



WHY SUDAN SHOULD NOT BE REMOVED FROM THE TERRORISM LIST

John Prendergast, Founding Director, Enough Project - March 2018

The United States is considering next steps, including the removal of Sudan from the State Sponsors of Terrorism List, as part of a path to a full normalization of relations with Sudan in a move that would undermine core U.S. national interests.

- 1) **Economic Crisis:** Sudan has entered a new moment where a spiraling economic crisis – fueled by decades of grand corruption and gross economic mismanagement – has come to a head, sparking popular protests which have led to the deaths and imprisonment of protesters, journalists, and other independent voices. This is a moment of reckoning for the Khartoum regime.
- 2) **Support for Extremists:** Even while sharing some intelligence with the CIA, the Sudan regime has maintained extensive ties with active extremist organizations and clerics within Sudan. Some call for *jihad*; others recruit or advocate for ISIS or *al Qaeda*. In some cases, the regime even financially supports some of these radical groups and clerics, against an historical backdrop that includes being implicated in the bombings of U.S. embassies and the USS Cole as well as hosting Osama bin-Laden for years.
- 3) **Religious Repression:** The Sudan government continues to harshly repress Christians and some minority Muslim sects. Churches have burned, priests attacked, and congregations harassed. Just this month, government authorities in Khartoum sent a bulldozer accompanied by police to demolish a Christian church.
- 4) **Russia and Turkey:** Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir traveled to Russia to meet President Putin, during which time Bashir attacked the U.S. and offered Russia a military base on the Red Sea. Subsequently, an arms deal was concluded between the two governments. Bashir also offered a military base to Turkey at an unhelpful moment in the Gulf and as Sudan's relations with Egypt and Eritrea are rapidly deteriorating, threatening regional stability.
- 5) **Genocidal Regime:** This regime is responsible for the Darfur genocide and for bombing and starving residents of the Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile. Millions of Sudanese remain in displaced and refugee camps, terrified to return to their homes.
- 6) **Humanitarian Aid:** Millions of Sudanese continue to be denied access to humanitarian aid. Aid deliveries have hardly expanded and malnutrition rates are on the rise.

As the U.S. negotiates with Sudan, benchmarks should include ending persecution of Christians and repression of civil society groups, creating transparency mechanisms to counter grand corruption, stopping support for radical groups and clerics, securing peace agreements with the various groups around the country in rebellion, allowing aid deliveries to the millions who are now obstructed, and laying the groundwork for a democratic transition.

Incentives and **pressures** provide the necessary leverage for diplomacy to be successful:

Incentives: The Sudan regime wants to be removed from the Terrorism List and access to massive debt relief through the Paris Club and elsewhere.

Pressures: Spoiler elements should be targeted who are prolonging war, entrenching dictatorship, blocking humanitarian aid, looting the state, and maintaining ties with extremist groups. Smart, targeted sanctions – including through the new Global Magnitsky authorities – should begin to be imposed on some of the worst offenders and ratcheted up in support of ongoing negotiations.

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