



AFRICA/SUDAN - "Let us not forget the suffering of the peoples of Sudan", says the Church

Juba (Agenzia Fides) - "As we focus on South Sudan, we remain painfully aware of the suffering of the peoples of the Nuba Mountains, Darfur and Blue Nile, and the contested area of Abyei", write the Bishops of Sudan and South Sudan in the pastoral Exhortation published at the end of their Plenary Assembly held in Juba from January 21 to 31, referring to the areas of Sudan which have long been disrupted by clashes between the troops of Khartoum and a series of guerrilla movements.

"Daily bombing causes great suffering and death to civilians. Confined in their own areas, they do not have access to food, medicines, vaccines and other humanitarian necessities. Women, children and the elderly shelter in caves. Many have been displaced. They too deserve justice and peace, the freedom to practice their own religion and culture, and full citizen rights in the land of their birth".

"The people of Abyei are yet to receive the official referendum, which they were guaranteed in the CPA", the Bishops recall. The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) signed in Nairobi in 2005 included, in addition to the 2011 referendum which led to the independence of South Sudan, even a referendum to determine the fate of Abyei, the oil-rich area on the border between Sudan and South Sudan. "We support the right of the people of Abyei to determine their own political future", the Bishops said and conclude by recalling the situation of "Christians and southern Sudanese living in Sudan", who "also deserve to have basic human rights guaranteed. We condemn attempts to harass and restrict the activities of the Church". (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 01/02/2014)