



BRIEFING ON THE CURRENT SITUATION IN SUDAN & SOUTH SUDAN

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SUDAN – KHARTOUM

Recent history of the SVP in the Khartoum area:

- 1998: Historic persecution of Christians and harassment of SVP by the authorities
- 2000: Some recognition and permission to build Gebel Awlia Centre
- 2003: Acceptance that SVP is recognised as a credible NGO
- 2011: Government express wish to work in partnership
- 2013: Warning signs of trouble ahead
- 2014: Persecution of Christians and harassment by the authorities

Over the years support for street children developed into a huge programme, the funding of which accounted for 65% of the SVP budget for major programmes in the Khartoum area. Many of the 180 staff employed by the Society were needed as a result of this programme. It also resulted in tremendous pressure on the management team in terms of the quality and frequency of reporting to partner organisations, many of whom need their reports to be formatted to their own standards. Without going into too much detail the programme also attracted more than usual attention from the Khartoum Government as it was often interpreted as a method of evangelising. During my last visit to Khartoum I was accompanied at all times by a “man from the security” who didn’t seem to be interested in baby feeding and medicine – more so the foster homes.

In such circumstances the whole operation of the SVP in Sudan, in terms of major programmes became embroiled in this difficult process which necessitated the employment of people with specialist skills such as care workers, foster parents, doctors, paediatricians, psychologists, teachers, even down to security guards. Although the original principles and objectives were exemplary, I have expressed the view many times in the past that the simple and basic provision of help and compassion to the most needy and vulnerable (and our Vincentian Spirit) was at risk. The situation now is that many children have returned to the South or have been reunited with relatives.

As everyone is aware we have been suffering major problems in Khartoum in recent years which have been exacerbated recently. These problems have culminated in the withdrawal of funding by the Swiss Association of the Friends of Sister Emmanuelle (ASASE). The focus of ASASE has always been on the “Street Children” programme which provided foster homes and other accommodation for orphans or older children in need. It is important to provide some explanation and put this latest development into true perspective.

The Trustees and National Council of the SVP (E&W) have been kept informed and everyone is agreed that we develop a plan for the continuation of the baby feeding and some medical support through the Friday Clinics. Now that a major demand for specialist skills has been removed I believe that we have the knowledge and commitment necessary in our members and volunteers together with a number of core staff.

I have informed the SVP in Khartoum of our proposals for the short term. Clearly we are eager to continue our support and I am looking forward to developing plans to continue with the baby feeding and perhaps some medical support. We have proved in the past that we can communicate effectively with our members in Khartoum to get good and regular reports by email and Skype conversations. We already have the necessary reporting processes in place which would satisfy our needs.

I am now waiting for a revised budget from them but I’m sure that based on previous years we can maintain a level of funding which will enable them to provide baby feeding and hopefully some medical support for the foreseeable future. **As far as the SVP (E&W) is concerned there should be no change in the support which we provide.**

SOUTH SUDAN – JUBA

Juba CC has been the Central Council for South Sudan for years and after the difficult birth of the new country the SVP embarked on a programme to replicate the programmes which had proved so successful in Khartoum. The most significant step was to develop the Lullugu Centre just outside the capital, Juba which incorporates vocational training for young people, a Medical Centre and a Baby Feeding Centre

The work of the Conferences continues with indigenous people but more recently urgent attention has been needed to help huge numbers of refugees. It is reported that tens of thousands people have been killed and more than 1.6 million have been internally displaced since civil war broke out in South Sudan in December 2013. Ignited by a political struggle between President Salva Kiir and his former vice president Riek Machar, the conflict escalated into ethnic violence. Fighting increased following the early March suspension of peace talks between the warring parties. On 24 March, the UN Security Council threatened sanctions against “senior individuals” responsible for violence. (Source: *International Crisis Group – March 2015*). For more information: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-14069082>

The SVP is caring for over 12,000 Internally displaced people from Bentinue, Malakal, Bor and Kworijik. The Disaster Fund will be used in part to alleviate the suffering and improve living standards but the demand is so great more funds are needed. Through the efforts of Juba CC, each of 2,200 households receives monthly: 50 Kg maize flour, a bucket of beans, 5 ltrs of cooking oil, 2 packets of salt and 1 tablet of soap.

During my visit to Juba with Terry Brown we visited the typical South Sudanese village of Kworijik (pictured below left). It really does bring things closer to home when I received an email on Monday 6th April 2015: “.....the village we visited outside Juba (Kworijik) is burnt down to ashes in the nomads-farmers conflict. SVDP members have been terribly suffered, the village is deserted and people displaced. It's a consequent of the unjustified war that pushed cattle headers to farming areas.....”



So you see that the people in Sudan and South Sudan are still desperate for our help in many ways. - Please encourage everyone to pray and continue to support our efforts through increasing public awareness and generous giving.

PLEASE CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THE SUDAN APPEAL ALL YEAR ROUND.