



Committee on International Justice and Peace

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November 18, 2011

The Honorable Hillary Clinton
Secretary of State
U.S. State Department
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Clinton:

As Chairman of the Committee on International Justice and Peace of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), I wish to share the Committee's growing concern with the situation in Sudan and South Sudan. I do this by transmitting the most recent Message of the Sudan Catholic Bishops' Conference entitled, "The Church God Wants Us to Be".

The Bishops of Sudan raise issues addressed to both the Governments of Sudan and South Sudan, but they are particularly worried about events in Sudan. First, they call on the Government of Sudan to guarantee all citizens' rights, especially the question of citizenship for all people in Sudan. The bishops also urge the government of Sudan to guarantee respect for the human diversity that exists in Sudan whether it be ethnic, linguistic, cultural or religious. The protection of the rights of the Christian minority is of particular concern to our Conference given Sudan's history.

The Bishops of Sudan also address the outbreak of violence in Sudan. They state, "Civil war has broken out in the Nuba Mountains/South Kordofan State and in Blue Nile State, alongside the ongoing war in Darfur.... Civilians are being terrorized by indiscriminate bombardment. There is an urgent need to open humanitarian corridors...." There are hundreds of thousands of people who have been displaced or affected by the fighting. In addition to the immediate suffering in Sudan, there are reports of tens of thousands of refugees who have streamed into Ethiopia from Blue Nile and thousands others from South Kordofan into South Sudan, including one camp in South Sudan that has been bombed by the Sudan Armed Forces.

The current violence risks igniting open, armed conflict between South Sudan and Sudan. To help prevent this possibility, we urge the United States to lead an international effort to bring an end to fighting and suffering in Sudan. Such an effort must address the many issues left unresolved in the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

As you develop and implement your policies and actions to build peace and promote integral human development in the region, we urge you to take into account the recommendations coming from the Bishops of Sudan on these crucial issues.

Sincerely yours,

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Most Reverend Richard E. Pates
Bishop of Des Moines
Chairman

Encl: