



Above: A Sudanese refugee in South Sudan

Anguish and Achievement

Featured in this issue:

- An update on Sudan and South Sudan
- Stories from the Sudans
- Partner Profile: Benjamin Barnaba
- HART visit to Health & Hope, Burma
- News and Updates from HART

Anguish in Sudan: A Forgotten Genocide

After the horrors of the genocide in Rwanda, world leaders said 'Never Again'.

But 'again' is happening: the evidence is incontrovertible. World leaders are refusing to recognise the reality. Countless people are suffering prolonged attempts to exterminate them while the international community fails to take any effective action to stop the systematic killings, deaths from starvation and forced displacement into exile.

Where? In Sudan today. A HART team recently visited Blue Nile State again and heard first-hand stories of the genocidal policies of the Government of Sudan.

Regular aerial bombardment of civilians and civilian targets such as markets, schools and clinics has reduced the population to a state of destitution. Villagers trying to grow and harvest crops are targeted while out in the open, working on their land, so they cannot produce food. They are reduced to scavenging, eating things such as roots with no nutritional value.

Many have died from starvation and hunger-related illnesses.

The Government will not allow access by humanitarian aid organisations, so there is a desperate shortage of medicines and no immunisation to protect children from preventable killer diseases such as polio, TB and diphtheria.

We saw the ruins of schools, clinics and markets gutted by bombs. In one now largely deserted village, we heard how on one fateful morning the deadly Antonov aircraft flew over a busy market; it then returned, flying lower and discharged bombs directly onto the people in the market; it then returned again, flying lower, seeking out and killing villagers who had scattered and were trying to hide under trees or in the river bank. This is deliberate carnage of innocent civilians.

The planes now also come at night, equipped with searchlights so they can identify villages in the darkness. Those we met described being unable to light fires for fear of being seen by the planes.

Continued on page 2

Furthermore, the types of aerial bombardment are intensifying, with a greater variety of fast flying aircraft (MiGs and Su25s) and long-range missiles launched from Government of Sudan bases such as Kirmuk, not many kilometres away from some of the villages we visited.



Above: Inside a newly stocked health clinic in Blue Nile, Sudan

HART is deeply grateful to the Isle of Man Government International Development Committee for its financial support which has enabled our valiant partner, Benjamin Barnaba of the New Sudan Council of Churches, to purchase life-saving medicines and to transport them into Blue Nile State. There, competent local healthcare workers are able to take responsibility for safe storage and provision of treatment. We visited two clinics and saw an excellent selection of medicines appropriate for the health needs of the people in these desperate circumstances.

We were profoundly moved by the resilience of the people we met, and their passionate commitment to provide for a future which Sudanese President Al Bashir – already indicted by the International Criminal Court for his actions in Darfur – is trying to destroy. We return heart-broken with grief by the plight of these people subjected to indescribable suffering by their own Government, but also inspired by their determination not only to survive but to build for a future for their people by providing what education they can.

In Yabus (Sudan), the community has established four primary schools. There are virtually no teaching materials: in one school, a simple hut, we saw a damaged blackboard, a jar of stubs of chalk and some paper drawings of animals with letters in Arabic as a basis for teaching literacy. The teachers are brave volunteers who have returned to this danger zone to provide what education they can for children trapped in this war.

You can understand why we are so humbled by the courage, resilience and dignity of our partners and why we are so profoundly disturbed by the international community's refusal to fulfil its 'Duty to Protect' for people suffering manifest *de facto* genocide in 'The Two Areas' of Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan States in Sudan – as well as continuing atrocities still being perpetrated in Darfur. We continue to raise these issues with the British Government to seek appropriate intervention to stop the killings and to provide essential, life-saving aid – so far, without success. So, while the British Government and the rest of the international community continue to permit this Genocide, we must continue to try to call them to account, pointing out the hollowness of the commitment 'Never Again' by political leaders. We also continue to do what we can, in our own small way, to provide support to these isolated communities through our exceptional partners, and to fulfil our mandate to provide aid and advocacy for some of the most forgotten and neglected people in our world.

Amazing Achievements in Burma

As a happy ending to this introduction: a small team from HART has just returned from a visit to 'Dr. Sasa's' Health and Hope Training Centre deep inside Chin State, Burma. The achievements of his visionary Training Programme for Community Health Workers have expanded beyond any expectations: now over 800 men and women have received training which will enable them to continue to save, on average, the lives of 8 out of 10 people who would previously have died, in over 400 villages, extending further and further to more remote regions in Chin State and now also into neighbouring Rakhine State. A brief account of our challenging, exhilarating and inspirational visit is included in this Newsletter.

Caroline Cox

Right: HART's partner Benjamin at a school in Blue Nile, Sudan



CONVERGING CONFLICTS in SUDAN AND SOUTH SUDAN

KEY DATES

June 2011 – violence erupts in South Kordofan. The Government of Sudan begins aerial bombardment of civilians, indiscriminate shelling and other atrocities.

July 2011 – South Sudan gains independence, after 99% vote for secession in a referendum. South Kordofan and Blue Nile remain in (north) Sudan.

September 2011 – conflict resumes in Blue Nile

December 2013 – conflict breaks out in South Sudan.

Spring 2014 – South Sudan's conflict increasingly affects Sudanese refugees living in camps in South Sudan. Food supplies are cut off by the conflict. Refugees and aid workers are targeted. Some refugees return to Sudan.

December 2014 – Attacks intensify in South

Kordofan, forcing many to flee over the border to South Sudan. 500 new refugees arrive in Yida camp (South Sudan) every week in December and January. 70% are children.

April 2015 – Conflict in South Sudan enters its 16th month, and peace talks remain deadlocked. New evidence shows that the Government of Sudan has used cluster bombs on civilian areas.

ATTACKS

3740 – the number of bombs dropped on civilian targets since April 2012 by the Government of Sudan

970 – the number of bombs dropped on civilians between December 2014 and February 2015 alone

The number of deaths more than tripled between November 2014 and January 2015. The number of civilians injured in January was the highest documented in the conflict since records began

HUMANITARIAN NEED

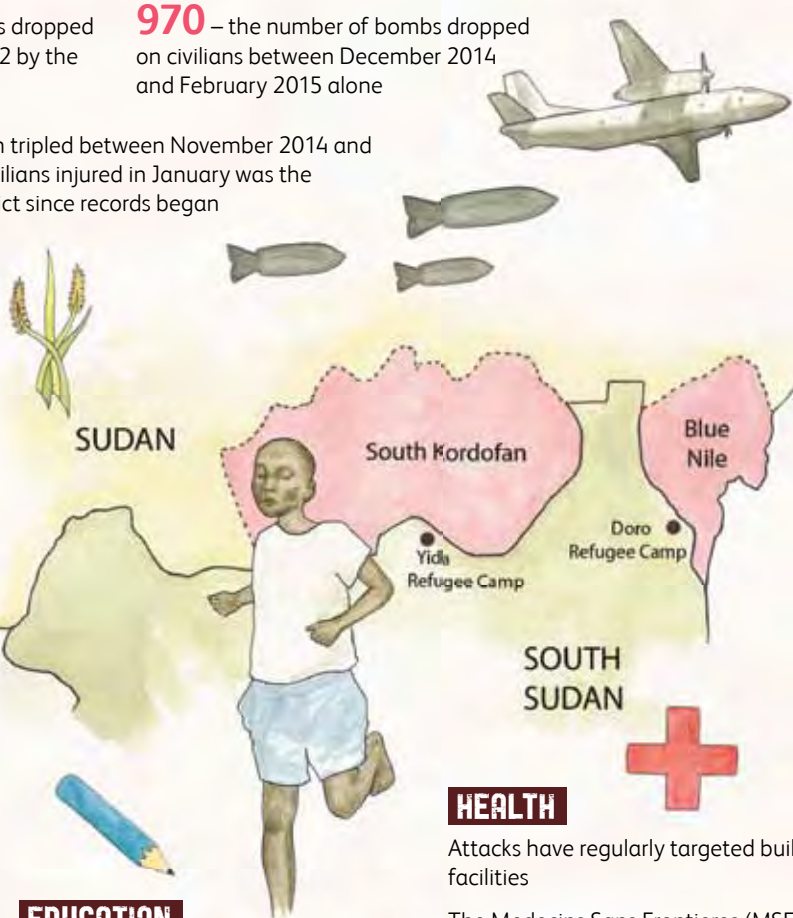
An estimated **940,000** people are in need of humanitarian assistance in South/ West Kordofan and Blue Nile

Displaced communities are facing crisis levels of food insecurity

90% of households lack sufficient food stocks to last more than one month

81% of households are reducing the number of meals consumed each week

In some parts of Blue Nile, women may walk for up to eight hours just to collect two jerry cans of water



EDUCATION

Children have very little access to education, and attacks regularly target schools. On the 13th January, for example, 7 rockets were launched at the Girls Peace Secondary School, destroying a classroom

HEALTH

Attacks have regularly targeted buildings clearly marked as health facilities

The Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) hospital in Frandalla has been bombed twice, in January 2015 and June 2014. MSF have now had to withdraw their operations. In May 2014 the Mother of Mercy Hospital in the Nuba Mountains was bombed

The civilian hospital of Heiban was bombed twice in February 2015
47% of people in South Kordofan have to walk more than 5km to the nearest health facility

Main statistics are for South Kordofan and Blue Nile, Sudan

DISPLACEMENT

Over 2 million

– the number of civilians severely affected by the conflict in South Kordofan and Blue Nile since 2011

1.7 million – the number of IDPs – roughly half the population

250,000 – the number of Sudanese refugees in South Sudan

SOUTH SUDAN

50,000 – estimated number of people killed since December 2013

2.5 million face crisis/emergency levels of food insecurity.

>7 million at risk of hunger and disease

1.5 million have been internally displaced

491,000 refugees in neighbouring countries

32% of IDP locations still not reached with humanitarian assistance

Sources:

Enough Project
FEWSNET

Global Centre for
the Responsibility
to Protect

International
Crisis Group

Nuba Reports
Sudan Consortium

South Kordofan
Blue Nile
Coordination Unit

UNHCR
UNOCHA

USAID

HART Visit to Sudan

In January 2015, a team from HART travelled to South Sudan and Sudan, spending time with partners and communities affected by the conflict. This report focuses on our findings from Blue Nile State, Sudan. This is a priority area for HART, because it is almost entirely closed off from the rest of the world. We witnessed first hand the devastation wrought by aerial bombardment, the growing humanitarian crisis, and the extraordinary efforts of local organisations to provide food, education and healthcare.



Above: A child in Doro refugee camp with a toy made from a USAID carton

Since the most recent wave of conflict broke out in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States in 2011, the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) have regularly targeted civilian areas with aerial bombardment, missile attacks and ground assaults.

We visited a number of locations inside Blue Nile State. Those we met described the devastation caused by aerial attacks on villages far from the frontlines, and the impact that these attacks have on every aspect of life. In the words of one interviewee, “They hit the villages, the churches, the schools, the clinics. All the infrastructure is being regularly hit and bombed by the planes of the Sudan Armed Forces. There is no way you can hide, or operate, in that infrastructure.”

The Government’s actions are creating a humanitarian crisis. The attacks often target markets, crops, livestock and people working in their fields. They correlate with the planting and harvesting season, and with market days. The Government of Sudan continues to block humanitarian access.

One interviewee stated: “The main target is to bomb the farms, to try to burn down the sorghum. If they see something that looks like a store for food, they bomb it.”

A member of civil society, who regularly visits Blue Nile, said, “This season, the crops were attacked by grasshoppers and also by aerial bombardment... I am expecting that people are going to suffer from acute shortages of food in the next six months”.

Below: Two young boys in Doro Refugee Camp



Similar concerns were voiced by a community leader in Blue Nile: “The majority of the people do not have time to cultivate. Their main source of income is agriculture but they are finding this a very difficult time to cultivate, because of the Antonovs [a type of plane used for aerial bombardment]... The harvest that they are having right now can take them up to March, but in April they will start hunger and starvation, until June if nothing comes for food, then the whole area will be starving.” According to the Famine Early Warning Systems Network, households in the conflict areas are facing Crisis (phase 3) levels of food insecurity.

The situation is obvious to those on the ground, whose daily reality is one of attacks, displacement and devastation. Yet they feel that the rest of the world continues to ignore or obfuscate the situation. As one courageous local human rights monitor said to us, “I challenge anybody who is denying the reality of what is happening in South Kordofan and Blue Nile to come and verify it for themselves... we can show them the reports, the bombing sites, the number of people who have been killed, the photographs, we can lead them from house to house where people have been lost, and take them to meet those who have become disabled as a result of the bombing.”

Humanitarian Aid

In South Kordofan and Blue Nile, where the Sudanese Government has banned international aid organisations, the work of local organisations is particularly crucial.

HART’s partners – the New Sudan Council of Churches (NSCC) in Blue Nile and the Nuba Relief, Rehabilitation and Development Organisation (NRRDO) in Nuba Mountains – have demonstrated the huge achievements that can be made by local community organisations with relatively small amounts of money, and the crucial role they play in responding to the humanitarian crisis and building peace.

On this and previous visits, we have seen the impact of their work first-hand. They are managing to reach remote, conflict-affected communities with aid. They have an intimate knowledge of the needs and priorities of local communities, and – being from the region themselves – an unrivalled commitment to improving the situation. With the support of local communities they are able to find innovative and

and South Sudan

By Alice Robinson

effective ways to improve access to food, healthcare and education.

We visited clinics in Blue Nile State that are now stocked with medicines, including painkillers and antibiotics, thanks to the work of Benjamin Barnaba and the NSCC. The NSCC has worked with local communities to establish five health centres. We also met some of the trained health workers, who are able to distribute the medicine appropriately whenever it is available.

The work of organisations such as NRRDO and the NSCC is a lifeline for those living in South Kordofan and Blue Nile. After a recent food distribution by the NSCC, a local community leader said, *“It is unbelievable to see determined people who endeavor these kinds of difficulties to save lives like NSCC staff. I have been challenged and there are no words to explain my gratitude to NSCC and its partners”*.

Education

We received a strikingly clear message from those we spoke with in both Sudan and South Sudan: that despite the crisis and conflict, education is their number one priority.

Years of conflict and marginalisation by the government in Khartoum have left Blue Nile and South Kordofan with almost no educational infrastructure. Since 2011, many schools in South Kordofan and Blue Nile have been destroyed or forced to close because of aerial bombardment. The repercussions of this lack of education can hardly be overstated. As Benjamin said on our visit, *“If tomorrow, peace comes to Sudan, we will be looking for educated people and we will not find them. We will not have people for leadership positions.”*

Turning this situation around is now a priority. The need for education was a constant theme running through our visit, voiced by many of those with whom we spoke, who see it as the greatest potential path to peace and development. *“Without education, we cannot change this series of wars in Sudan – peace will be signed, and war will break out again and again and again,”* says Nagwa Konda, Executive Director of NRRDO. *“But if the next generation are properly educated, nobody is going to marginalise them anymore. If you are educated, you have the capacity to take your rights.”*

Towards the end of 2014, NRRDO held a conference on education in the Nuba Mountains, consulting local communities on their views. *“The people of the Nuba Mountains said their top priority was education, regardless of the conflict we are going through,”* reports Nagwa. *“They said they have been fighting this war for a long time, and they want to change the weapon of war from a Kalashnikov to a pen”*.

Local communities and organisations in both South Kordofan and Blue Nile are working hard to improve access to education, building new schools and supporting volunteer teachers with food and accommodation. However, support is needed to scale up the availability and quality of education.

Below: Children outside a new clinic in Blue Nile State



Peace and Reconciliation

The message we heard again and again was of the desperate need for an end to the conflict. People are frustrated by the inaction of the international community, but are taking their own steps to promote peace. The efforts of local communities to build a more stable future, particularly through education, and their desire for peace and reconciliation, are truly inspiring.

In Sudan, we met with Malik Agar, the elected governor of Blue Nile State, who was deposed by President al-Bashir in September 2011. He spoke: *“I am ready to shake hands with Bashir, even though he has killed so many people from my own ethnic group, and from my own village itself... You cannot allow the next generation to inherit hatred.”*

Throughout Sudan's recent history, elites have sought to divide communities, suppress diversity and marginalise certain groups in order to monopolise power and wealth. But for those in the Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile, their diversity is a source of pride – something they refuse to allow the Government to destroy.

Many spoke passionately about the need for Sudan to become a country in which all people – regardless of religion, ethnicity and other affiliations – are equal. In the words of Malik Agar: *“Blue Nile is diverse in culture, ethnicity, religion, and we want to keep this harmony... We want to bring about equality of citizenship, whereby the citizens are equal before the law regardless of their religion, affiliation or anything else.”*

“they want to change the weapon of war from a Kalashnikov to a pen”

Stories from Sudan and South Sudan



Many of the stories we heard on our visit contained shared themes – of indiscriminate or targeted attacks on civilians, forced displacement, lack of access to food, shelter, healthcare and education, and an urgent need for peace. Here are just a few of them. Read the full report at www.hart-uk.org/locations/sudan.*

Ahmed, refugee in Doro, South Sudan

"I come from Mayak in Blue Nile. Many people are still there – they are hungry, they don't have medicine, they are sick and afraid.

The Antonov is bombing the people. Right now. All the time it is bombing us. Those who are surviving, they are surviving because of the mercy of God. Every day it comes. Every day.

Life is so difficult because many people are sick. There are bombs, malaria, fever and lots of diseases. We did not have the chance to cultivate our food so the harvest is very bad.

A lot of people have been killed since 2011... some are still there but many have fled to the refugee camps.

Now the Antonov comes even at night while people are asleep. It puts on a searchlight to see where to bomb. Now we have to be careful about using any light, even fires for cooking. You cannot light a fire at night because you will be a target...

The people who are left in Blue Nile, they are not finding any rest. The plane is bombing them all the time... people are displaced and are fleeing... from one stream to another stream. There is no security. My message for all the governments of the international community is let them arrest Omar al-Bashir, to be accountable for his own atrocities on us. He has finished the Sudanese people with his killing and forced them to become refugees all over the world... This person does not deserve to be a leader because he is dividing the people. He helps some people and others he kills and displaces.

We need a genuine peace. Peace that is comprehensive for all the Sudanese, and a new president that is concerned for the whole people of Sudan."



Mubarak, a Sudanese refugee in South Sudan

Mubarak, from Blue Nile, described being attacked whilst fleeing to South Sudan:

"The day I was injured... the whole family were fleeing with me. We were many people going together. The Antonov came and threw two bombs. One of them fell amongst us. It killed one girl. It destroyed her head. It also killed Hashim – we did not see him, we only found his leg, all of his body was scattered. The bomb also destroyed the donkey which was carrying all our foodstuffs. We could not see the donkey or the food. Other people carried those of us who were injured on beds, until we reached Gufa, and from there again they carried us up to Bunj to the refugee camp."

He described the situation he fled: *"[In Blue Nile] they are using aerial bombardment, Antonovs, artillery and missiles... They are targeting the civilian population in the villages. They are killing innocent people – women, children, the elderly, they are killing everybody. They are also killing livestock – donkeys, camels, cows, they are killing everything that they see.*

They are shelling at any time, it is non-stop – just fire fire fire fire fire fire fire fire fire fire – we can't even count...

When they find a place which seems to be inhabited they throw bombs. When they see a bush they suspect people are hiding in they throw bombs. There is no place to hide. Every place is targeted by Sudanese Armed Forces.

It's not just wounds, even those who do not have wounds are terribly psychologically affected, because they see their loved ones killed and injured, and because of the terror inflicted in their lives."

*Most interviews were conducted through a translator. They have been edited for length.



Hadia and Lemon, refugees from Blue Nile

Hadia and Lemon, from Mayak in Blue Nile, fled their homes when the fighting broke out in 2011. They walked for four days, carrying their children and baggage, to arrive in Doro.

"The humanitarian situation here is difficult. Sometimes the food rations are enough and sometimes they are not. We need places where we can get treatment, and education for our children."

During the rainy season, the water floods everywhere... there was an outbreak of hepatitis E and many people died, some from our families. Any attempts to control hygiene are very difficult."

Lemon has eight children, and Hadia (pictured above, in pink) has five. Two of Hadia's children are in Government-controlled areas of Blue Nile State. Because they are behind Government lines, she is unable to communicate with them. She does not know whether they are safe.

The conflict between the Government of South Sudan and the rebels has led to further instability and violence in and around the refugee camp. *"We are still afraid – maybe the rebels will enter into the camp. We have been hearing rumours. The UN are around but we don't know if they can protect us."*

However, they feel that they are much safer here than they would be in Blue Nile. They report that their relatives who remain in Sudan *"must go from place to place because of the bombardment... they live close to the streams and hide in riverbeds from the bombs"*.

"As long as there is bombing we cannot go back [to Blue Nile]."

Toma Azki in Doro Refugee Camp

"We need peace – we don't need war. My children are here in the camp and they are tired, some have become malnourished. Even in this place, we are still not 100% safe."



Margaret and Toma, internally displaced in South Sudan

Margaret is from Bentiu in South Sudan. She fled because of fierce fighting in the city, during which many civilians were killed, and walked for ten days to reach Turalei IDP camp. She has been living here with her seven children since April 2014. Her husband is fighting – she doesn't know where he is, or if he is still alive.

"We are suffering in the camp because of the lack of food. Sometimes we go two days without eating. We struggle to feed our children. They don't have clothes or blankets. Most people in this camp are sleeping under trees, without tents."

When we ran from Bentiu, lots of people lost their life. Unless peace comes, we will not go back."

The children do not go to school and access to healthcare is very limited.



Margaret's friend, Toma, said: *"Those of us here, from Bentiu and Malakal, we are all brothers and sisters, we will not kill each other, we are living here peacefully. This is a problem only of Machar and the Government, they are killing civilians."*

Left: Margaret

Unorthodox Requirements for Sitting Exams in the Nuba Mountains

In November, 1004 students in the Nuba Mountains sat their primary exams. **Nagwa Konda, Executive Director of NRRDO**, describes the unconventional methods necessary to prepare for exams under threat of aerial bombardment.

"Last year, when the exam was conducted, we asked all the students to bring a very clean and big stone, and keep it near them."

We asked them – what are you going to do with this stone? Why are we asking you to bring a big stone and put it near you while you are doing your exam? Some of them

said because it will remind us of strength so we don't get afraid."

We told them it was because when the plane flies over, if you leave your paper the wind can blow it away. They could get mixed up. What you need to do, calmly, is pick up the stone, put it over your paper, and lie down until the plane goes. Because if they start running around, if it drops the bomb, it would hurt so many people, a big number – over 1000. So they have to bring this stone, be ready, at any time the plane comes, very calmly you put the stone over

your paper so it is not blown up by the wind, you dive down, wait for the plane to pass, and then you go back, gather your strength, and start again."

This is a horrible experience that these people are going through, and they are not giving up. They are continuing, and even they want to compete with their counterparts in Kenya, who have been studying in a very different situation. This is very encouraging, when you see the children smiling, and the teachers working completely voluntarily."

PARTNER PROFILE:

Benjamin Barnaba



*An Interview with HART's Partner
in Blue Nile, Sudan*

BIOGRAPHY IN BRIEF

Benjamin was born in the Nuba Mountains in 1971. His parents were both clergy in the Episcopal Church of Sudan. Growing up during the civil war, education in the Nuba Mountains was severely limited, and Benjamin went to school in Khartoum, working alongside his studies in order to support himself. He completed further education in Uganda and Kenya.

Benjamin has worked in community schools in the Nuba Mountains, for Save the Children USA and the Sudan Council of Churches.

He is currently Executive Director of the New Sudan Council of Churches (NSCC), a faith-based organisation undertaking humanitarian and advocacy work. NSCC work in marginalised areas of Sudan, including Blue Nile and the Nuba Mountains, and also in the refugee camps in South Sudan.

An Interview with Benjamin

What is the current situation in Blue Nile?

The current situation in Blue Nile can be described as a catastrophe. Civilians are being killed deliberately by their own government with impunity. The world is watching the Khartoum regime which is slaughtering its own people without any remorse.

There is no opportunity to cultivate food, which is the main source of livelihood in Blue Nile. The Antonov manoeuvres in the sky day and night; people are afraid and do not go to cultivate their food in the fields. There is no education for the children; the world is talking about ending illiteracy but right now there are tens of thousands of children who are denied school. There are no health services because most of the qualified health personnel have left Blue Nile, and those few remaining do not have enough medicines in the stores to help the sick people. Children have not been immunized for the last four years.

The result of all these factors is mass killing, mass displacement, widespread violence, psychological torture, separation of families, famine, illiteracy and poor health. Life in Blue Nile is unbearable as all aspects of life are endangered. People in Blue Nile keep asking why they have to experience this kind of collective punishment at such a ruthless pace. Omar Bashir has never visited Blue Nile in his life. Criminality is not the right word to describe this – maybe there is a better word, a very ugly word, that the world shies away from – “Genocide”. If human beings are subjected to such inhumane conditions for such a long time, then if not because of annihilations from the face of the earth, then what would be the aim?

Can you give us an example of how the conflict has affected you personally?

My family and I had to flee to South Sudan in June 2011. This is because war broke out between the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Army due to differences in the election results. The civil war has continued to date causing widespread displacement of the civilian population due to deliberate aerial bombardment campaigns launched by the Sudan Armed Forces, Missile launchers, Heavy Artillery shelling, and ground attacks where many villages, farms and livelihoods are all destroyed in order to achieve the aim of controlling the land and its resources without the people of the land.

Because of this insecurity, my family and I together with hundreds of thousands had to leave Nuba Mountains. I do visit Nuba Mountains regularly though because my mother and other siblings are still there, and many of my people are still living in such untold hardships and atrocities.

Can you describe your work?

Our work in Blue Nile is to save lives, because there are no humanitarian agencies to fill the gap in the absence of the responsibilities of the government. We supply five community health centers with essential medicine so that at least people can access some basic medical care. We support education that is done at the basic

education level, scholarships for young people to build their capacities through knowledge and skills to serve their communities. We also provide psychosocial support for those suffering from trauma and post-traumatic stress, including counselling services.

All that we are trying to do is just a drop in the ocean. The needs are overwhelming and there are high expectations from the beneficiaries about what we ought to do as the only humanitarian agency present on the ground.

We have helped many elderly people who were left behind by their relatives as they fled their villages to escape the atrocities. We have provided medicine to civilians who most needed it, including those with injuries from bombardment, and waterborne diseases. We are trying to help the children have access to education – we believe that these children will have a better future if they are exposed to a literacy program.

What challenges do you face?

We are facing many challenges. As a local organisation we are not able to address the overwhelming needs of the people. This inflicts a lot of psychological stress as you are with the suffering and dying people and you are helpless yourself.

We also endure hardships during the delivery of humanitarian aid as you are within range of the missiles and heavy artillery that are launched randomly from the SAF garrisons in Kurmuk County to the areas that are populated with civilians.

Antonov bombardment does not discriminate on the basis of who is a soldier, civilian or humanitarian worker in this regard, therefore the terror, the stress and the humiliation which a person has to endure during the bombardment moments is psychological torture, because you could lose your life at any given moment.

A lack of communication and transportation equipment also makes the work very difficult. The agency does not have a single vehicle to move with it and are dependent on hiring vehicles from the market which is not sustainable or reliable.

What motivates you to do this work?

What motivates us is our belief in survival. It is an instinct that comes naturally when you see a person struggling to survive; you have to help that person as much as you can to survive. We believe in God's divine intervention and human dignity. This is the basis of our motivation.



How did your relationship with HART begin?

We have known Caroline Cox from history. Many of us had never met her, but her name was huge in the community of Nuba. When we met for the first time ever in Yida (South Sudan) I had a total conviction that it was God's plan. We were so positive in our first meeting and personally my spirit was lifted.

HART's support assured us that there are still people out there who have the people of Sudan at heart and mind. HART enabled us to save many people from dying of hunger and disease. HART will remain in our lives and is part of our history for many generations to come.

What are the prospects for peace in Sudan?

Because I believe in divine intervention, I am optimistic that God has His way out of this crisis, that one day we shall overcome, and we shall live in peace side by side with our friends the Arabs who made our lives miserable; and that we shall truly reconcile and forgive each other. Change is coming and I will live to see change.

What are your hopes and priorities for the future?

My hope is to see a peaceful and just Sudan, and my plans for the future are: to work for peace through advocacy initiatives locally, regionally and internationally. After peace, I will be engaged in the rebuilding of the community starting with my own close environment, the surrounding area and then the wider society.

Do you have a message for friends and supporters in the UK? How can people help?

My message is that genocide in Sudan is real. The regime in power in Khartoum is supported by radical not only Islamic ideology, but also with an agenda to wipe out the African indigenous race in Sudan. Our friends and supporters in the UK are our source of energy to survive, so long as you are standing by us we shall overcome. We are not going to overcome by the power of the gun, but we shall overcome by the power of resilience and our instinct to survive.

You can help us with your prayers, with your advocacy initiative to the EU and global policy-makers; with your direct or indirect donations and with humanitarian assistance so we can fight death, ignorance and poverty, to liberate ourselves genuinely.

Is there anything else you want to say?

I would like to say thank you for HART for giving us this rare opportunity to have access to the outside world and tell our story. And enormous thanks for the great assistance that enables us to serve the forgotten people in this part of the world and save the lives of many people.

Below: A health worker by a clinic in Blue Nile, supported by HART and NSCC



NSCC and HART in numbers:

1639

people benefited from food assistance in 2014

\$20.50

The cost of one month's food supply for one person

5

primary health care clinics established and supported by NSCC

"We are not going to overcome by the power of the gun, but we shall overcome by the power of resilience and our instinct to survive."

Left: Teaching aids in a school in Blue Nile

Please help HART to support Benjamin and the New Sudan Council of Churches to deliver medicines, food and education in Blue Nile. With international aid organisations currently denied access to the area, Benjamin's support is a lifeline. For more information, contact office@hart-uk.org.

Burma Visit Report

Below:
The road to Lailenpi



By Anna Cox

Earlier this month, a HART team consisting of Baroness Cox, David Thomas and Dr Martin Panter from HART Australia undertook an arduous journey to visit the Health and Hope Training Centre in Lailenpi, Chin State, Burma.

Rough journey with joyous reward

The journey to Lailenpi – along a newly built path through the jungle – was an adventure: twisting and sliding and bouncing round hair pin bends, with the jeep over the edge of a 2000ft precipice at points. Dr SaSa, who has had just one driving lesson and has never passed a test, was the driver.

The villagers' welcomes along the way made the journey worth the risk. People had stayed up through the night to welcome the group as they passed through their home villages. The team eventually arrived at Lailenpi at 2am to a wonderful candlelit celebration.

Below: Dr SaSa with a map showing villages that now have a CHW



Community Health Workers (CHWs)

Having made it to Lailenpi, the HART team witnessed first-hand the inspirational work of Dr SaSa and his team of life-saving CHWs. To date, Health and Hope has trained 681 CHWs who have returned to work in their villages. A further 157 have just completed their training. 473 villages now benefit from the CHW activities and the geographical area has extended beyond Chin State to include people from as far away as Rakhine state. There is now great diversity of religions represented at the centre including Christians, Buddhists, Traditional Believers and Muslims. It is very encouraging to see people from different faiths working together to improve healthcare.

CHWs who have returned to their villages after training have implemented valuable systems. Dr Martin Panter of HART-Australia – a medical practitioner with special interest in tropical diseases and medicine in developing countries, and with over twenty years' experience of Burma – claims that the work of these CHWs saves the lives of 8 out of 10 people who would previously have died from preventable diseases. The CHWs teach basic sanitation and healthcare to their villagers such as the importance of rehydration

Below: Inauguration of a new road



and boiling water before drinking; constructing latrines and hand-washing every morning, evening and after using the toilet. Malaria nets have been distributed. Cutting fingernails, especially of children, has helped to prevent infection from scratching with dirty nails. These practices have made a very significant difference, preventing disease and improving the health of local villagers.

There are still difficulties faced by the CHWs, particularly in relation to funding. Many highlighted the pressures of carrying out their work while trying to support families. There is also a great shortage of medicines and CHWs often work extra hard to buy supplies for the villagers as many cannot contribute to the cost. The CHWs also expressed a desire to receive refresher training and clinical updates.

It is clear that Health and Hope has produced passionately dedicated and caring CHWs with the ability to save many lives. The work of Dr SaSa and his team does not stop here. The growth in the number of CHWs is very exciting and means that more and more people will be able to learn basic hygiene and healthcare and have better access to medical support.

Official Celebrations

In addition to the heart-warming candlelit welcomes, Baroness Cox was invited to open of a piece of land identified by Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF) to build an airstrip. This airstrip will make Lailenpi more accessible, meaning greater prospects for delivery of supplies, visits by professional personnel, monitoring and other communications.

Finally, it was a privilege for the delegation to visit 'Baroness Cox Mountain' marked by a plaque at the path at the mountain's base and crowned with a magnificent cross. Many hundreds of villagers travelled to the top of the mountain to share in the service of dedication.

Political situation

While many challenges remain elsewhere in Burma, particularly in Shan, Rakhine and Kachin states, where fighting continues, we were encouraged by significant improvements in Chin State. This includes an increase in freedom of speech, improved relations with the Burmese Army and Police Force, and economic investment in essential services such as healthcare, education and access roads.

It is a cause for great hope to be able to come back with such encouraging news of the political situation in Chin State, the proposed MAF airstrip and the inspirational work of CHWs which continues to be highly effective in saving lives and promoting health. There are still challenges, and the CHWs need more support and supplies to improve their services, but there was an overwhelming sense of happiness in completing the CHW training and being able to care for their communities. Dr SaSa and his team continue to provide outstanding training and we look forward to seeing their expanding vision for the future.

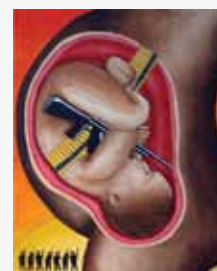
News from HART

The HART Prize for Human Rights

The HART Prize for Human Rights ran between October 2014 and February 2015. Over the past few months, we have been reaching out to young people across the UK, letting them know about HART's work, our partners, and the competition itself. We have had a tremendous response, with an unprecedented number of entries to the competition – 163 in total!

The entries included essays, poems, short stories and artwork, covering all eight countries where HART works, and a broad range of issues. We were delighted to see so many excellent entries, showing a remarkable passion for human rights amongst young people.

A selection of entries were exhibited at a prize-giving event in London on the 14th April. A list of winners and selected entries is available to view on the HART website.



'Born To Fight': the winning piece in the Senior Creative category by Emma Gittus

Visit Nagorno-Karabakh with HART!

On behalf of HART and Baroness Cox, we would like to invite you to join us on a visit to Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh in August 2015.

This is an opportunity to learn about a fascinating and beautiful part of the world, and to experience a HART project first-hand – the pioneering rehabilitation centre, an extraordinary project providing care to those with disabilities, and challenging stigma.

In the words of Baroness Cox: *"This year marks the centenary of the Armenian Genocide, a time for commemoration of the atrocities committed against the Armenian people in 1915. On this visit, we will travel to sites of remembrance of the Genocide as well as to places of hope, new life and cultural significance to experience the true 'spirit of Armenia'."*

This will be my 84th visit to Nagorno-Karabakh. Each and every time I have returned humbled, refreshed and inspired by the dignity and courage of the people who have suffered so much yet who retain such great faith, dignity, generous hospitality and creativity."

All are welcome – contact office@hart-uk.org for more information.

NEWS AFFECTING OUR PARTNERS

Muhammadu Buhari has won elections in **Nigeria**, in the country's first ever peaceful, democratic transfer of power. One of the biggest issues in the elections was the continuing violence in the north. Boko Haram's insurgency has led to the displacement of more than 1.5 million people. Estimates suggest that over 9,000 people have been killed. They have also destroyed hundreds of schools and villages, and have created a climate of terror and distrust across the north.

Nigerian security forces have been implicated in further human rights abuses, including extra-judicial killings, torture and incommunicado detention.

In **Burma**, military offensives in Shan and Kachin states have intensified, accompanied by increasing human rights abuses and renewed waves of displacement.

As humanitarian aid and international investment into Burma increases, there are concerns that this support is bypassing ethnic minority groups and civil society organisations, and thus only increasing their marginalisation. Large-scale development projects in ethnic national areas are being undertaken without the consent or inclusion of local people, who face land confiscation, forced displacement and threats to their health and livelihoods.

A new report from the Women's League of Burma, *"If they had hope, they would speak"*, highlighted ongoing sexual violence and intimidation of women by Burma Army personnel.

The predominantly Muslim Rohingya continue to face systematic persecution and marginalisation.

We publish a weekly round-up of the news affecting our partners every Friday. Read it on our website at www.hart-uk.org/news

On the HART Blog:



For International Women's Day (8th March 2015) we ran a blog series on Women's Rights Around the World. We published eight blogs, celebrating the work being done by women to promote and protect human rights, and highlighting the issues that continue to affect women disproportionately, including sexual violence, political participation and access to education.

Other topics recently covered on the HART blog include:

- A Beginner's Guide To Elections In Sudan
- Sustainable Development Goals and Women's Rights in Burma
- Elections in Nigeria: The Precarious Choice between Democratic Order and Security
- The Modern Slavery Act, recently passed by the British Parliament
- The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict: Obstacles to Resolution

Read them all at www.hart-uk.org/blog

Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust



HART works to provide lasting change through aid and advocacy for those suffering oppression and persecution, who are often neglected by other organisations, or are largely out of sight of the world's media. Founded in 2003 by Baroness Cox, a human rights activist, HART makes every endeavour to be a 'Voice for the Voiceless' for those who may be unreachable, unhelped and unheard.

HART relies on first-hand evidence of human rights violations as a basis for powerful twin-track programmes of international advocacy and aid. We believe that advocacy, combined with aid, is vital if we are to achieve sustainable community development, local ownership and empowerment for oppressed peoples.



YES!

I want to make a difference and be a Voice for the Voiceless!

At HART we see all the time how a little goes a long way – both in the way our partners abroad use the funds we provide and the difference our volunteers can make. There are many ways to support the work we do.

If you would like to donate to our work, you can do so in a number of ways:

☐ I would like to make a one off payment towards the work of HART. A cheque is enclosed for £.....

☐ I pledge to help HART's partners and their grassroots organisations on a regular basis with a

☐ monthly ☐ quarterly ☐ annual gift of £..... (please tick one)

Please send me a standing order mandate.

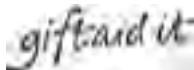
Title.....First Name.....Surname.....

Address

CityCountyPostcode.....

E-mail address.....

Phone



☐ I am a UK taxpayer. Please treat as Gift Aid all qualifying donations made:

☐ Today ☐ In the past 4 years ☐ In the future (please tick all boxes you wish to apply)

I confirm I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax and/ or Capital Gains Tax for each tax year (6 April to 5 April) that is at least equivalent to the amount of tax that all the charities and Community Amateur Sports Clubs that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts for that year. I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify. I understand that the charity will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I gave on or after 6 April 2008 (28p) of tax on every £1 that I gave up to 5 April 2008).

Please return to:
HART-UK, 3 Arnellan House, 146 Slough Lane, London, NW9 8XJ.
Tel: 020 8204 7336

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

For more information about HART or to make an online donation, go to
www.hart-uk.org