



PRESS RELEASE

**Co-Chairman
James P. McGovern**

**Co-Chairman
Frank R. Wolf**

March 1, 2012

For Immediate Release

Contact: Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission
(202-225-3599) or tlhrc@mail.house.gov.

***TLHRC Co-Chairs Speak Out on Crisis in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile Regions of Sudan;
Rep. Wolf Visits Yida Refugee Camp in South Sudan***

Washington – Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission co-chairmen James P. McGovern (D-MA) and Frank R. Wolf (R-VA) this week strongly condemned the horrific abuses inflicted by Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir’s regime on the people of the Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile regions of Sudan. In addition, the co-chairmen noted that the brutal ground and aerial attacks have prevented farmers from planting and tending to their crops, making the threat of future famine and humanitarian crises imminent. Yesterday, Rep. McGovern spoke about this looming crisis on the floor of the House of Representatives, urging both the United States government and the international community to pressure Sudan to take action. Last week, Rep. Wolf traveled to Africa where he met with refugees from the Nuba Mountains who had fled across the border to Yida refugee camp in South Sudan, only to face continued threat from aerial bombardments by the Sudanese Armed Forces.

Rep. McGovern’s statement before the U.S. House of Representatives is found below; a video of the presentation can be accessed by clicking on the link: [“Too Silent on Sudan”](#).

Rep. Wolf’s full trip report and a video of the visit can be accessed by clicking on the links: [Sudanese President Bashir Must Be Brought to Justice](#) and [“2012 Trip to Sudan; Yida Refugee Camp.”](#)

Rep. James P. McGovern (MA)
5-Minute Special Order
Wednesday, February 29, 2012

Too Silent on Sudan

M. Speaker, once again, the world is standing by, silent and passive, while the Government of Sudan wages war on its own people.

We have been here before, M. Speaker, when hundreds of thousands of people perished in Darfur before the international community finally woke up and took action to try and protect innocent civilians from their own government's brutality.

The humanitarian crisis continues in Darfur. There is no peace, and villagers, refugees and humanitarian personnel still live and work under constant peril of attack. President Bashir has expelled many humanitarian workers from Darfur – and even today threatens to shut down their life-saving operations.

Last May we witnessed the ruthless ethnic cleansing of Abyei by the Sudanese military. More than 100,000 people of the Dinka indigenous population were forcibly displaced. They fled to South Sudan, seeking safe haven, where they remain today, in very poor conditions.

When Sudanese President Bashir saw that the world was indifferent to this brutal assault, he began military operations in June against insurgents in South Kordofan and more generally against the Nuba people.

And still the world stood silent.

So, in September, Khartoum launched attacks on another border region. This time, the state of Blue Nile was under siege, with attacks by the Sudanese Army and bombings of civilians. Thousands fled to the neighboring countries of Ethiopia and South Sudan for safety, joining the desperate refugees from South Kordofan.

And so Sudan has undertaken a bloodbath against its own people in the states of South Kordofan and Blue Nile. House-to-house arrests and killings. Rape. The merciless bombings of civilians.

For nearly eight months, Khartoum has blocked all humanitarian aid to South Kordofan and Blue Nile. And it has not only continued to bomb civilians in those states, it has crossed the border and bombed refugee camps and towns inside South Sudan where tens of thousands had hoped to find food and shelter.

Here are photos of some of the people in refugee camps in south Sudan. Saleh Kora is from the Angolo tribe in South Kordofan. The government dropped bombs on her fields when she was trying to plant. And then the government dropped six bombs on her village. She grabbed her children and hid in a nearby ditch.

After the bombing stopped, Sudanese soldiers moved into the village and burned several homes. When they began shooting people, Saleh ran and hid with her children. The soldiers didn't care if you were an unarmed civilian, a woman or a child. She fled with her children across the border in January to the Yida refugee camp in South Sudan.

This woman and her little girl are from the Nuba Mountains. She is married to a man who fled the nightmare of Darfur in 2005. Both were suffering from malnutrition when they arrived at the refugee camps.

The people of South Kordofan and Blue Nile are being subjected to bombing, murder, rape, scorched earth and starvation. This should come as no surprise when Ahmed Haroun, the Sudanese official wanted by the International Criminal Court for crimes against humanity in Darfur, is now the governor of South Kordofan.

We are fast approaching the month of March, the point at which the Famine Early Warning Systems Network – or FEWS Net – has predicted that South Kordofan and Blue Nile will reach emergency levels of food insecurity. This is just one level short of all-out famine.

And yet Khartoum still denies food and medical relief to the suffering people of these regions.

Last week, the U.N. Security Council called on the Sudanese government and the armed rebels to allow unhindered access for humanitarian aid and for both sides to return to talks and cease hostilities. President Bashir said “no.”

The United States and the international community – including China, Russia and others – must increase the pressure on Sudan to allow the delivery of aid to the suffering people of South Kordofan and Blue Nile and to reach agreement on a ceasefire.

The safety and security of the Sudanese people – whether in Darfur, Abyei, South Kordofan, Blue Nile or elsewhere – must be our first priority.

We’ve been silent too long.

Rep. Wolf (VA)
Monday, February 27, 2012

2012 Trip to Sudan: Yida Refugee Camp

I traveled to South Sudan, the world's newest nation, on February 19 - 21 to observe the situation there and in order to make a number of policy recommendations at the conclusion of my trip. My interest and involvement in Sudan has spanned over two decades. I have traveled to Sudan six times since 1989, including in July 2004 when I was the first member of the House of Representatives to visit Darfur, the violence-ravaged western region of Sudan. The unfolding human rights crisis I witnessed with my own eyes would come to be recognized by the world as genocide.

Since that time, the situation has become more dire. These conditions served as the backdrop for my trip. I felt it was critical to see with my own eyes what was happening and then shine a bright light on this unfolding humanitarian crisis. I also want to formulate policy recommendations that could help save lives and engage in oversight, in my capacity as a member of the State Foreign Operations Appropriations subcommittee, which funds the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS), the World Food Program, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and other humanitarian assistance programs.

###