



## *Department of Social Development and World Peace*

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December 11, 2007

The Honorable Dr. Condoleezza Rice  
Secretary of State U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Rice:

The Catholic Church in the United States and in Sudan has worked hand-in-hand to promote peace and offer humanitarian assistance in Sudan for more than 20 years. Catholic Relief Services (CRS), in partnership with the Church in Sudan, has provided aid to thousands in Southern Sudan for many years. In 2004, CRS extended relief work to Darfur. To support the efforts of the Church in Sudan, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) joined the Save Darfur Coalition, uniting with people of good will from across the country in a broad community of hope and service. We have sought your help and Congressional assistance on a number of occasions in addressing issues pertaining to Sudan. U.S. Bishops have visited Sudan on a regular basis, most recently visiting both Southern Sudan and Darfur during the summer of 2006.

In my letter of July 9, 2007 I expressed appreciation for the leadership that the Administration has shown to secure an end to suffering in Darfur and to provide resources for humanitarian assistance. Now, five months later, despite significant progress to promote peace, I must express my deep concern regarding the political situation in both Darfur and Sudan as a whole.

Although the United Nations Security Council has approved the creation of a 26,000 strong UN/African Union peacekeeping force, the government of Sudan has created many obstacles that will adversely affect the future success of this effort. Meanwhile, peace talks in Sirte have ended without success and violence in Darfur has worsened.

The withdrawal of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement from the National Unity Government is also cause for alarm. While much progress has been made in implementing the Comprehensive Peace Accord, many key benchmark deadlines have been missed. The lack of a North-South boundary agreement, the failure of Sudanese armed forces to withdraw from the South, the limited progress towards elections, and the absence of transparency and equity in sharing oil revenue all threaten the viability of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. The Church in Sudan raised many of these same concerns to the President of Sudan back in July 2006, yet they remain unresolved.

Lastly, it is clear that the conflict in Darfur is spilling over to the South through clashes such as those that have occurred in Kordofan region. The geographic expansion of the conflict also

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contributes to further destabilization of Chad and Central African Republic. These troubling developments all point to the urgent need to halt the downward spiral to renewed and increased conflict across Sudan that will affect the rest of the greater Horn of Africa.

Sudan is at a critical juncture. If Sudan is to build a sustainable peace and hold successful democratic elections in 2009 and a North-South Referendum in 2011, the U.S. will need to redouble its diplomatic efforts to develop a more holistic strategy to address all aspects of this complex, multi-faceted conflict. The U.S. can work in cooperation with the UN Security Council, the European Union, the Arab League, Eritrea, Chad and the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD). The United States Government can also call on the support of France and China to promote full implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and to support the UN/AU peacekeepers. The U.S. and its international partners must ensure that the UN/AU peacekeeping force meets its objectives by fully funding a robust deployment and preserving its Chapter VII mandate to protect the victims of violence in Darfur.

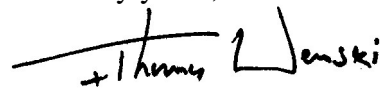
The U.S. and its partners need to support UN efforts to bring all parties to the Darfur conflict, especially those who represent the internally displaced and women, to the negotiation table to engage in good faith discussions leading to a ceasefire, disarmament of militias and resolution of key issues, most importantly, access to and ownership of land.

The United States was a leader in the achievement of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and in the creation of the UN/AU peacekeeping force. It is now time to intensify U.S. efforts to preserve these initiatives. The people of Sudan have suffered through more than 20 years of conflict that has left hundreds of thousands dead and millions more homeless and destitute. We believe peace in Sudan is still possible. The United States has the capacity and responsibility to lead the international community in a coordinated effort to bring about a just peace.

This past week, the world watched as the U.S. led parties to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to the peace table to renew their commitment to a just peace in the Holy Land. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops hopes and prays that strong leadership will result in a just and lasting peace for this troubled area.

Similarly, we reiterate our support for continued and enhanced U.S. leadership to end the suffering in Sudan.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas Wenski". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending to the left.

Bishop Thomas G. Wenski  
Bishop of Orlando  
Chairman, Committee on International Justice and Peace

cc: Mr. Andrew Natsios