

AUTHORITY *NY 100-111*  
BY *DA* NARA Date *3/2/8*  
FOUR (Classification) ATCH

*745 W. 00/2-554*  
*XR 845 W. 413*

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DESP. NO.

FROM : USLO, Khartoum

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

February 5, 1954  
DATE

REF :

15 For Dept. Use Only	ACTION	DEPT.
	NEA-4	DC/R-2 011-6 EUR-5 P-1 SC-2 UNR-4
REC'D	OTHER	
2/19	0 CIA-7 USA-10	

SUBJECT: Catholic Leader Answers Allegation of Catholic Interference in Local Politics

From time to time Sudanese nationalists have alleged that Christian missionaries, particularly Roman Catholics, have intervened in politics in the South. It is usually alleged that these Christian missionaries have been anti-Islam and pro-British. During the recent parliamentary elections NUP leaders claimed privately that the Catholic Church counselled its adherents not to support the NUP. On January 28, 1954 a pro-Umma newspaper published an attack on alleged intervention by the Roman Catholic Church in local politics in the South. Catholic leaders in Khartoum, including Bishop Barroni, have advised the reporting officer in confidence that they fear that the NUP Government will eventually curtail the freedom of Christian missionaries throughout the Sudan. In public statements, however, the NUP leaders insist that they stand for religious freedom. To make clear its stand, the Catholic leadership here decided to make a public answer to the Umma attack of January 28 and under the signature of Habib Neman HADDAD, Deputy President of the Catholic Movement in the Sudan, issued a statement explaining the neutral stand of the Roman Catholic Church in local politics. This statement was published in El Umma on January 31, 1954 and has stimulated considerable discussion. A translation of the Catholic statement is attached as Enclosure No. 1, Unclassified.

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
FEB 19 1954  
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C/O  
BRANCH

*Joseph Sweeney*

Joseph Sweeney,  
United States Liaison Officer.

Enclosure: As stated

cc: London  
Cairo

JSweeney:md  
REPORTER

CONFIDENTIAL

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The following statement has been made by the Catholic movement in the Sudan in answer to the news published by the Umma newspaper on 28/1/1954 about the alleged intervention in local politics by the Roman Catholic Church in the South.

1. "The fact is that the Catholic Church and the State are two different things each possessing its own head and means with which to attain its objectives.
2. The head of the Catholic Church is His Holiness the Pope who is elected by Cardinals from all over the Catholic world.
3. His Holiness has representatives the world over known as the Papal Ambassadors of the Vatican State.
4. In the Sudan the Catholic Church comes under the Papal representative in East Africa Bishop Waknoki (!) with headquarters at Mombassa.
5. The only object of the Church is to promote the spiritual ties as opposed to temporal ones. Therefore the Church does not interfere in the affairs of the peoples nor does it meddle with Government policies except when its religious freedom is threatened with curtailment. The Church never stands up against one specific political party in favor of another since it is made up of different races enjoying absolute equality.
6. It must be borne in mind that in the view of the Catholic Church in this country every political party is acceptable so long as it does not advocate hostility to God nor to the freedom of His worship.
7. The best evidence of this state of affairs can be found in the fact that Southern M.P.s belong to varying political camps and if there was any church pressure on the Southern electorate it would have been possible to group the entire Southern electors together round a given political idea.
8. Catholicism throughout the globe endeavors to protect its religious and moral standing against external aggression as can be seen from the effective resistance to Communism put up by Catholic Christians of whom thousands are persecuted in the process. See El Ahrām of 19/1/1954, with reference to Poland.
9. In conclusion may we ask if journalists may abstain from involving us in political strife. Everyone of us has in civil life his own ideas, prestige and independence. Let our motto be: "Religion belongs to God and the homeland to all."

/s/ Habib Naman Haddad  
Deputy President of the Catholic  
Movement in the Sudan."

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