



July 22, 2015

President Barack Obama  
 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue Northwest  
 Washington, DC 20500

CC: Secretary Kerry, Ambassador Rice, Ambassador Power

Dear President Obama,

As you prepare for your upcoming trip to Africa, we the undersigned 19 organizations, urge you to use this important opportunity to press for a solution to the ongoing crisis in South Sudan and stress the need for greater regional cooperation to pressure the warring parties to make the necessary concessions for a sustainable peace in South Sudan. A central component of this agenda should be combating the culture of impunity that surrounds the conflict to help forge an enabling environment for peace negotiations.

Given the lack of consequences for attacks against civilians thus far, atrocities are becoming more heinous while the humanitarian situation deteriorates due to lack of access and insecurity. The latest report by the human rights monitors at the United Nations Mission in South Sudan documented extreme acts of torture and gender-based violence specifically targeting women and children. Recent attacks have been characterized by a “new brutality and intensity,” according to the UN’s report. The Famine Early Warning System (FEWS NET) has found conditions of famine in a growing number of South Sudanese households and widespread food insecurity threatening millions.

Mr. President, your time in the region will provide an invaluable opportunity to discuss with regional heads of state the need to build the necessary leverage to revitalize peace negotiations. Without accountability for economic and atrocity crimes, the plundering of the nation’s wealth and abuse of its people will continue. Any peace agreement that does not address this central aspect of the conflict is unlikely to result in a sustainable peace, particularly if a transitional government emerging from such an agreement is similar in composition to the pre-crisis arrangement.

Specifically, we urge the following on your trip to the region:

- Press heads of state to support regional enforcement of existing sanctions designations and build regional support for both additional high-level designations against individuals who continue to undermine the peace process and orchestrate attacks against civilians, and a UN

arms embargo. This work in the region should be coupled with immediately intensifying efforts to collect information and develop dossiers on these high-level political elites in conjunction with the UN Panel of Experts.

- Urge heads of state, particularly from neighboring countries, to engage with all parties to the conflict to press for a real cessation of hostilities and a sustainable peace, including urging the withdrawal of military and other support that emboldens the parties to continue fighting.
- Urge Kenya and Ethiopia to share intelligence and contribute actively to the Asset Recovery Inter-Agency Network for Eastern Africa to jumpstart efforts to trace, seize, freeze, and return the proceeds of corruption to the people of South Sudan. Following up on these talks in the region, we recommend prioritizing greater inter-agency support to the Department of Justice's Kleptocracy Asset Recovery Initiative as it seeks to identify actionable instances of grand corruption in South Sudan with a strong connection to the United States.
- Publicly endorse the need for a hybrid court for South Sudan with a special emphasis on the importance of prosecuting crimes against humanity and war crimes, including pillage. While in the region, push for the consideration and release of the African Union Commission of Inquiry (AU Col) report on atrocities committed by fighting forces on both sides.
- Urge regional heads of state to demand that all parties immediately stop obstructing the delivery of humanitarian aid, a violation of the laws of war and the provisions of UN Security Council Resolution 2206, and provide for immediate and unimpeded access to areas where humanitarian assistance is needed.

In taking these strong steps while in the region to build leverage, promote agreement, and press for humanitarian access you can help revitalize the prospects for an inclusive peace process that results in a durable peace in South Sudan. The message you will send is a strong reminder that the people of the United States stand with the people of South Sudan and against South Sudan's military and political elites who are committing acts of violence against the people they are empowered to protect. Such strong messages can build towards future engagement in September with Chinese President Xi and at the UN to maintain pressure on the parties to reach a sustainable peace for the South Sudanese people.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

American Friends of the Episcopal Church of  
Sudan and South Sudan

American Jewish World Service

Auschwitz Institute for Peace and  
Reconciliation

Citizens for Global Solutions

Darfur Interfaith Network

Enough Project

Humanity United

i-ACT

Jewish World Watch

National Association of Evangelicals

National Council of Churches

Presbyterian Church (USA)

Sojourners

STAND: A Student Anti-Genocide Coalition

The Episcopal Church

United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness  
Ministries

United to End Genocide

Voices for Sudan

World Without Genocide at William Mitchell  
College of Law