



SUDAN PEOPLES' LIBERATION MOVEMENT
GENERAL HEADQUARTERS



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“Horn of Africa: Current Conditions and U.S. Policy”

House Committee on Foreign Affairs
Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health
U.S. House of Representatives

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Mr. Chairman, Congressman Smith and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for holding this important hearing on current conditions and U.S. policy in the Horn of Africa. I appreciate the opportunity to speak on behalf of the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Movement (SPLM) about the momentous changes taking place in our country and the role we hope the United States can play in helping us avoid a return to conflict in Sudan and ensure a brighter future for the Sudanese people who have suffered too many years of war and destruction.

As you are aware, the Government of Southern Sudan was formed five years ago with the signing of a Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) that ended the longest civil war in Africa. One of the key provisions of the CPA is a referendum on self-determination for the people of Southern Sudan, to be held in six months on January 9th, 2011. The SPLM's primary goal between now and then is to ensure the smooth and transparent conduct of the referendum and to prepare itself for issues it will face in providing governance in either a unified Sudan or independent South Sudan.

Since 2005, we have worked to strengthen the capacity of GOSS to govern Southern Sudan, and despite a lack of resources and capacity, poor infrastructure, a population which is new to nation-building after many years of war and destabilizing interference by the NCP, we have made progress.

In the area of security, with the help of the international community, we have been strengthening the capacity of South Sudan police force and judiciary, as well as investing in disarmament and learning from previous efforts in this area. We are transforming the SPLA from a guerilla army into a modern conventional army capable of defending Southern Sudan. Southern Sudan has a history of internal tension that is based on competition over scarce resources and a lack of strong institutions and can best be addressed by building up institutional capacity. The new government will be committed to bringing the diverse Southern Sudanese communities together, something we have never really had the opportunity to do in the past.



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We are also addressing serious concerns about corruption in the government. We have created Southern Sudan Anti-Corruption Commission, and in response to grave allegations of corruption, President Salva Kiir dismissed two Ministers of Finance and Economic Planning. While very little work in this area could be done during the war, it is a high priority of our government now. With help over time, we will build greater accountability, including a harmonized civil service, improved financial management and a strengthened law enforcement and judiciary.

After Sudan's April elections, some of the candidates who had lost in the South chose to express their dissatisfaction with the results by armed rebellion. Dissatisfaction with election results is common in any election, but in Southern Sudan, where large stocks of weapons are readily available, it can become dangerous when candidates choose to resort to arms rather than express their grievances peacefully. While the SPLA has the ability to deal with these groups militarily, it is not the intention of GOSS, nor is it in its interest to do so. GoSS' aim is to bring all groups together through dialogue, and in doing so, turn away from the "eye for an eye" mentality of the past. However, make no mistake: much of this internal tumult is being stoked by support from the NCP in Khartoum as long as the NCP finds it in its interest to support dissidents in the South and security in the south will continue to be affected. GoSS has evidence of the NCP's support for these groups, and President Kiir recently sent an envoy to present President Bashir with a message of protest from GOSS.

These challenges are not unique to the South – the North must also deal with issues of ethnic and cultural plurality and armed insurrections in Darfur and in the East. Whatever the outcome of the referendum, the South must work together with the North to address these common problems and to maintain peace. The people of Sudan, North and South, cannot afford another war. You have my pledge that despite provocative behavior from the North, we will do all we can to work the NCP leadership in to making the transition peaceful.

We have made progress in the past five years but much still needs to be done to ensure next year's referendum is free, fair, and credible. As President Kiir told Vice President Biden in Nairobi on June 9th, we formally request assistance from the United States in preparing for the referendum and in addressing the most urgent post-referendum needs, particularly in the areas of security, governance and development, in order to promote a peaceful transition post-referendum. GoSS is ready and willing to participate in efforts to make progress on negotiations with Khartoum on outstanding CPA issues, and in particular the establishment and effective functioning of the Referendum Commission. This should include prompt establishment of a schedule of meetings between GoSS and the NCP, supported by international mediation. Other outstanding issues include oil negotiations, border demarcation, water rights and citizenship.



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GoSS also seeks clear expressions of support for the CPA process from the United States to reinforce the prompt conduct of the referendum in January 2011, as has been agreed by the parties and guarantors. We appreciate the comments Vice President Biden made in Nairobi supporting the referendum being held without delay and the results respected unconditionally. The conduct of the referendum must be supported by the international community to ensure a legitimate and recognized process, and we seek the United States' assurance that it will unconditionally support the outcome of the referendum whatever it turns to be. We continue to be grateful for the critical role the United States has played so far as a guarantor of the CPA.

Despite the challenges of the next six months, we take comfort in the paths we have seen others take towards peace, freedom and prosperity. Our battles have similarly been fought in defense of our identity and dignity: to ensure for ourselves freedom of belief, freedom of speech, freedom from want and freedom from fear. Although the outcome of our civil war may not parallel the United States', we are determined to emerge from it a people strengthened in freedom. In your early days as a nation, you received vital help from your friends. Without this help, the United States would not have grown to be the great nation it is. We ask nothing more than to have the same opportunities you had as a nation in your early days.