



Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission Briefing

Panelist Bios

Omer Ismail, Senior Enough Advisor, The Enough Project

Omer Ismail was born in the Darfur region of Sudan. He has spent over 20 years working both independently and with international organizations on relief efforts and human rights. Omer fled Sudan in 1989 as a result of his political views. He helped found the Sudan Democratic Forum, a think tank of Sudanese intellectuals working for the advancement of democracy in Sudan. In addition, he co-founded the Darfur Peace and Development organization to raise awareness about the crisis in his troubled region. He currently works as Policy Advisor to several agencies working in crisis management and conflict resolution in Africa. He was a Fellow at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University's Carr Center for Human Rights Policy.

Ryan Boyette, Founder, Nuba Reports

Ryan Boyette has been living and working in South Kordofan, Sudan for the past 11 years. His first 8 years in Sudan was working with a humanitarian organization helping to reach the needs of the people in the region. In 2011 war broke out, Ryan resigned from the organization and started an indigenous reporting team that is now Nuba Reports. Ryan and his team focus on video journalism from the front lines in Sudan.

Ambassador Princeton Lyman, US Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan (2011-2013), and Advisor to the President, United States Institute of Peace

Ambassador Princeton N. Lyman served as United States special envoy for Sudan and South Sudan from March 2011 to March 2013. As special envoy he led U.S. policy in helping in the implementation of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement. Ambassador Lyman previously held the position of Ralph Bunche Fellow for African Affairs at the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR). He was also an adjunct professor at Georgetown University and at Johns Hopkins School for Advanced International Studies. From 1999 to 2003, he was executive director of the Global Interdependence Initiative at the Aspen Institute.

Ambassador Lyman's previous career in government included assignments as deputy assistant secretary of state for African affairs (1981-1986), U.S. ambassador to Nigeria (1986-1989), director of refugee programs (1989-1992), U.S. ambassador to South Africa (1992-1995), and

assistant secretary of state for international organization affairs (1996-1998). From 2008-2010, he was a member of the African Advisory Committee to the United States Trade Representative. He began his government career with the U.S. Agency for International Development and served as USAID director in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 1976 to 1978.

Ambassador Lyman is a member of several boards, including the National Endowment for Democracy, the Niger Delta Partnership Initiative, the Buffleshoek Trust in South Africa, and the board on African science academy development for the National Academy of Sciences. Ambassador Lyman has a PhD in political science from Harvard University. He has published books and articles on foreign policy, African affairs, economic development, HIV/AIDS, U.N. reform, and peacekeeping. He has published op-eds in *The Washington Post*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Baltimore Sun*, *Miami Herald*, *Los Angeles Times*, and *International Herald Tribune*. His book, "Partner to History: The U.S. Role in South Africa's Transition to Democracy" (U.S. Institute of Peace Press), was published in 2002. He was co-director of the Council on Foreign Relations Task Force Report, "More Than Humanitarianism: A Strategic U.S. Approach Toward Africa", issued in 2006, and co-editor of "Beyond Humanitarianism: What You Need to Know About Africa and Why It Matters" (Council on Foreign Relations) published in 2007. Most recently he has published several articles on Sudan and South Sudan.

Lauren Ploch Blanchard, Specialist in African Affairs, Congressional Research Service

Ms. Lauren Ploch Blanchard is a Specialist in African Affairs with the Congressional Research Service, where she provides nonpartisan analysis on African political, military and diplomatic affairs, and on U.S. policy toward the region, to Members of Congress and their staff. Ms. Blanchard's portfolio focuses on East Africa and Nigeria, and on security issues and U.S. military engagement on the continent—she has written extensively on these topics and has testified before Congress on terrorist threats in the region and on the U.S. military's Africa Command. She also speaks regularly at academic institutions and international policy fora in the United States and abroad. Prior to joining CRS, Ms. Blanchard managed governance programs in East and Southern Africa. She has supervised and conducted training on political party and coalition strengthening, parliamentary support, civil society capacity building, leadership development, and public opinion research. Previously, Ms. Blanchard served as Legislative Assistant in the United States Senate. She holds a master's degree in National Security Studies from Georgetown University. She also holds a bachelor's degree in Political Science and Classical Studies, with a minor in African Studies, from the University of Florida.