

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 30, 2017

Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

As you are aware, President Obama issued Executive Order 13761 in January, just one week before your inauguration, which provides temporary relief from many U.S. sanctions against Sudan that have been in effect for 20 years. On or around July 12, 2017, you are called upon to determine whether that temporary relief should be maintained or be made permanent.

We write to request that you delay lifting these sanctions for one year or until your Administration has been able to fully staff the Department of State and National Security Council, and you have named a Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan. Once in place, this team should more thoroughly review whether the Government of Sudan has abided by the requirements of the Executive Order. At this point in time, we believe that the evidence is unavailable or inconclusive to reach a determination, in particular on the two tracks that most affect the Sudanese people, namely unimpeded humanitarian access and cessation of hostilities.

The Executive Order requires progress from Sudan on five tracks of U.S.-Sudan engagement. We are particularly concerned about progress – or lack thereof – on three of the tracks: Sudan's commitment to a cessation of hostilities, unimpeded humanitarian access to regions under siege by the Sudan Armed Forces, and cooperation on counterterrorism. There has been substantial fighting in Darfur in recent months, including evidence of targeting of civilians by Sudanese armed forces and their affiliated militias and, as expected, no humanitarian access has been granted to South Kordofan and Blue Nile states, and only limited access to Darfur.

While the Sudanese government may seem cooperative on counterterrorism efforts, we believe they continue regularly scheduled support for violent non-state armed groups, like the former combatants of the Islamist group, Seleka, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), and other similar violent actors operating in northern and central Africa, the Middle East and neighboring countries.

As you may recall, Sudan housed Osama bin Laden, was found guilty of supporting al-Qaeda's bombing of the USS Cole in 2000, and the U.S. embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998. To reward Sudan with this prize will reflect on American credibility and resolve to confront the perpetrators of war crimes and sponsors of terrorism. It should be an action taken very carefully and only after thorough, objective review.

Should the U.S. allow sanctions relief to become permanent in July, we are deeply concerned that Sudan will continue to expand its financial and logistical support to illegal armed groups on the African continent – something that certainly represents a threat to our national security and interests on that continent.

The Sudan government has one of the worst human rights records in the world. Over the past thirty years, President Omar al-Bashir has presided over the murder and violent displacement of millions of Sudanese people. Since June 2011, the Sudanese government has targeted civilians in Darfur, the Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile State by dropping over 5,000 thousand bombs on innocent people in villages, schools, hospitals and churches. In addition, the Sudanese President and two of his top officials are wanted by the International Criminal Court for war crimes and crimes against humanity, war crimes and genocide in Darfur. This gives Bashir the dubious distinction of being the only sitting head of state to ever be indicted for war crimes.

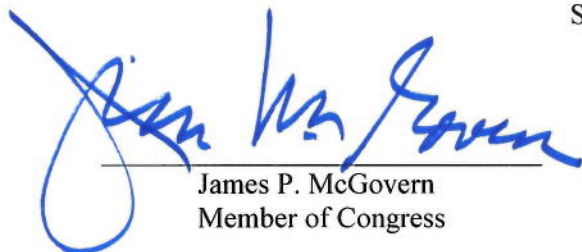
While we welcome stronger U.S. engagement with Sudan, relieving Sudan of sanctions – without having a new phase of engagement in place, along with new, targeted pressures – will not increase our leverage but rather weaken it while empowering a genocidal regime with additional capacity to acquire more military equipment, train more soldiers to commit more war crimes and further its support for groups like the ex-Seleka. We need look no further than the regime's demolition of two Christian churches in Khartoum this year, and their plans to bulldoze at least 27 more. This is state-sanctioned persecution of Christians and the denial of freedom of religion –something the original sanctions imposed by Executive Order since 1997 were designed to target.

In addition, before the announcement of a cease-fire by the Sudan government last year, ostensibly in response to the five-track process, the Sudan military took over several large farming areas in the conflict zones, in order to strategically starve the besieged civilian population. U.S. sanctions were imposed for the purpose of curbing actions such as these, and changes to policy and the sanctions regimen must ensure that they do not condone or institutionalize them, let alone reward them.

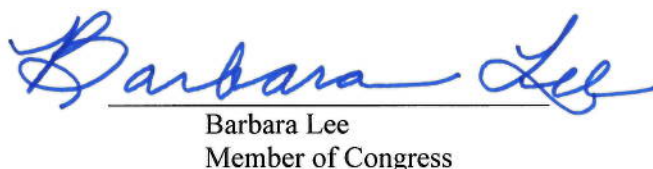
Further, it is troubling that we have seen both little change in the behavior of the Sudanese government and no indication that its behavior is likely to change if sanctions are lifted. For 30 years, this regime has manipulated the international community by pausing violence when it sees a benefit in doing so. However, these periods during which military attacks against civilians decrease have never become permanent. More time is needed to assess whether the current diminishment (as it is not a cessation) of offensive military operations is permanent or merely a strategic ceasefire that benefits the regime.

By delaying the July 12th deadline, the U.S. government will ensure it has the proper personnel in place and the time and resources to review Sudan's compliance with the executive order. Ultimately, such a review will pave the way for a more constructive relationship with Sudan that is in the best interest of the United States and the long-suffering people of Sudan.

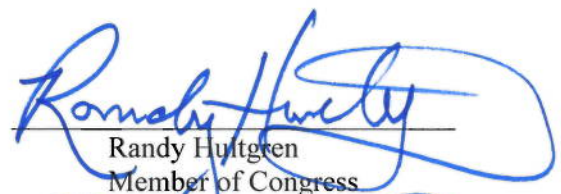
Sincerely,



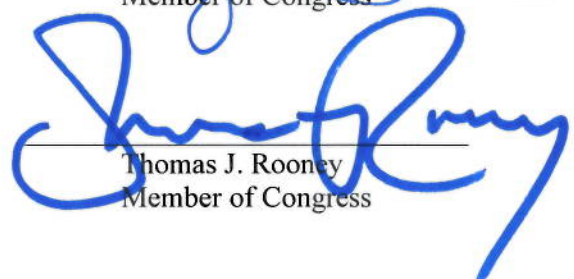
James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



Barbara Lee
Member of Congress

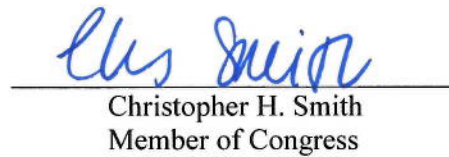


Randy Hultgren
Member of Congress



Thomas J. Rooney
Member of Congress


Michael E. Capuano
Member of Congress

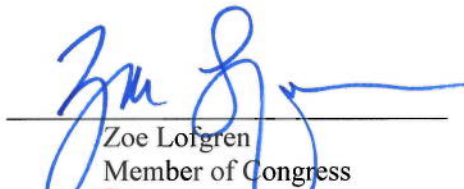

Christopher H. Smith
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Joseph Crowley
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Trent Franks
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Barbara Constock
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Zoe Lofgren
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Daniel M. Donovan, Jr.
Member of Congress


Gwen Moore
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Glenn Grothman
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Mark Pocan
Member of Congress

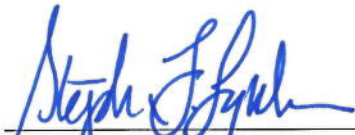

Barry Loudermilk
Member of Congress


Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress

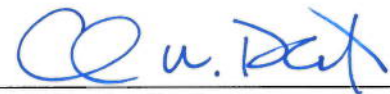

Lou Barletta
Member of Congress


Raul M. Grijalva
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Chris Stewart
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Stephen F. Lynch
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Charles W. Dent
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Earl Blumenauer
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Robin L. Kelly
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Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.
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Gus M. Bilirakis
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Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress



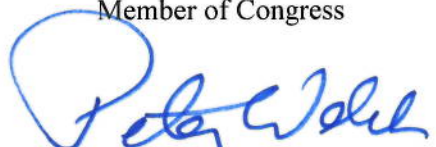
Betty McCollum
Member of Congress




Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress




Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress




Peter Welch
Member of Congress



Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress



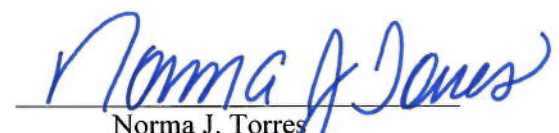
Kyrsten Sinema
Member of Congress



Cedric L. Richmond
Member of Congress



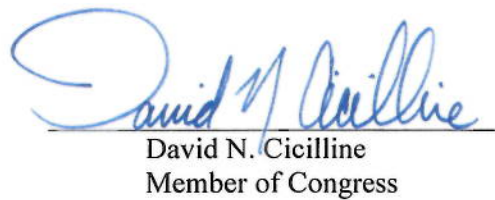
Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress



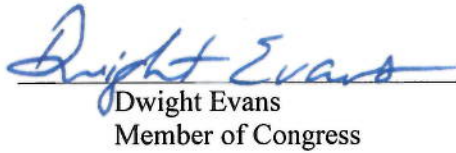
Norma J. Torres
Member of Congress



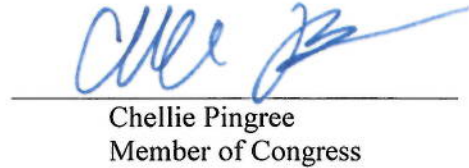
Nita M. Lowey
Member of Congress



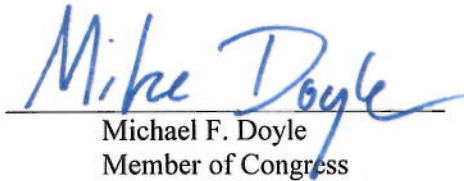
David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress



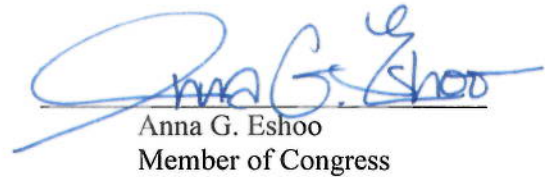
Dwight Evans
Member of Congress



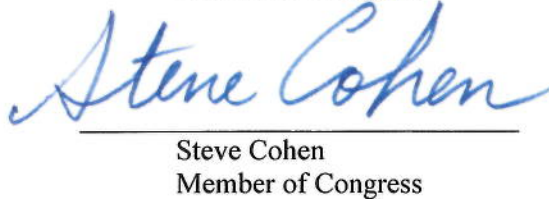
Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



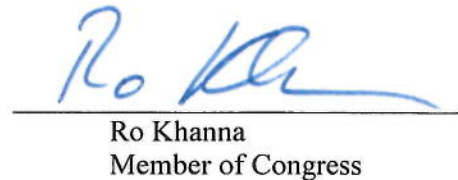
Michael F. Doyle
Member of Congress



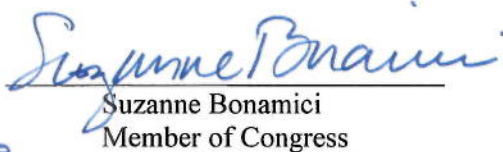
Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress



Steve Cohen
Member of Congress



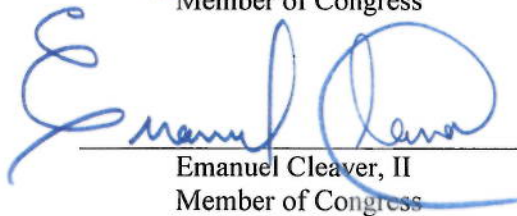
Ro Khanna
Member of Congress



Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress



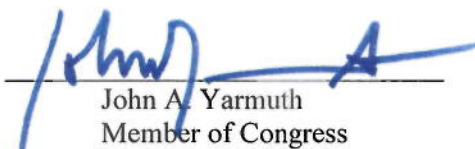
Adam B. Schiff
Member of Congress



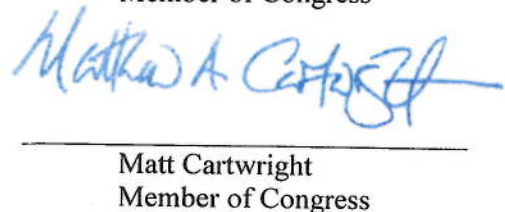
Emanuel Cleaver, II
Member of Congress



Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress





John A. Yarmuth
Member of Congress



Matt Cartwright
Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable Michael R. Pence, Vice President of the United States
The Honorable Rex Wayne Tillerson, Secretary of State of the United States
The Honorable Dan Coats, Director of National Intelligence
The Honorable Steven Mnuchin, Secretary of the Treasury
The Honorable Wade Warren, Acting Administrator, United States Agency for International Development
Lt. General H. R. McMaster, National Security Advisor


Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress


Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress


Hakeem S. Jeffries
Member of Congress