



## *Committee on International Justice and Peace*

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Your Grace:

As Chair of the Committee on International Justice and Peace of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) I write to renew our solidarity with the Church and the people of South Sudan during this time of crisis and to share with you a statement that our Conference and Catholic Relief Services (CRS) have made.

On February 26 the House Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Human Rights and International Organizations held a hearing on the crisis in South Sudan. Attached you will find a copy of the statement that the USCCB and CRS submitted to the Subcommittee hearing that will be included in the record of the proceedings. You will note that the statement included the Sudan Catholic Bishops' Conference Exhortation *Let Us Found Our Nation on a New Covenant*.

During the hearing, The U.S. Special Envoy to Sudan and South Sudan Donald Booth and a couple of the other witness echoed your statement that South Sudan cannot go back to business as usual. They also argued that civil society members be allowed to participate in the negotiations in order to broaden the discussions and to ensure the interests of the common good are protected in the final agreements. Special Envoy Booth recognized the role that the faith communities have played in South Sudan and met with them while they were in Addis.

I believe that the hearing helped to raise the profile of the crisis in South Sudan and Sudan. The Congressmen on the Subcommittee and the civil society witnesses sent a clear message to State Department that the United States Government must intensify its efforts to help bring peace, to rebuild national unity and to restart long term development programs that will create greater prosperity for all South Sudanese.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops remains committed to supporting the Church and the people of South Sudan and I look forward to working with you to accomplish this goal.

Sincerely yours,

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Most Reverend Richard E. Pates

Bishop of Des Moines

Chair, Committee on International Justice and Peace

Encl: Statement by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and Catholic Relief Services