

DANCE KING

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Counties

WEEK OF NOVEMBER 22-30, 2005

Relief sought for genocide victims

Rights groups ask U.S. appeals court to help Sudanese recovery

By Larry Neumcister
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK - For the people of Sudan, a case slowly moving through the courts in the U.S. holds great potential - a lawsuit that claims a Canadian company aided in genocide in its pursuit of oil.

But winning relief in a court half a world away will depend on how many people will be able to join in the lawsuit.

A federal judge recently limited the scope of the 2001 lawsuit brought by the Presbyterian Church of Sudan against Calgary, Alberta-based Talisman Energy Inc. in U.S. District Court in Manhattan by refusing to grant class-action status.

The 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals will decide by the end of this year whether to consider the class-action issue before the case goes to trial in January 2007.

The plaintiffs say class-action status is crucial to set the stage for a potentially large payout to Sudanese victims and to set a precedent for U.S. courts to aid suffering people worldwide who cannot find relief in their own courts. The church brought the case in the U.S. because the American courts are often the traditional route for such genocide cases.

Without it, "thousands of victims will be effectively denied any opportunity to pursue legal redress for acts of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes," said Beth Van Schaack, assistant professor at the Santa Clara University School of Law. She submitted court papers on behalf of human rights groups and activists asking the appeals court to hear the issue.

The lawsuit alleges that Talisman, Canada's biggest independent oil and gas exploration and production company, joined the Sudanese government in ethnic cleansing, killings, war crimes, property confiscation, enslavement, kidnapping and rape.

The plaintiffs allege Talisman supplied the Sudanese military with money, logistics, fuel, vehicles and accommodations as Sudan sought to depopulate 142 villages near oil fields by attacking them with bombers and helicopter gunships from 1999 through 2002. The plaintiffs - victims of aerial

Please see **SUDANESE/2A**

SOUTHERN COMFORT



PHOTO: CALVIN FERGUSON

Ashleigh Ferguson, 4, picks tomatoes at her Charlotte home last summer. Despite the region's history of racial strife, black southerners are generally proud of the region.

Many blacks proud of the region despite difficult past

By Jay Reeves
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. - Blacks have a complicated love affair with the South.

Their ancestors were enslaved in the region for generations, then Jim Crow laws pushed them to the back of the bus. From inner-city slums to old plantation counties, being black too often still means a sec-

ond-class existence.

Yet surveys show blacks who live in the South are more likely than any other racial or ethnic group - even whites - to identify themselves as Southerners. It's a label millions claim with pride and affection, yet uneasiness.

For many black people, feelings for the South come back to family, summer cookouts, sto-

ries told on the porch, graciousness, gospel and Atlanta hip-hop. Their emotional ties are no less strong, even as they see a place that has yet to completely live down its past.

"As an African-American Southerner, I enjoy our culture that includes our famous Southern charm and hospitality," said Stephen Wicks of

Please see **BLACK/3A**

Fund to wipe out health disparity

Grants for \$8.9 million in North Carolina

By Herbert L. White
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A statewide fund is bankrolling efforts to reduce health disparities in North Carolina.

The NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund announced Monday an \$8.9 million pool for grants over three years. The fund will accept applications from eligible organizations who seek to reduce disparities, for both children and adults related to obesity and chronic diseases, such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes and cancer.

According to the 2003 Racial and Ethnic Disparities Report Card published by the N.C. Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities, African Americans, Native Americans and Latinos have significant disparities in most areas of health status.

"Funding innovative and proven approaches to eliminating health disparities among racial and ethnic groups is paramount to ensuring that all North Carolina residents are able to live healthy and productive lives," said Lt. Gov. Beverly Perdue, the fund's chair. "Working together is the only way we can understand and tackle this growing national and statewide problem."

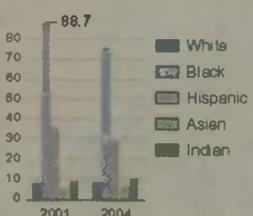
Created by the General Assembly in 2000 to allocate some of North Carolina's share of the national tobacco settlement, the trust fund has pumped \$127 million

Please see **STATE/7A**

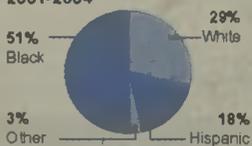
HIV cases down among blacks

An HIV study based on data from 33 states, with name-based reporting systems, shows falling rates among blacks. The decline may be tied to overlapping drops in diagnoses among injection drug users and heterosexuals.

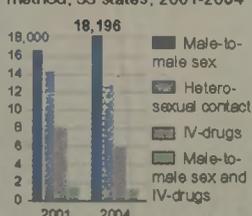
Diagnosis Rate Per 100,000 population, by race/ethnicity in 33 states, 2001-2004



New HIV diagnoses, 2001-2004*



Estimated HIV/AIDS diagnoses, by transmission method, 33 states, 2001-2004



SOURCE: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Black HIV rates decreasing

By Mike Stobbe
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ATLANTA -- The rate of newly reported HIV cases among blacks has been dropping by about 5 percent a year since 2001, the government said Thursday. But blacks are still eight times more likely than whites to be diagnosed with the AIDS virus.

"The racial disparities remain severe," said Lisa Lee, an epidemiologist at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The falling rate among blacks seems to be tied to overlapping drops in diagnoses among injection drug users and heterosexuals, CDC researchers said.

The study was based on 2001-04 data

See **HIV/6A**

the box NEWS, NOTES & TRENDS

Women key to historic election

GLOBAL INFORMATION NETWORK

A victory party was celebrated recently by supporters of Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, a Harvard-educated economist who edged out her rival with 59.4 percent of the vote cast in national elections on Nov. 8.

Activists hailed the presidential vote in favor of Johnson-Sirleaf, who held an unbeatable lead in the West African state of Liberia, torn by years of civil war.

Liberian-born international soccer star, George Weah, received 40.6 percent of the vote that was

heavily young and male.

But women are the larger voting bloc and brought Johnson-Sirleaf the climactic win.

"This shows that if we put our minds to things, we can get to the highest positions," said Tsitsi Matekaire, Sirleaf



director of the Women in Politics Support Unit, a Zimbabwean group lobbying for increased participation of women in decision-making in politics.

After 26 years, the Bible has been translated into Gullah dialect 8B



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