

Sudan

Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No.29).
(Sudan ratified Convention No. 29 on 18 June 1957)



MANY WOMEN AND CHILDREN ABDUCTED IN SUDAN DURING THE CIVIL WAR HAVE BEEN REDUCED TO A STATE OF SLAVERY. VERY OFTEN THEY FALL VICTIM TO BRUTAL TREATMENT, INCLUDING RAPE.

Key facts

- Sudanese militiamen (sometimes supported by official forces) have attacked villages, massacring the men and leading away women and children.
- The women and children are then forced to work for their kidnappers or are sold as slaves.
- These slaves are subjected to torture and cruel treatment, including rape.
- Most of the victims belong to the Dinka tribe, the largest ethnic group in the southern part of the country. In 2000, the Dinka Committee, which supports the Sudanese Committee for the Eradication of the Abduction of Women and Children, estimated that some 14,000 women and children had been abducted in the south and then brought to the northern part of the country.
- In recognition of the practical difficulties faced by the Sudanese Committee, on numerous occasions the ILO has asked the govern-

ment of Sudan to punish the kidnappers and respect Convention No. 29.

- The ILO would like to send a direct contacts mission to Sudan to help the government put an end to forced labour. The government has still not taken up this proposal, which it claims to be considering.



Special paragraph

In its report adopted by the International Labour Conference in 2001, the Committee on the Application of Standards devoted a special paragraph to Sudan in relation with Convention No. 29 on Forced Labour, 1930. That paragraph reads as follows:

The Committee took note of the information provided by the Government representative on the causes of abduction of women and children, the measures taken to eliminate forced labour of which they were the victims and the subsequent discussion. The Committee highlighted the extreme gravity of the case which affected fundamental human rights for which reason it had been included in a special paragraph in 1997, 1998 and 2000. The Committee noted that the Committee of Experts had observed that there was a broad consensus among the relevant instances of the United Nations agencies and workers' representative organizations concerning the persistence and extent of the practice of abduction and imposition of forced labour, and concluded that such situations were very serious violations of Convention No. 29. The Committee noted the information supplied by the Government representative on the practical difficulties faced by the

Committee for the Eradication of the Abduction of Women and Children in carrying out its task of identifying and ensuring their return to their homes and found that the measure was inadequate. The Committee expressed its profound concern at the serious situation in Sudan and urged the Government to initiate systematic actions concomitant with the magnitude and gravity of the problem and to reply to the questions raised by the Committee of Experts, in particular with respect to the relevant preventive measures, identification of those responsible for exacting forced labour and the imposition of appropriate penal sanctions. The Committee noted that the Government representative rejected the proposal that a direct contacts mission should visit the country to work with the Government in finding solutions to eradicate the practice of forced labour, but had announced that it would consider that possibility.

Trade union demands

In view of the gravity of the situation in Sudan, the Workers' Group is demanding:

- That the Sudanese government immediately take up the ILO's offer of direct contacts and cooperate closely with the ILO in an attempt to put an end to the abduction of women and children and to the situation of slavery in which they find themselves.
- That the governments of the ILO Member States make every effort, at both the diplomatic and other levels, to encourage the Sudanese government to follow the recommendations of the ILO's supervisory bodies.
- That employers' organisations and trade union organisations throughout the world draw the attention of their respective governments to the situation in Sudan, to make them realise just how urgent the situation has become.
- That trade union organisations throughout the world bear witness to the gravity of the situation in Sudan in their international activities.
- That all ILO constituents seize every opportunity to draw the attention of other agencies of the United Nations and the international financial institutions to the gravity of the situation in Sudan.



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