. To that effect, the government of el-Bashir has succeeded in garnering military support from Iraq, Iran, Libya, and Yemen, and other Arab and/or Muslim countries. (2) The Sudan government would effectively deflect world attention from the slavery issue, and vigorously prosecute war with the SPLA. Furthermore, the government denies international relief (food, medical, and other essential services) to the African civilians in the south and refugees in the north. This leaves many millions of African men, women, and children vulnerable to enslavement or death by starvation.

Ideology of Arab Slavery and Hegemony

A number of factors combine to shape the ideology of slavery in the Sudan in the past and in the present, three most salient of which are cultural, religious, and racial factors. Sudan is characterized by diverse cultures, religions, races and languages. However this diversity is generally understood in the context of two broad cleavages -- *Arab and Africa*. Since independence, the successive regimes in Khartoum have defined Sudan culturally as an Arab and Muslim nation and have adopted policies for forcibly converting the non-Arab people in South Sudan, the Nuba Mountains, and Ingessana Hills into Arabs and Muslims. For example, Sadiq el-Mahdi, former Prime Minister of the Sudan put it bluntly:

Islam should influence the whole of Africa but there is a conspiracy in East Africa. Here people believe they are Negroes, different from Arabs and must project their own personality and follow their own way. This underlies the affairs in the South (which is black African) at present ... the South is a step-board for Arab entry and Islamic influence into the heart of Africa.

Additionally, a prominent member of the Khatmiyya Islamic sect, Ali Abd al-Rahman in a parliamentary session once stated with characteristic arrogance that "the Sudan is an integral part of the Arab world and as such must accept the leadership of the two [Islamic] religious leaders, anyone dissenting from this view must quit the country." More recently, Lt. General Omer Hassan el-Bashir, current military leader of the Sudan, maintains that "Arabism without Islam will degenerate into tribalism."

With respect to race, a kind of one-blood-drop rule applies in discerning racial cleavages. Whereas in Anglo-Saxon cultural contexts this rule is applied to maintain racial exclusivity, in the Sudan, it is applied to camouflage racial imperialism and cultural chauvinism. Professor Ali Mazrui illustrates the racial distinctions in Sudan as follows: "With the Arabs, the child is Arab without reservations. If we visualize an Arab marrying a Nilotic woman in the fourteenth century

and visualize [a] son being born, the son would be Arab. If we imagined in turn that the son again married a Nilotic woman who bore a son -- this son too, would be an Arab. If we then assumed that the process is repeated, generation after generation, until a child is born in the second half of the twentieth century with only a drop of his blood still ostensibly of Arab derivation and the rest of his blood indubitably Nilotic, the twentieth century child is still an Arab." What this illustration conceals, however, is that in Sudan, the relationship between Arabs in the north and Africans in the south has historically and in present been an adversarial one, that the hybrid race resulting from this process has always looked at African culture and skin color as inferior to Arab culture and race, and, therefore, at the Africans as enslavable people.

A Call to Action

In light of the foregoing, we are calling on the United States Congress and Government to lead an international campaign to abolish slavery in Sudan and Mauritania. Specifically, the U S congress should adopt a binding resolution calling for the abolition of all forms of slavery in Sudan and Mauritania. Further, the U S representative to the United Nations should bring to the table a U N Security Council Resolution authorizing member states to impose a comprehensive economic and military embargo against Sudan. Since the Sudan Government has shown an unwillingness to take measures directed at ending slavery, and since it has blocked the U N Special Rapporteur on human rights from conducting investigations on slavery in the Sudan, it is time for the international community to take much stronger actions. In the case of Mauritania, the U S should introduce a Security Council resolution to appoint a Special Rapporteur on human rights to systematically investigate slavery and other human rights abuses in Mauritania and render a comprehensive report to the U N General Assembly.

Furthermore, the U S Congress should continue to support regional peace initiatives such as the Inter-Governmental Authority for Drought and Development (IGADD) whose "Declaration of Principles," recognizes, among other things, the fundamental right to self-determination for the people of Southern Sudan, Nuba Mountains, and Southern Blue Nile Province, a right that is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is time the international community recognized that slavery and the dehumanization of Africans cannot and will not be abolished through a peaceful solution to the ongoing war within the framework of a unitary Sudan. Only through partitioning of the country can African Sudanese rid themselves of Arab slavery and cultural imperialism.

That the present regime of the National Islamic Front has turned Sudan into a pariah state that is heavily involved in international terrorism, and in destabilizing its neighbors cannot be overemphasized. What has escaped the world consciousness is the internal terrorism that this regime is imposing on Africans in Sudan which, in turn, fuels the ongoing slavery and slave trade. Therefore, a concerted action of the world community is needed to stamp out slavery in Sudan and Mauritania.

Sudan People' Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A)
1717 Massachusetts Avenue NW # 701
Washington DC 20036
Phone 202-347 3507 Fax 3418

Dear Madam / Sir,

RE: SLAVERY AND SLAVE TRADE IN SUDAN

The Sudan Peoples' Liberation Movement has learned with satisfaction of the forthcoming Congressional hearing on slavery and slave trade in Sudan.

We wish to confirm that the practice of slave raiding and the institution of slavery in the Sudan re-emerged in the mid-1980s after the scrapping of the Southern Regional Government and the resumption of military conflict in the Sudan. The scale and nature of the slave industry in Sudan is massive, vicious, cruel, and dehumanizing. We are confident that independent witnesses will adduce sufficient corroborative evidence to this fact.

The present fundamentalist Islamic regime in Sudan is the chief promoter, merchant and practitioner of slave raiding, trading, export and keeping. State institutions like the army and paramilitary formations carry out the raids. Women and children are sold to Islamic Party supporters as domestic chattels and 'conveniences'. Men are used in agricultural schemes as unpaid labor. 'Surplus' slaves are exported to neighboring Arab countries. It would be difficult for individuals to smuggle humans across the borders without the tacit agreement of the regime.

The government of Omer Beshir and Hassan Turabi is in the slave business because it is consistent with their military agenda of de-populating Southern Sudan and the Nuba region. They have declared 'holly' war on all the African people of the Sudan. These are their own words. To us the question is not whether slavery exists in Sudan but what humanity can do to stop it immediately. The solution lies in the removal of the present regime so that a new political dispensation is instituted to resolve the humanitarian, political, economic and social problems of the Sudan.

Steven Wondu



Representative.

March 5, 1996.



GENERAL HEADQUARTERS

**SUDAN PEOPLES' LIBERATION MOVEMENT
AND SUDAN PEOPLES' LIBERATION ARMY**


Chairman and commander in chief


 Ref No **DOCS/FOREIGN/APP.**
 Date **DECEMBER 31, 1995.**
LETTER OF ACCREDITATION

1. This is to certify that Mr. Stephen Wandu is appointed Official Representative of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLM/SPLA) to the United States of America and Canada with effect from January 1, 1996.
2. The SPLM/SPLA requests foreign Governments, organizations and individuals kindly to provide all necessary and possible assistance to Mr. Stephen Wandu and to accord him the normal diplomatic treatment.
3. The Chairman and Commander-in-Chief, on behalf of the people of the New Sudan and of SPLM/SPLA and on his own behalf, appreciates in advance and in anticipation any assistance and diplomatic treatment accorded to Mr. Wandu.



(SIGNED):


 DR. JOHN GARANG de MABIOR,
 Chairman/C-in-C, SPLM/SPLA.
 Chukudum, New Sudan.

Question for the Record submitted to
William H. Twaddell, Deputy Assistant Secretary
Bureau of African Affairs
U.S. Department of State
House International Relations Committee
Subcommittee on Africa and Subcommittee on Human Rights

1.Q. What is the United States doing to encourage the Government of Mauritania to end the vestiges of slavery?

1.A. We use our access to the senior levels of the Mauritanian government to stress the importance attached to this issue by the U.S. Government, American citizens, and non-governmental organizations in the United States.

We have urged the Mauritanian Government to establish an office within its bureaucracy to investigate and resolve all allegations of human rights abuses, especially related to slavery.

We have stressed on numerous occasions the need for the government to undertake public education programs and repeat its programs of the 1980s to inform people of their rights.

We have urged the Mauritanian Government to permit open discussions on radio and television and in the press on the vestiges of slavery.

Question for the Record submitted to
William H. Twaddell, Deputy Assistant Secretary
Bureau of African Affairs
U.S. Department of State
House International Relations Committee
Subcommittee on Africa and Subcommittee on Human Rights

In VOA editorials, we have condemned slavery as the worst activity of man and called on the Mauritanian government to take immediate steps to end the vestiges of slavery.

Question for the Record submitted to
William H. Twaddell, Deputy Assistant Secretary
Bureau of African Affairs
U.S. Department of State
House International Relations Committee
Subcommittee on Africa and Subcommittee on Human Rights

We have encouraged the government to welcome visits by American and international non-governmental organizations, to allow them to make their own independent assessments of human rights in Mauritania, which it has done.

We have urged the Mauritanian Government to review and respond to the UN's 1984 recommendations on slavery at the April 1996 session of the UN Human Rights Subcommission.

We have encouraged the government to give official recognition to non-governmental Mauritanian organizations concerned with slavery and begin productive and direct dialogue with its leading human rights and anti-slavery activists.

We have urged the Mauritanian Government to prosecute vigorously and publicly any individual responsible for forced labor or mistreatment.

We are urging the Mauritanian Government to facilitate access to the media by the three organizations which now exist to deal with the vestiges of slavery.

Question for the Record submitted to
William H. Twaddell, Deputy Assistant Secretary
Bureau of African Affairs
U.S. Department of State
House International Relations Committee
Subcommittee on Africa and Subcommittee on Human Rights

2.Q. What role does color play in determining who is enslaved in the Sudan and in Mauritania?

2.A. We have no evidence that color plays a role in determining who is enslaved in Sudan. Rather the determining factor is membership in a racial, ethnic, or religious minority, which in Sudan is often indistinguishable by color. Slavery in Mauritania has existed for centuries among all ethnic groups, except the Wolofs. The white Moors--an Arab/Berber people--enslaved the original inhabitants of the Sahara as well as people captured during wars with neighboring ethnic groups. The descendants of these captured people are now known as Black Moors or Haratine (Literally "Freed people"). Slavery was also practiced among the southern black ethnic groups, the Halpulaar and the Soninke, who enslaved other blacks.

A large percentage of white and black Moors have ancestors who were Arab/Berbers and ancestors who were members of various ethnic groups native to Subsaharan Africa. The skin color of these Moors may vary greatly. We know of no studies correlating skin color to one's status as a slave, former slave, or free person.

Question for the Record submitted to
William H. Twaddell
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Bureau of African Affairs
U.S. Department of State
House International Relations Committee
Subcommittee on Africa and Subcommittee on Human Rights

3.Q. Does Mauritania have a national program backed with government funds - similar to the post Civil War effort of the United States, i.e. The Freedman's Bureau - to end the legacies and vestiges of slavery and to educate people regarding their rights? Is the United States providing funds for such an effort?

3.A. No single official government office dedicated to ending the vestiges of slavery per se exists, although several departments within the Mauritanian Government have initiated education and work programs to assist the poorest and least educated part of the population--largely made up of former slaves and their children. The Energy and Commerce Ministers are haratines (free men whose ancestors were slaves). Several Mauritanian human rights organizations, which focus on issues related to slavery, are permitted to operate openly in Mauritania. SOS-Esclaves helps former slaves recover their property and children. "The National Committee for the Struggle Against the Vestiges of Slavery" has published a report on the vestiges of slavery. We are urging the Mauritanian Government to do more to assist these NGO's in their work.

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