



American Friends of the Episcopal Church of Sudan
3737 Seminary Road
Alexandria, VA 22304
www.afrecs.org

.....connecting hopes and gifts.....

October 19, 2009

The Honorable Richard Durbin
United States Senate
Hart Senate Office Building – Room 309
Washington, DC

Dear Senator Durbin,

The American Friends of the Episcopal Church of Sudan (AFRECS), a faith based network of Episcopalians and Episcopal dioceses concerned about peace in Sudan, greatly appreciate your responsiveness to our concern that our government be more assertive in requiring greater accountability from both parties within the Sudanese government in implementing the terms of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). The CPA provides the framework for achieving peace and stability for the people of Sudan; therefore upholding its faithful implementation is key to a peaceful Sudan.

We have learned through your constituent and our board member, Phil Darrow, that you will meet with the Administration's Special Envoy, Scott Gration, in the coming week to discuss the current situation in Sudan. We trust that you will use this occasion to raise with him several key concerns about developments in Sudan which do not bode well for peace in that war ravaged nation.

Of major concern is the success of national elections in 2010 which will be a precursor to a referendum in 2011 as to whether Sudan will move forward as a united and peaceful nation. While AID has made a substantial commitment to civic education and election monitoring as plans for the elections progress, we question whether sufficient resources have been committed to ensuring that all regions and thus all citizens of Sudan participate in these elections. Given the vastness of the country and the lack of an infrastructure which would support full participation in an election, it is essential that these elections be carried out with full participation and transparency if the referendum which follows in 2011 is to be credible. We would ask that supplemental funds be provided to ensure the presence of a requisite number of monitors to cover all of Sudan.

Election monitoring is vital to assure the validity of election results in the face of widespread suspicion in the south that the Khartoum government will subvert the election and thus totally undermine the peace process. Thus full disclosure of any fraud that might be detected by the monitors must be reported and addressed immediately. Otherwise, a renewal of warfare could result.

We would also ask that the Special Envoy encourage the use of local church and community leaders who, with adequate training, could substantially enhance the outreach needed to ensure that even those in remote parts of the country are included in the election.

We also feel that as all parties to the CPA need to be held accountable for implementing its provisions. While recognizing that continuing to enlist the cooperation of both the National Congress Party and the SPLM in implementing the CPA is essential to bringing about peace, this effort needs to be accompanied by clear standards of accountability with designated outcomes and timelines so that timely and convincing results occur. There is a widely held perception among many observers that without measures of accountability attempts to negotiate differences become a pretext for preparing for war and frustrating the intentions of the CPA.

Another matter of concern is the need for a defensible criteria for the sharing of revenue from oil production , particularly with South Sudan alleging that they are being denied a equitable share of revenue . Having access to their just allocation of these revenues is indispensable to any rebuilding that South Sudan might undertake as they receive both IDPS and returning refugees.

AFRECS will continue to monitor developments surrounding the peace process. We are encouraged by the interest which you have shown in giving serious attention to this crisis which, if not addressed as an urgent international issue, could result in a major global humanitarian disaster.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Richard Parkins', written in a cursive style.

C. Richard Parkins
Executive Director