



UNHCR

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
Haut Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés

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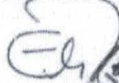
RE: **Christian Children in Sudan's Refugee Camps**

Dear Eng. Morowa,

Further to your letter of 13 September (ref. COR/35/A/1), we have reviewed the report of 6 September by the group "Aid to the Church in Need" (ACN) and would like to provide the following comments in relation to the claims regarding South Sudanese refugees in Sudan:

- UNHCR was never interviewed for this report.
- UNHCR has not received complaints from South Sudanese refugees or from its field offices that Christian refugee children in the refugee camps are not receiving food unless they say Islamic prayers.
- WFP provides food assistance to the South Sudanese refugees based on COR/UNHCR registration. General Food Distribution is done on monthly basis in the camps and food rations are provided to the Heads of Household.
- There are no school feeding programs, where food would be given directly to children, in the South Sudanese refugee camps.
- In the refugee camps in White Nile state, there is at least one church in every camp. Some camps have more than one church.
- In East Darfur, the majority of refugees in El Nimir are Muslims and there is no church in this camp. In Kario, there are a total of 5 churches in the camp.

Yours sincerely,


Elizabeth Tan
Officer-in-charge



Eng. Hamad Elgizouli Morowa
Commissioner for Refugees
Office of the Commissioner for Refugee (COR)
Khartoum

Sudan: Christian refugee children must recite Islamic prayers before receiving food

September 6th, 2017



South Sudan refugees queuing for aid in Sudan

By: Murcadha O Flaherty and John Newton

Christian children in Sudan's refugee camps are not receiving food unless they say Islamic prayers, according to reports received by sources close to Catholic charity Aid to the Church in Need. A contact, who asked to remain anonymous for security reasons, described how Christian refugees from South Sudan are "in a terrible situation" in refugee camps in Sudan.

Speaking of the plight of child refugees in Sudan, the ACN source said: "We have heard stories where children are conditioned to say Islamic prayers before [being] given food. This is not right. These children are Christian. They should be respected for that."

The source, who estimates that 700,000 South Sudanese Christians are refugees in Sudan, added: "The majority are left in camps, some in a very terrible situation. They are confined in those places. They are not allowed to go further north to the cities."

ACN also received reports that it is hard for refugee families to survive on food provided by the government. A monthly food parcel for a family lasts little more than two weeks – leading parents to seek provisions in

the local market. ACN was told items provided by the UN are sold in the market – many still in wrappers marked with UNICEF or UNHCR logos.

The charity's source went on to say that the Khartoum government has hampered charities seeking to provide urgent assistance to the camps, preventing them from overseeing emergency help.

He said: "We have heard the story that the government does not allow any other agencies to give support including the Church agencies. The government knows very well that the Church is the body in the world that supports enormously the needy around the world. The Muslim community have a charity, so the Christians have a charity, so that possibility should be given so that the people are supported."

He said he identifies with the suffering families especially as he was a refugee as a boy. Referring to visits to displaced families in South Sudan, the source said: "I tell them I was once a refugee like you – that was not the end of the road... yet still I can now contribute something positive to society."

Describing people being forced to leave their country, he compared refugees to the young Jesus Christ who fled with his parents to Egypt as a child, adding: "We call on humanity to have heart for refugees.

"Refugees should be given genuine respect, dignity and their rights should be respected.

"Never mistreat a refugee because you never know what tomorrow holds."

The source's comments come amid reports of increasing persecution against Christians in Sudan with the regime reportedly intensifying its Islamising agenda.

In May 2017 a source who also requested anonymity for security reasons, told ACN: "Churches [in Sudan] are destroyed but it's claimed to be just town planning. The Church is not allowed to buy property."

At about the same time, a Sudan Church source told ACN: "Churches are being torn down each month – you never hear that about mosques."

Reports also note that Church leaders are increasingly concerned about Sudan's intolerance aimed at Christian women.

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In June 2015, 12 Christian women were arrested as they left a church for wearing trousers or skirts which were seen as “indecent or immoral dress.”

For more information see: www.acnuk.org

Tags: [ACN](#), [South Sudan](#), [Sudan](#), [Islamic prayers](#)