

# ▶ Province of Episcopal Church of Sudan

Sudan News Update April to August 2023

## **Introduction**

War broke out in Khartoum on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2023 between the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and has continued to this day. It has escalated to different parts of Sudan, west to Darfur and El Obeid, and south to Kadugli and Blue Nile. It has forced most of Khartoum inhabitants to flee from the city to other, safer States within the country, while others fled to neighbouring countries, such as South Sudan, Egypt, Ethiopia, Chad, Central Africa Republic. Others have made their way to Europe and America. The UN estimates that due to this war about 4,800,000 people are either internally displaced or are refugees outside Sudan.

Most public property in the capital has been destroyed in the fighting. People's houses have been occupied by the RSF and women raped. The church is not unscathed. One ECS pastor (Musa James) was shot dead, while another (Makki Adoonki) suffered shrapnel wounds. Pastor Isaac Kodi was beaten up and forced to leave his house. Many are homeless.

In August Archbishop Ezekiel Kondo visited Egypt and was able to engage in Zoom meetings with mission partners, as well as encouraging Sudanese refugees who fled there. Assistant Bishop Revd. Dr. Fajak Avajani is also in Egypt, for medical treatment.



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## **Provincial Office**

The Provincial Office and All Saints Cathedral have been occupied by the RSF and the vehicles were stolen. Internal theft and damage have not been confirmed, but description of the actions of RSF elsewhere suggest that all the safe boxes will have been broken open, and contents looted including computers and valuable documents. It is confirmed that the guest house, Beit al Salam which was dedicated and opened in May 2022 as a source of income, has been vandalized by the RSF.

## **Diocese of Khartoum**

All the premises of the Diocese of Khartoum have been broken into and looted, including the Bible Translation Department and printing room, the Mothers Union, Youth, Prison Ministry and the Meeting Hall.

All the Diocesan and Translation Department computers were broken and damaged. All the vehicles (6) were stolen and all safe boxes were broken into and whatever money stolen. Church property documents and all historical documents are lost. Diocesan income generation shops have been looted and damaged. The homes of the bishop and the dean have been forcibly occupied by the RSF.

The Diocesan Bishop (who is also Archbishop of Sudan) and the Asst Bishop have relocated to Port Sudan with their families. A few pastors also left Khartoum/Omdurman due to escalation of fighting in their areas. However, most parishes are open and functioning with their pastors. Only three churches (All Saints Cathedral, Church of Saviour, and at Fitihab) are closed, because their locations are fighting areas: most people had left and relocated to safer places.

## **Diocese of Kadugli**

Although Kadugli Town was not directly affected by the war in Khartoum, for about a month now it has been under siege by SPLA/N. They have been shelling the town causing civilians to flee for safer areas nearby, including A/Bishop Hassan with his family. Sunday services were interrupted.

## **Diocese of El Obeid**

The Diocese is particularly affected by the fighting. Part of Darfur States were attacked by RSF and as a result Bishop Ismail could not visit the area and he could not meet with the clergy in these areas either. El Obeid town has been under siege by RSF for long time (like Kadugli) except that the Bishop remains in his house. Nothing has been heard from church centres west of El Obeid. It is thought all has gone.

## **Diocese of Port Sudan**

The Diocese of Port Sudan has not seen fighting, but is affected by hundreds of thousands who fled Khartoum. The city has temporarily become the capital of Sudan. The Diocese (Bishop Abdu) has tried to provide basic humanitarian relief, and has provided facilities for the displaced Provincial Office.

## **Diocese of Wad Medani**

The city of Wad Medani, being the nearest to Khartoum, was the first to receive displaced people escaping the fighting. St Paul Cathedral compound filled with people of all faiths seeking relief food support. Bishop Saman Farjalla and his team have been offering some assistance to them.

## **Achievements**

- Open temporary Provincial Office in the Diocese of Port Sudan by the support of Bishop Abdu Elnur Kodi
- Equip the office by the help of Sherborne Parish in the Diocese of Salisbury in UK.
- Reactivate and access ECS bank account in Port Sudan
- Rent a temporary house for the Archbishop and furnish it.
- Staff salaries paid for April to August 2023
- Distribute financial support to 207 ECS key workers across the whole Province (Khartoum, Kadugli, El Obeid, Port Sudan & Wad Medani) through the support of Diocese of Leeds, the Anglican Communion Fund and Relay Trust
- Purchase a car for the Province with the support of Relay Trust
- Relief food distribution across the whole Province (Khartoum, Kadugli, El Obeid, Port Sudan & Wad Medani) by the support of the Diocese of Leeds, the Anglican Communion Fund, the Church Association UK, Relay Trust, the Church in Wales and AFRECS

- All the Bishops are with their flock in their Dioceses except the Diocese of Khartoum where the Bishop is displaced in Port Sudan. However, churches are functioning in the Diocese.

## **Challenges**

- Property in the Provincial Office, All Saints Cathedral, Khartoum Diocesan Office, the Translation Department and Shukai College is destroyed, including historical items.
- Occupation of Church premises and clergy houses by the RSF.
- Income generation projects destroyed.
- Some parishes got closed.
- Many people lost their lives.
- Many Christians have fled, relocated to other states or to neighboring countries.

## **Way forward**

- Six-months Survival Plan for ECS staff and clergy so that the Church can continue in service.
- Six-months Survival Relief Plan for people stranded in Khartoum, Kadugli, El Obeid, Port Sudan and Wad Medani.

- Post-war reconstruction of what got damaged by the fighting.
- Trauma healing workshops for both Pastors and Laity.
- Training of Church Personnel during this time of crisis.

## **Vote of Thanks**

The Province of the Episcopal Church of Sudan expresses its thanks and appreciation to our friends and partners in UK and other parts in the world for the generosity they have shown to us during this time of crisis in the country. Because of their stand all the dioceses, parishes and staff have been able to continue serving the people.

Thanks especially to the following for the contribution they have given for the support of Bishops, Clergy, Staff and ECS Christians in general.

- *Leeds Diocese*
- *Relay Trust*
- *Archbishop of Canterbury Anglican Communion Fund (ACF)*
- *Church Association for Sudan & South Sudan (CASSS)*
- *Salisbury Diocese*
- *The Church in Wales*
- *AFRECS*
- *Individuals including people from other Faiths.*



Christ Church Cathedral Port Sudan



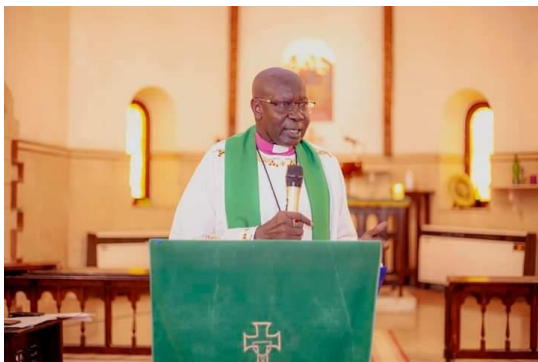
The New Car



Provincial Secretary & Accountant



Relief Distribution at St Yaggub, Khuteir



Preaching in Cairo Sudanese Congregation



Tiling St Yagoub Church compound Khuteir. Despite the war, maintain the church building continues



Hajer Zauya Church Algariya Relief distribution



Atabra Church Relief distribution



All Saints Cathedral Khartoum



Khartoum Provincial Office + Beit al Salam



With Pastor Anis and Youth