



Friday, May 21, 2010

The Honorable Susan Rice  
U.S. Permanent Representative to the U.N.

Major General Scott Gration  
U.S. Special Envoy to Sudan

Dear Ambassador Rice and General Gration:

I am writing on behalf of the Save Darfur Coalition to express concern about the Sudanese government's actions over the last week in Khartoum and in Darfur. The apparent crackdown on opposition leaders and newspapers, along with a new military offensive in Darfur, appears to represent a dangerous post-election course chosen by Sudanese President Omar Al Bashir and his ruling National Congress Party (NCP).

Those within the regime in Khartoum must understand that diplomatic engagement cannot continue on these terms. The United States should not view a government that arbitrarily arrests opposition leaders, shuts down newspapers, intimidates human rights activists, and continues aerial bombings in Darfur as a committed party to peace and stability in Sudan and in the region. Instead, it is urgently necessary for our government to condemn these actions and, even more importantly, convey to the Sudanese government that this behavior will negatively affect its relationship with the United States and standing in the international community.

If this clear and direct message is not sent, Bashir and his NCP will draw the wrong lessons from the recent elections in Sudan. Rather than fear consequences for policies that stifle political space and violate the political rights of opponents, the regime will act – as the incidents of the last week show – with new unbridled authority. This emboldened and destructive mentality, if not checked, will endanger even more innocent lives in Sudan. First and foremost, the people of Darfur and the regime's critics in Khartoum will bear the brunt of this new wave of repression and violence. This political trajectory also precariously puts in doubt Bashir and the NCP's willingness to implement the final stages of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, including the holding of a free and fair referendum for South Sudan in January 2011. As you know, the Sudanese people fear these scenarios as they proffer only further violence, suffering, and choking instability.

In addition to sending this message to the Sudanese government, we also urge you to do everything in your powers to strengthen and support the operations of the United Nations/African Union peacekeeping mission (UNAMID) and the Darfur peace process. As you know, Joint Special Representative Ibrahim Gambari yesterday stated that continued fighting in Darfur has "caused substantial civilian casualties, the displacement of communities, and hampered the delivery of humanitarian assistance." In addition, a faltering ceasefire, deadly attacks against peacekeepers, the armed kidnapping of three aid workers, and

troubling news of a military build-up reveals deteriorating security amid an escalating crisis that threatens the lives and livelihoods of Darfuri civilians.

Given these challenges, we urge the United States to lead the international community in applying appropriate pressure on both the Sudanese government and the Darfur armed rebel movements. UNAMID must receive the political support of the United States and other states so that it can perform its duties effectively. As we noted in a letter this week to the presidency of the United Nations Security Council, this requires:

- Demanding accountability and transparency in all investigations of attacks against humanitarian and peacekeeping operations and their assets, and active participation in bringing perpetrators to justice in accordance with the rule of law;
- Demanding that all parties live up to their commitments as outlined by the framework agreements signed in Doha and encourage their return to the negotiation table;
- Ensuring the Sudanese government's full cooperation in permitting UNAMID forces to broadly interpret their mandate to protect civilians and humanitarian operations through the robust and proactive implementation of the applicable rules of engagement;
- Demanding repercussions for any obstruction to operations of UNAMID forces by the Sudanese government and Darfur's armed movements;
- Urging UNAMID commanders to expand the range of security zones patrolled by peacekeeping forces;
- Demanding adherence of the Sudanese government, all armed parties, and states to the UNSC arms embargo, per UNSC Resolution 1591; and
- Continuing to fully resource and finance all operational needs of the force.

JSR Gambari also declared that the peace process "has progressed, but a deep sense of mistrust remains and some parties are not engaging in the process." The United States must hold all parties accountable for the faltering peace process, including the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) that recently backed out of the Doha talks and rebel leaders such as Abdel Wahid Al Nur who refuses to participate in any negotiations.

Ultimate responsibility though rests in Khartoum. In General Gratton's testimony last week, he stated that Bashir and the NCP desperately desire to be welcomed back into the respected community of nations. Unfortunately, it has become apparent that the Sudanese government believes that fraudulent elections and incessant – but unfulfilled – promises of reform and peace are the path to normalizing relations with the United States and international community. Now is the time to set the record straight with the regime and for the people of Sudan. To that end, we urge you to issue a forceful statement that these actions are completely unacceptable and that, if they continue, Bashir and the hardliners in his party will face new consequences and only isolate themselves further.

Sincerely,



Mark Lotwis  
Acting President  
Save Darfur Coalition

CC: Secretary of State Hillary Clinton  
National Security Advisor James Jones