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“...a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering a service to God.” John 16:2

Today’s 21st Century evangelists and missionaries, concerned about accommodations in the target areas of their attention, frequently ask, *“What kind of hotels do they have in that town?”* By contrast, First-century evangelist and missionaries usually asked, *“What kind of jails do they have in that town?”* That’s where they generally wound up.

Times haven’t changed much today in restricted-access countries where Frontline Fellowship missionaries serve. Read on, and praise the Lord for His mercy.

After much prayer and international pressure evangelical Bishop Bullen Dolli and Dr. Peter Hammond were released, following 6-days of detention last month by the Sudanese Peoples Liberation Army (SPLA). They were held just short of a week in Yei, at the headquarters of the SPLA in Western Equatoria.

Intensive investigation by the SPLA Public Security Office and Military Intelligence revealed an intricate and diabolical plot to discredit the Christian ministry of dedicated missionaries and to murder Bishop Bullen Dolli and Rev. Peter Hammond.

These two key Christian figures were on the National Islamic Front hit list. Bishop Bullen Dolli, well known for his strong public stand against the NIF Government in Khartoum, recently received an award for defending religious freedom from the Institute for Religion and Democracy in Washington DC. On his visit to America last year he toured 35 states exposing first-hand the NIF’s brutal religious persecution in southern Sudan, where two million Christians have been slaughtered in the 18-year Jihad, or holy war. Bishop Dolli’s church, the Fraser Cathedral in Lui, still bears the scars from repeated bombing campaigns by the Muslim Sudan

Air Force.

The drama began last year when four short wave radios were brought into Southern Sudan by Frontline Fellowship and handed over as gifts. These were intended to establish a reliable and much needed communication link between the Samaritan's Purse hospital, the conservative Episcopal Church of Sudan and the FF mission base in Mundri.

Somehow the Islamic Government of Sudan (GOS) got word of this and launched a clever, triple-play scheme designed to eliminate three "thorns in the flesh" to Islam: the evangelical Bishop Bullen Dolli, Dr. Peter Hammond and to discredit the SPLA in otherwise friendly Western circles. Soon the National Islamic Front (NIF) in Khartoum "*leaked*" false information to junior officers of the SPLA saying,

We have introduced four radios into the South for espionage purposes. Each unit has within it the capability to advise us of all transmissions."

When Frontline Fellowship brought in radios for the Churches it was assumed that Bishop Bullen Dolli and missionary Peter Hammond must be the ones in contact with the Islamic Government. Arrest warrants were issued for the Bishop and for Dr. Hammond, director of Frontline Fellowship, charging them with treason – a capital offense.

Disinformation works very well among simple people with no technical means to check the veracity of a rumor. The lie seemed plausible. Junior officers in the SPLA were aware of the four radios brought in by FF, who had made no secret of their desire to help improve communication.

In December 2001 orders went out from SPLA southern HQ in Yei to confiscate the radios and arrest those involved with them. Two church radio operators, Joseph and Dominic, were whipped with over 75 lashes each for resisting handing over the radios to renegade SPLA soldiers. Timothy Keller was arrested at gunpoint and marched 26 miles to an army base.

This was not a case of mistaken identity, but a deliberate Muslim plot designed to discredit two recognized Christian leaders and as a consequence have the SPLA do their dirty work by executing them. This would seriously damage the SPLA's otherwise favorable image in the West as they normally respect the Church and protect religious freedom. It was a win-win situation for the Arab schemers.

The NIF plan was to create doubts about the loyalty of Bishop Dolli and cast suspicion on Dr. Hammond. In war time the allegation of "treason" is so egregious it demands the death penalty.

There was an added ingredient in this tangled web – tribalism. The Dinka are the largest tribe in the New Sudan. Earlier in the war they were displaced during Arab raids across the South. Many settled among the Moru in Moruland. The Dinka are cattlemen and have virtually destroyed the Moru farming infrastructure by indiscriminate grazing. As a majority nation the Dinka have many senior positions in the army. They resent the Moru objections to their grazing practices. Since the FF base and mission school are in Moruland, and Bishop Dolli is Moru, Hammond and Dolli were seen in a less favorable light by Dinka dignitaries following the disinformation campaign despite the fact that FF has worked extensively among the Dinka to their great benefit.

It seemed particularly incredible that Bishop Bullen Dolli could be accused of collaborating with the Arab Islamic regime as they had tortured and killed his only brother. The Muslims tied a rope around his neck and dragged him for some distance behind a vehicle, then poured gasoline on his shredded body and set it alight.

Dr. Peter Hammond's many writings and work on behalf of the suffering Christians in Sudan is well known internationally, particularly his best-selling book, *Faith Under Fire in Sudan* and the award-winning video, *Sudan: the Hidden Holocaust*. Last year the Government of Sudan published articles on their official website stating that, "*Peter Hammond should expect to be bombed when he comes to Sudan. Hammond should expect to be shot on sight, because his writings make him an enemy of the State.*"

After thorough investigations, the security services of the SPLA concluded that the Bishop and missionary were innocent of the charges and concluded that they were victims of an elaborate disinformation campaign, which included some foreigners in New Sudan. It was difficult to determine the extent to which the mortal danger was exacerbated by the false and slanderous accusations made by a disgruntled former Frontline associate – but it was considerable.

The leadership of the SPLA issued orders that Bishop Bullen Dolli and Dr. Peter Hammond were cleared of all charges and were henceforth free to travel anywhere in the New Sudan. SPLA commanders were also instructed to provide them with every protection.

Six days after their arrest, the missionaries were released. Bishop Bullen Dolli resumed his ministry in the Diocese of Lui. Peter Hammond returned to Cape Town in time for the 20th Anniversary celebrations of Frontline Fellowship and to launch a new film on Sudan - "Terrorism and Persecution."

3 Films on Sudan on 1 DVD

[Faith under Fire in Sudan](#)