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CHRISTIAN ACTION WITH THE WORLD'S POOR

One year on, Sudan yet to feel gains of peace

One year after a landmark peace agreement ending the 21-year war between the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement, millions of Sudanese continue to live in fear of violence and have yet to feel the benefits of peace, warned six international agencies working in Sudan.

"The peace agreement signed a year ago was a momentous achievement," said Sorcha O'Callaghan, spokesperson for a coalition of international aid agencies." But with conflict still raging in Darfur and insecurity in the south and east of the country, many Sudanese have little to celebrate. The challenge this year is to make sure that people of Sudan really feel the benefits of peace."

For the past generation, people in many parts of Sudan have lived without schools, health services or enough food or clean water. In April 2005 at an international donor conference in Oslo, \$ 4.5 billion was pledged to support the development of Sudan, but delays have meant that little has reached the struggling communities who are trying to rebuild their lives.

"Before the peace agreement... we knew nothing about life but were waiting only to see death. But when peace prevailed, life is now returning into normal. We have found life," said a man from the Monythany tribe in South Sudan as part of an initiative by the agencies to gather perspectives on peace from communities in north and south Sudan.

However, a group of Dinka women stated: "We feel we are not living in freedom because we are living in poverty. We rely on relief supply outside Sudan and not on what our land produces. One cannot claim freedom without self-reliance and self-sustainability."

Currently many people in south Sudan are still unable to meet their basic needs for food and water. Most communities continue to have no access to schools or health services. As the thousands of people who fled during the fighting begin to return to their homes, they will place additional strain on these fragile communities, which could lead to further insecurity. Significant work remains to prepare southern Sudan for the masses who will return home.

'Settlement was difficult, nevertheless this is our motherland and home...we found nothing during our arrival. Relief got finished before we arrived. We thought that we were neglected but we realized later that they were lacking rations to offer to us," reported a group of women who have returned home to South Sudan.

Unless the hopes and needs of Sudanese people are met, the time and effort invested in Sudan's Comprehensive Peace Agreement will be squandered.

- The Government of National Unity and the Government of South Sudan need to implement faithfully, at both the political and the community level, the peace they have signed, and protect their people from violence.
- Donors must deliver on the pledges they made at Oslo and invest in the development of Sudan so that the benefits of peace can be felt by all.



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- The international community must actively support the implementation of the CPA, as well as peace processes in Darfur and East Sudan, as the Sudanese people deserve a just and sustainable peace after so many years of suffering.

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