**UN Genocide Adviser Refuses to Answer on Sudan, Defers to Khartoum PR**

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UNITED NATIONS, October 28 -- When the UN's Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide hosts an event about “Dangerous Speech on the Road to Genocide,” it seems fair to ask about Sudan, the only country subject to an indictment for genocide by the International Criminal Court -- especially with the Adviser is from Sudan, and the UN helps produce and sell his books about Sudan.

But when Inner City Press asked Francis Deng and his co-presenter Dr. Susan Benesch for this opinions of genocide and Sudan, and the place of media strategies in this, the UN's Deng refused to comment, and instead deferred to the Ambassador of Sudan, Dafaala Al Haj Ali Osman, who ridiculed the ICC's genocide charge by only partially quoting the definition of genocide.

Neither Deng nor Dr. Benesch offered any response to Sudan, including the misquoting of the Genocide Convention.

After Inner City Press asked its question, Dr. Benesch said, “Mr. Lee asked Dr. Deng about Sudan and about Sri Lanka and since he's far more expert over those topics, I would defer to him to answer.”

But Deng in turn deferred, to the representative of the very government accused of genocide. Deng said, “I think we should restrict our questions and comments on the subject of today's lecture.” Video here, from Minute 57:08.

Since the event was about genocide and media, a question about genocide and the Sudanese media seemed well within the subject. Inner City Press emphasized this, so that Deng couldn't use fairness as a basis for not answering noting the presence of Sudan's Ambassador in the room.

“So ask him,” Deng said. Video here, from Minute 57:08.

Sudan's Dafaala Al Haj Ali Osman took the floor, and made a presentation he later admonished Inner City Press to “reflect.” He began by saluting “my fellow citizen” Francis Deng, then launched into Inner City Press, video here from Minute 58:

“Despite the fact that Professor Susan has answered you [that] this is out of the context of this workshop or lecture, I will try to give you a few glimpses, how this is related to Sudan. I think you have read this pamphlet it talks about a definition of genocide, 'the deliberate and systematic extermination of an ethnic, racial, religious or national group.'

[Note: the full quote, relegated by the UN to the inside of its pamphlet, is the “intent to destroy, in whole OR IN PART, a national ethnical, racial or religious group.']

Sudan's Ambassador, using the half-quote of the Genocide Convention, continued:

“If we want to apply it to Darfur we find a rebellion against central authority... they killed Army people and Police... I think any student of law would know that the central authority or the President is obliged by the constitution of the land to react to put an end to a military operation, to establish peace and security.. To share some information not unveiled for one reason nor another, the Prosecutor General of ICC in his accusation that the President has committed genocide mentions three tribes. For your information 45 individuals or more of those three tribes are members of the National Parliament in Sudan and more than that number are Parliament members in the 25 parliaments in the regional states of Sudan. The federal Minister of Justice in Sud belongs to one of these tribes. I really don't follow you, if it really a genocide, how would the President spare all these people, and not exterminate them?”

Apparently, the survival (for now) of 45 people disproves genocide. One would have expected Ban Ki-moon's Special Adviser for the Prevention of Genocide to have spoken up against such an interpretation. But he did not. As Inner City Press asked Ban's spokesman Martin Nesirky on October 27, it is unclear when Deng is working and speaking for the UN, and when he is not. From the transcript:

Inner City Press: This is also on Sudan, but it’s sort of on the UN. There was an event yesterday held by DPI [Department of Public Information] in the North Lawn Building called Event, New Vision, it was about Sudan and it had Mr. [Francis] Deng speaking at some length about books that he has written. It had books for sale outside the room and had the host, the Ambassador of Sudan. But what had led me to wonder is, I know Mr. Deng is the Special [Adviser] on prevention of genocide, but it seems… I’ve heard from people that these books are written on UN time; that this is actually one of the things that he does in his UN office. And so, I just, I am unclear of what to make of the book, of the books that he produces. If they are created on UN time and with UN money, are they UN views or is there some, what are topics is his office working on in terms of…?

Spokesperson Nesirky: Did you attend it yesterday?

Inner City Press: I did attend it.

Spokesperson: And you asked him?

Inner City Press: And I asked him afterwards what other countries he is working on prevention of genocide; he said, “We don’t like to be country-specific.” But it seems like it’s hard to prevent genocide unless you name countries.

Spokesperson: Well, this is obviously something that Mr. Deng can comment on. I don’t have anything on that.

Inner City Press: What are rules, I guess I am saying, for UN, if a UN official spends his time in the UN building while on UN time writing books? Does the UN own the copyright?

Spokesperson: That’s what you are saying. Or you said, “Some people say”. That is not an established fact, Matthew. You shouldn’t then turn it into an established fact. You said, “Some people say”.

Inner City Press: Okay. If you can look into it and find that no staff member’s time is entirely…

Spokesperson: As I said, it sounds like you had the chance to ask Mr. Deng yesterday.

Inner City Press: But also, was, is the book being sold…

Spokesperson: Any other questions? Yes, Khaled?

A Permanent Five member of the Security Council told Inner City Press on the morning of October 28 that these “Deng book questions” were good. So while Deng as Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide may have refused to answer the question genocide and Sudan, maybe these questions about Deng and the UN will be answered. Watch this site.