



“This is an historic period in the history of Sudan. After the referendum in 2011 Sudan will never be the same again, whether it remains united or becomes two countries. Time is short and urgent reflection and action are needed to ensure a peaceful future. This is Sudan’s Kairos Moment. It is time to choose life. We have no time to waste” (Choose Life: A Vision for a Peaceful Sudan, Sudanese Church Position Paper on the Current Political Situation, the Referenda, and the Popular Consultations in 2011 and Beyond).

To: the Sons and Daughters of Sudan in the United States of America, the Church and the people of the United States of America and all people of good will,

On behalf of the Sudan Catholic Bishops Conference and representing the Sudan Council of Churches, I, Bishop Rudolf Deng Majak, Bishop of the Diocese of Wau and the President of the Sudan Catholic Bishops Conference, and my brother bishops, Bishop Daniel Adwok Kur Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Khartoum and Bishop Eduardo Hiiboro Kussala of the Diocese of Tombura-Yambio, have come to the United States June 11th - 28th, 2010 bringing a message of hope and peace for Sudan. We have traveled to New York, Baltimore, Washington DC, and Atlanta. At the end of our visit, we wish to express our gratitude and appreciation for the hospitality and reception accorded to our delegation in all the places we visited and audiences availed to us during our visit. We have seen the Statue of Liberty, the Lincoln Memorial, and the tomb of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. - all powerful symbols of the hopes and struggles of this great land for liberty, an end to slavery, and civil rights for all its citizens. We have met with people of faith and people of influence. We have met with the sons and daughters of Sudan driven and drawn to this country.

We have come so far because the people of Sudan have waited so long for a just and lasting peace. We have come because our country and our people are at a critical point, soon choosing the shape and path of their future. We have come to invite the American church, the American people, and all people of good will to join our call for a peaceful transformation to a New Sudan, whether one country or two, that recognizes and reflects the diversity, dignity, rights and freedoms of all the Sudanese people as endowed by their creator. We have suffered too much and suffered too long to believe our full freedom will be easily or quickly achieved. There have been too many lives lost and too many agreements dishonored to believe these freedoms will be easily defended.

The path to peace has been and will be a long one as the people of Sudan struggle to overcome the distrust and violence that has divided us and threatens to destroy us. The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) signed in 2005 will end in 2011 and the Sudanese Church is concerned that many of the key provisions within this historical agreement have not been implemented. Issues of citizenship, border demarcation, trans-boundary rights, international treaties and conventions, foreign debt, and shared natural resource management including oil production and water usage remain unresolved. Hunger and insecurity in the Darfur region and the southern states threaten the conditions for peace and the conduct of the referendum on secession guaranteed through the CPA.

The Sudanese Church is concerned that four issues in particular hold the potential for Sudan’s return to violence if they are not resolved.

- First, the border states of Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile States will remain potential flashpoints until the legitimate aspirations of the people of these two states are met. These two areas lie partly north of the 1956 boundary and were not granted the right of self-determination

as called for in the Church's "*Let My People Choose*", but were instead granted a "popular consultation" about their form of government without the options for an exercise of "self determination" like in the south or autonomous rule for themselves.

- Secondly the Sudanese Church calls for the full and timely implementation of referenda in the South and Abyei areas as agreed upon in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. The Church calls for international support to ensure that sufficient security, logistics, voter education, voter registration, and monitoring are in place for the referenda to be conducted in a free and fair manner that reflect the will of the Sudanese people.
- Thirdly, the church is appalled by the increasing number of inter-ethnic clashes in Southern Sudan, most prominently in Jonglei, Upper Nile, Lakes and Warrap States, the ongoing attacks by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in Western Equatoria and the continuing insecurity in Darfur. We are particularly alarmed by the increase of abuse, rape and killing of women, elderly and children, aimed at destroying the social fabric within and between communities. We strongly condemn these atrocities and any other form of violence and urge both the Government of National Unity (GNU) in Khartoum and the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) in Juba to fulfill their obligations to protect their citizens and bring to justice those responsible for committing and encouraging such attacks.
- Finally, the rights of minorities, particularly the religious and ethnic minorities historically marginalized, must be protected throughout Sudan. The new constitution of the united Sudan, or the constitutions of the two new nations, must reflect the full rights and dignity of all its citizenry. Sudan's war of visions and identities must end. The people of Sudan will not overcome the hatred and violence visited upon us, and harbored within us, until we all recognize and accept our broad diversity and common dignity. Regardless of the choices made or the lines drawn, Sudan's true peace and prosperity will come when we overcome the temptation to oppose or oppress others based on different ethnic, cultural, or religious identities.

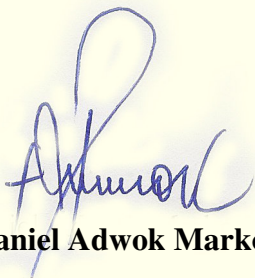
To address these concerns, we urge the United Nations, the U.S. Government, and the American people to commit themselves to a visible and sustained engagement with the people of Sudan in order to:

1. Engage with the Government of National Unity (GNU) and the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) to end the violence in Darfur and in Southern Sudan.
2. Hold the Government of National Unity (GNU) and the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) responsible for a strict timetable of actions to create favorable conditions for a free and fair referendum to be held no later than January 2011. Define publicly the consequences for delays or failures in implementation.
3. Encourage the international community, the National Congress Party and the Sudan Peoples Liberation Movement and their respective governments, the GNU and the GoSS, to officially recognize and accept the results of a referendum that reflects the will of the Sudanese people.
4. Publically define the consequences for both the Government of National Unity (GNU) and the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) of a clearly defrauded referendum. Such consequences could include a UN resolution of condemnation with similar resolutions from the Africa Union, Arab League, and the European Union.
5. Establish an international group of negotiators, such as that convened to negotiate the CPA and mediate between the Northern and the Southern parties, to resolve disputes related to the referendum and if secession is chosen, to identify the solutions needed to ensure a peaceful transition to the two new countries.

6. Have this same international group ensure successful popular consultations in the border states and any further measures required to meet the aspiration of the people of these states and negotiate a peaceful resolution of the conflicts in Darfur and in Eastern Sudan.
7. Make public the consequences for both the North and the South if there is a return to civil war. Such consequences could include UN enforcement of the existing arms embargo on Sudan, especially targeting offensive weapons.
8. Provide robust international assistance to the people of Southern Sudan to build a responsive, accountable and democratic government capable of providing for the basic services to its people. Substantial development and peacebuilding assistance should include Southern Sudanese civil society and in particular reflect the historical contribution of faith-based communities. Continue to provide humanitarian and development assistance to the people of Darfur.
9. Establish emergency preparedness plans and conflict early warning systems that include civil society partners. Work with indigenous partners to reinforce their capacity to participate in those plans where possible.
10. Improve the visibility and effectiveness of the UNMIS troops by ensuring their mandate and deployment deter attacks on civilians and include long range patrols.

And now we return to Sudan and to the struggle for the right of self-determination for the Sudanese people as held in our Declaration of Principles proposed by the IGAD Countries in 1994 as a roadmap to peace in the Sudan. We leave on the eve of the anniversary of the American Declaration of Independence, a bold declaration made by a young nation with the full knowledge that this declaration would be questioned and violently opposed. We call for international support for our fundamental freedom to freely choose whether to remain united with the larger Sudan, or as that document suggests, “when in the course of human events it” has become “necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them...” (USA Declaration of Independence, July 4, 1776).

Let freedom ring. Let justice, mercy and peace prevail for all of God’s children.



Daniel Adwok Marko Kur,
Auxiliary Bishop of Khartoum,

On behalf of His Lordship,
Bishop Rudolf Deng Majak,
Bishop of the Diocese of Wau,
Leader of Delegation and
President of the Sudan Catholic Bishops Conference, (SCBC)