

After years of desperately fighting for survival in the Nuba Mountains, the Sudanese Peoples Liberation Army (SPLA) launched a full-scale military offensive in the Nuba Mountains of South Khordofan. Seven garrisons of the National Islamic Front (NIF) government's occupying force were captured and two concentration camps liberated. With the fall of Bilinia, the provincial capital, Kadugli, came within artillery range of the resistance movement.

In an exclusive interview with the SPLA Commander for the Nuba Mountains, Yosif Kowa Mekki, a Frontline Fellowship mission team was told that the Nuba people had finally managed to turn their defensive war for survival into an offensive campaign to liberate the long suffering Nuba.

Approximately one million Nubans are incarcerated in the NIF government's "peace camps" (concentration camps). About 400 000 Nubans have been holding out in the SPLA controlled liberated areas. The NIF government of Sudan has declared "holy war" (Jihad) against the mostly Christian Nubans. Most of the villages in the Nuba Mountains have been destroyed. Most of the churches have been burnt down. Most of the livestock has been looted or destroyed. Even wells have been poisoned. This is all part of the NIF government's scorched earth policy called "Tamsit" or "combing".

Commander Yousif Kowa noted that the NIF regime's policy of genocide had only hardened the Nuba people's resistance. In fact the government of Sudan had only succeeded in driving the Nuba people to support the SPLA. If the SPLA succeeds in opening up a land route from Bahr-El-Ghazal to the Nuba Mountains then the NIF oil fields at Bentiu also will be threatened.

NIF Force Destroyed

An entire mechanised column of NIF government troops was destroyed by the SPLA at the Isoloro Junction in Eastern Equatoria. The military dictator of Sudan, General Al Bashir, ordered the garrison at Torit to recapture the town of Magwe – which the SPLA had overrun in October 1996. General Al Bashir visited Torit on 12 October 1997 to inspect the soldiers before their offensive. This operation was meant to seize the initiative and inflict the first serious defeat on the SPLA in over a year. On 13 October the column left Torit. Twelve km from Torit the NIF force was ambushed by the SPLA and completely destroyed. The SPLA captured two T55 tanks, four 24 tonne Hino trucks and large quantities of weapons, artillery and munitions.

Arabs Bomb their own Prisoners

The high altitude bombing by NIF government Antonovs of civilian centres in the resistance controlled South resulted in 3 Arab prisoners of war being killed and 4 wounded at a POW camp outside Yei on 7 October. Frontline field workers have been delivering Gospel booklets and Gospel audio tapes in Arabic to the Yei (and other) prison camps.

International Jihad

It has long been known that the NIF government of Sudan receives military support from the Muslim governments of Iran and Iraq. Recently it was disclosed that the Muslim states in South East Asia – Malaysia and Indonesia – have also been providing military assistance to the government of Sudan.

A Sudanese diplomat who defected from the Sudan embassy in Kuala Lumpur reported that the NIF has engaged in widespread corruption in order to enlist the support of Malaysia's leaders. Malaysia's national petroleum company, Petronas, now owns a large part of the consortium exploiting Southern Sudan's oil resources. In return Sudan has received a substantial amount of military hardware from the Malaysians. Indonesia recently sent a large military delegation, headed by its Minister of Defence, to Khartoum. This Indonesian delegation actually visited the besieged Southern provincial capital, Juba, to see the desperate plight of their Sudanese allies first hand. The Indonesians announced that Sudan's Islamic government was "under threat from the infidels" and so Indonesia would continue to support Sudan militarily.

During our recent mission trips throughout Southern and Central Sudan, we saw the heavy weaponry, including tanks, captured by the SPLA on the road to Juba and walked over the decomposing corpses, skulls and skeletons of the defeated Arab army. We saw the Christian flags flying over the newly liberated towns in Equatoria province.

"When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the

flame scorch you.” Isaiah 43:2

Largest Bible Shipments Distributed in Sudan

From September to November 1997, Frontline Fellowship delivered six shipments of Bibles to seven different regions of Sudan. The number of Bibles and New Testaments, Hymn and Prayer books, Bible study, Sunday School and other Christian books distributed inside Sudan came to 22 086 Bibles and Christian books in ten languages.

The logistics involved in loading and off-loading and carrying over 400 boxes, a total of eight tonnes, across innumerable flooded rivers, over mountains and through swamps in a war zone like Sudan were complex. Often we were caught in torrential rain, slipping and sliding in the mud with boxes of Bibles under tarpaulins. Most of these Bibles were distributed in the newly liberated areas. We reached areas that had never had a visitor before – “not since the war began”!

These shipments brought the total number of Bibles delivered to Sudan by Frontline Fellowship in 1997 alone to 36 450. The total number of Hymn and Prayer books delivered comes to 9 765 and other Christian books – 13 790. The overall total of Bibles and Christian books in 17 languages distributed inside Sudan by Frontline Fellowship in 1997 exceeded 60 000!

Return to the Nuba

Over 5 000 of these Bibles, Hymn books and other Christian books were smuggled behind enemy lines to the beleaguered Christians in the Nuba Mountains. In March 1997 a Frontline Mission Team was strafed and bombed by M1-24 Hind helicopter gunships as they delivered Arabic Bibles to this island of Christianity besieged in a sea of Islam.

In September, the same Frontline missionaries, Steve and Scott, returned to the Nuba, walking over 250 km to conduct 30 services and personally deliver 1 200 Arabic Bibles, 1 000 Hymn books and 2 700 other Christian books to 26 different congregations. Often the team was welcomed by singing congregations to escort them to the services.

“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings Good News.” Isaiah 52:7

Kotobi Church Restored

In November I conducted the first ever service in the newly restored Episcopal Church in Kotobi. This church building had been destroyed by a helicopter gunship rocket attack in August 1996. Over 500 people packed out the rebuilt church building for a joyous three and a half hour celebration that Jesus Christ is building His Church and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it (Matthew 16:18)!

Teacher Training Course

An American volunteer, Dr. Monte Wilson, and I also conducted the first training course for secondary school teachers in Western Equatoria since the war began. There are many primary schools in the province, but only three secondary schools. Forty-seven teachers (from each of those three schools) attended this two-week Biblical Worldview Seminar. Frontline Fellowship also provided 1 500 Moru New Testaments and Psalms to 100 primary schools in Mundri County. These Scriptures will be used as textbooks.

“So shall My Word be that goes forth from My mouth. It shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.” Isaiah 55:11

Jesus Film in Sudan

Thousands of Sudanese people gathered as Frontline missionaries presented the first screenings of the JESUS film in their areas. Evangelists were equipped with Gospel Recordings “Messengers” (tough tape recorders with solar panels), Gospel tapes and flip charts. Chaplains were provided with bicycles. Repairs on a destroyed Bible College were also begun.

“The Gospel of Christ . . . is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes.” Romans 1:16

Lui Restored

At a special memorial service at Lui, the birthplace of Christianity in Moruland, I had the privilege of presenting the sermon. In it, I paid tribute to pioneer missionary Kenneth Fraser. Dr. Fraser, a CMS missionary from Scotland, brought the Gospel to Moruland in 1920. He established the first hospital, school and church in the area. Twice these buildings at Lui were destroyed by the fundamentalist Muslim government – first in 1965, secondly in the 1990’s. Yet on the 15th of November 1997, over 1 500 people packed the Frazer Memorial Church in Lui. Despite repeated destruction the threefold ministry, to body, mind and soul, started by Dr. Fraser has once again been restored. The Lui Hospital is fully operational again– over 12 000 patients had been treated and 400 major operations done in the first few months since reopening. Since Lui was liberated from the occupying Arab force, thousands of people have come back to Lui and the primary school already has 200 students enrolled. The resilience of this church has defied all attempts to destroy it. Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life!

Trench Evangelism

Thousands of Bibles were distributed to SPLA soldiers, including at the battlefield. We travelled by vehicle, motorbikes, boat, bicycle and by foot to deliver Bibles to some of the most inaccessible areas, mostly in the newly liberated territories. On occasion, we literally walked amongst the decomposing corpses, skulls and skeletons of the defeated Arab forces on the battlefield to minister to soldiers in the trenches. Bibles and Gospel booklets were also delivered to hundreds of Muslim prisoners of war.

An SPLA commander remarked how before one battle a traditional blood sacrifice offered by the local witchdoctor was refused by the soldiers who responded: “We have the Bible, our Christian Flag, our crosses and our chaplains!” They all knelt down as the Chaplain led the soldiers in prayer. Victory came quicker than thought possible – with few casualties in a battle for a deeply entrenched and heavily mined Muslim government garrison town!

Ministering to Body, Mind and Soul

All in all, Frontline missionaries have presented well over 800 church services and other meetings in Sudan, including three Medical Workshops, the Teacher Training Course and four Pastors Courses. Through Love in Action we minister to the body, Leadership Training ministers to the mind and Literature Distribution for the soul.

Please pray for our mission teams involved in further ministry inside Sudan at this time. We are seeking to provide Gospel Messenger tape recorders and charts to as many evangelists as possible, screen the Jesus film (in Arabic, Nuer or Dinka) to as many people as possible and preach the Gospel to as many Muslims as possible.

“Cush will submit herself to God” Psalm 68:31

Dr Peter Hammond

Related Resources:-

[3 Films on Sudan on 1 DVD](#)

[Faith Under Fire in Sudan](#)