

The following is an excerpt from an editorial which appeared in the Italian daily Il Giornale on February 6, 2002.

Sudan is the largest country on the African continent, even though the rest of the world hardly knows it. In Sudan, they are fighting the longest war of the 20th century, but know one seems to notice that either.

Perhaps this is because the war is a "jihad," a "holy war" against Christians who will not accept Islam forced on them. Perhaps this is why it is invisible. The victims are at the same time Christians and black Africans: doubly non-existent.

Sudan has 29.5 million inhabitants: 70% Muslim, 16.7% Christians (about 5 million), 12% animist.

The state of Sudan is the result of the patching together of two different countries. The North is Muslim and Arab. The South is black, Christian and animist. The conflict began in the 50s and enjoyed its only respite in the 70s. In 1983, the Nimeiri regime imposed *Sharia* law throughout the country. Independent military groups were formed in the Christian and animist South to oppose this law.

The subsequent regime ferociously imposed *Sharia* law, launching a *jihad* against the infidels and bombing villages, schools and churches in the South, even hitting international humanitarian aid stations. A massive and silent massacre was occurring as the world turned its back.

In its Annual Report 2001, Amnesty International affirmed: "By the end of 2000, the civil war which began in 1983, had taken the lives of almost 2 million people and was the cause of the enforced displacement of 4.5 million others. It is estimated that 500,000 people have fled abroad."

What is more, those involved are civilians, women and children whose only crime is not being Muslim.

To understand the extent to which

## IF KILLING A CHRISTIAN IS NOT A CRIME

by Antonio Socci



An image of Josephine Bakhita, the Sudanese slave who was brought to Italy and eventually became a nun, hangs from the facade of St. Peter's on the day of her canonization on October 1, 2000

this situation is being ignored by the international community, last May, incredibly, Sudan was elected a member of the United Nations Human Rights Commission together with such champions of freedom as China, Cuba, Libya and Vietnam. The United States was excluded for the first time in 50 years (when it was precisely the American government which had first requested the institution of the Commission).

After September 11, the regime in Khartoum quickly condemned the terrorists, in an effort to avoid suspicion, since they had hosted Osama Bin Laden for years.

On September 28, the UN Security Council, under the presidency of France, lifted an embargo imposed against Sudan five years ago. The

United States under Bush was the only country to abstain and continue unilateral sanctions.

In the meantime, the Sudanese regime continued its bombing against the villages of the South.

One week after the end of the UN embargo, the 4th of October, Sudan's vice-president Ali Osman Taha said, "The *jihad* is our path, we will not abandon it and we will hold high its flag."

He was speaking to a group of *mujahidin* who were heading to the South to massacre infidels and take as slaves Christian and animist women and children to sell in the North.

It is estimated that there are more than 200,000 Southerners in slavery in the North.

The stories of those whom the Christian aid organizations manage to liberate are terrible. About 75% of the girls over 12 have been raped by more than one person; more than 90% have suffered other physical abuse; more than 80% are forced to convert to Islam. The hardest hit are the Dinka population: Abok Alfa Akok, the girl condemned to death is a Dinka.

Peter Hammond, director of Frontline Fellowship underlines just how severe the regime is: "Some time ago, the Sudanese Supreme Court decreed that the crucifixion of heretics, that is, of Muslims who have converted to Christianity, is constitutional."

I doubt that the United Nations sent a delegation to inspect Sudanese "justice."

The question of human rights today is in the hands of regimes such as this one.

Sudanese Christians are the most oppressed, massacred and forgotten of this world. Poor Abok Alfa Akok, who in her 18 years has already seen enough horror, will probably now be killed amid the indifference of the world, because she committed an unpardonable crime: being Christian.