



Committee on International Justice and Peace

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September 23, 2010

The Honorable Hillary Clinton
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C. Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Clinton:

In my capacity as Chairman of the Committee on International Justice and Peace of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), I recently returned from Sudan where I met with Catholic Church leaders, officials in the U.S. Embassy and USAID, and United Nations staff. The trip made me cognizant of both the potential for a long-awaited peace and the dangers posed by the challenges yet to be overcome. Since the situation in the Sudan is rapidly reaching a critical point, I want to share some important insights and urgent recommendations for your consideration.

With only four months left of the five-year implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), most of the important benchmarks of the agreement remain outstanding. Not surprisingly, this lack of progress has instilled little confidence in the chances for a lasting peace. The Catholic Church in Sudan has stated clearly that they remain increasingly concerned about the situation in their country. The Church is particularly focused on the following crucial issues:

1. A successful referendum on Southern self-determination is the highest priority for the South and the best chance for peace in Sudan. Time is increasingly short. The lack of progress threatens the validity of the referendum results and may deny the people of Southern Sudan their right to self-determination, a right for which Southerners fought and died for thirty years.
2. The United States and its international partners must work with the governments of the North and the South to complete a legitimate referendum registration process that puts registration cards into the hands of every valid Southern voter. It is the firm belief of the Church in Sudan and others that the registration card would represent for people the first concrete sign of hope that their destiny is finally in their hands. That hope might be enough to allow any postponement needed to guarantee a free and fair referendum.
3. The Government of Southern Sudan asked the Church to revive the Kajiko peace process that built unity among Southern political leaders in the run up to the CPA. The Church has also revived the People to People peace process at the grassroots level of society. The Church is a trusted and viable force for peace and good governance. The newly reinforced Special Envoy's team shares the same goals as the Church and should partner with the Church to reach those objectives.
4. The Special Envoy's office should work with the Government of Southern Sudan to guarantee that it is inclusive of all ethnic and political groups and that its policies and

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- actions are transparent and accountable to the people it serves. Such policies are the best guarantees that violence in the South will not occur.
5. The Church in Sudan has serious concerns about the rights of Southerners in the North and Northerners in the South if the South votes for separation. The United States must remain vigilant and act decisively to protect religious freedom and citizenship rights for all minority peoples in Sudan no matter the outcome of the referendum. This concern also pertains to the people residing in the border areas of Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile states where creative solutions are needed to guarantee self determination and human rights.
 6. Oil revenue is the life blood of the governments in the North and the South. If a successful referendum is the means to resolve the issues of the past, a fair, mutually acceptable agreement on the sharing of oil revenue is the best guarantee for a peaceful future between the North and the South. Agreement on oil revenue, the border, citizenship rights, currency, migration rights and all other crucial issues to the CPA depends on fostering a spirit of mutual trust and balanced compromise. This is the responsibility that the United States and the other guarantors to the CPA must bear if Sudan is to build a future of peace for the first time in its history.
 7. Earlier this month you acknowledged the explosive nature of Sudan. While the U.S. works to defuse the situation, we must also be prepared to respond to the needs of a humanitarian disaster should the referendum fail, or violence erupts.

Attached you will find the Sudan Catholic Bishops' Conference statement "A Message of Hope and a Call to Action" that lays out the bishops' analysis and concerns in more detail. Also attached is the statement by Sudanese bishops who visited the United States earlier this year.

Let me reiterate the commitment of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops to work in collaboration with the Administration for peace in Sudan. In October of this year we will join others in hosting an ecumenical delegation from Sudan. It is our hope that you will receive them and act on their concerns.

The Administration's statement about employing incentives and pressure, and President Obama's planned meetings with Sudanese leaders in New York are encouraging signs. Concerted and high level engagement of the United States and the international community will be required in the days ahead to enable the peoples of Sudan to build a peaceful future.

Sincerely yours,



Most Reverend Howard J. Hubbard
Bishop of Albany
Chairman, Committee on International Justice and Peace