

**Testimony by Yasir Arman to the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission  
September 22, 2011**

Congressman Wolf, Congressman McGovern, Members of the Tom Lantos Commission on Human Rights, I very much appreciate the opportunity to testify today on the ongoing human rights violations in Sudan.

For the last twenty-five years, I have been actively engaged in the struggle of the Sudanese people to achieve a just peace and democracy in Sudan and to recognize diversity of all forms. My political activism and support for human rights in Sudan began as a student when I left Khartoum and joined the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) under the leadership of Dr. John Garang. I was one of the few Northern Sudanese leaders who were part of the SPLM leadership. I served as spokesperson for the SPLM until 2005, when after the Comprehensive Peace Agreement; I became the Deputy Secretary General of the SPLM.

I was the SPLM candidate for President of Sudan running against President Omar al Bashir until I withdrew due to the rigging of the elections. After the separation of South Sudan from the North, I continued as the number 3 person in the SPLM -North.

I have only recently arrived in the United States from Sudan, so I will be able to provide this Commission and the US Congress with updated reports on the current situation. But I would first like to place the current events into historical context.

In the last century and in this century, four historic events that threatened the stability and the welfare and well-being of human kind. These are World Wars I and II, the Cold War and, most recently, the War on Terror. The government of the National Congress Party and Bashir has effectively been involved in the fourth event.

Sudan, under the rule of the National Congress and President Bashir, has been a refuge for the leaders of the world terrorist organizations including Osama bin Laden and Iman Alshwahry. These and other terrorists, who pose a threat not only to Sudan but to international peace and stability including the U.S., were welcomed to live and operate in Sudan.

It is significant that terrorism started with the Sudanese people and then extended worldwide. The NCP and Bashir started a war against Southern Sudan and Nuba Mountain and Blue Nile and they extended it to Eastern Sudan and Darfur. There was no segment of Sudanese society that they did not fight or marginalize. They dismissed thousands of army officers, professionals, trade unionists, and they destroyed the lives of thousands of farmers and workers throughout Sudan.

As a result, more than two million Sudanese people from different parts of Sudan lost their lives in the long war in Southern Sudan and many parts of Northern Sudan, and in particular, Darfur, Nuba Mountains, Blue Nile and Eastern Sudan.

Despite the International Criminal Court's resolution to indict Bashir and Ahmed Haroun, they still rule Sudan and Southern Kordofan in a challenge to the international community and the human conscious.

The National Congress is a fascist group determined to impose their ideology in the name of Islam. Politicized Islam is an agenda for them to use to stay in power by iron and blood. Their Islamic first republic ended up by dividing Sudan into two countries. The new version of the second Islamic republic will further divide Sudan if they stay in power.

The new Islamic republic started by launching the war against Blue Nile and Nuba Mountains. The result has been the displacement of more than three hundred thousand people in the three areas: Blue Nile, Nuba Mountains and Abyei. These atrocities are happening in front of the eyes of all those who are advocating for human rights, rule of law, justice, democracy and human dignity. That is why it is so important for this Commission to focus on these events.

The National Congress does not care about the will of humanity. As we are talking now, more than one hundred forty leaders of the SPLM-N have been arrested and are being detained. Among them are Salwa Adam Benia, the Chairperson of the SPLM in Gadarif State; Adam Ali, the Chairman of the SPLM in Northern Kordofan; and, Abed Monim Rahma, a poet and a writer who is being detained and tortured in Blue Nile.

Thousands were tortured and killed in Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile and many are in custody and in the ghost houses of the National Congress in different parts of Sudan.

The National Congress leaders formed a committee headed by Hajmajed Suor, the Minister of Sports, to relocate the mass graves in the Nuba Mountains that hold more than five thousand civilians who were massacred in cold blood.

All that is taking place right now in Sudan, including in Nuba Mountains and Southern Kordofan. That is why it is so important for the Congress of the people of the United States to break their silence on the atrocities, genocide and ethnic cleansing taking place on a daily basis in Sudan.

At the same time that we are meeting now, the National Congress air force is targeting the civilian populations on a daily basis - killing and displacing them. Thus, we count on you to lead the international community to put an end to these atrocities by imposing a no-fly zone from Darfur to Blue Nile. That is the only way to protect millions of Sudanese civilians.

In our experience and in your experience, it has become obvious that The National Congress does not respond to niceties; they respond only to pressures. The United States has been a leader worldwide that helped to bring relative peace to Sudan. These efforts must not cease. It is time, now more than ever before, to put an end to the humiliations against Sudanese people for more than two decades that resulted in killings of more than two million and the displacements of millions of Sudanese people inside and outside of Sudan.

The United States is home to thousands of Sudanese who have found refuge in your great country and even more will seek refuge if we do not put an end to the rule of a dictator who is wanted by the ICC. Within Sudan, civil society organizations and indigenous NGO's such as Nuba Mountain and Blue Nile People's Association and Kush, Inc. need to be assisted to carry out their noble mission.

If we do not stop the National Congress, we may soon see their war agenda extend to a war between the South and the North. That course is already being openly propagated in the media and in the newspapers controlled by the fanatic leaders of the National Congress. They are on record advocating such a course in daily newspapers such as Alntbaha Newspaper. The editor-in-chief of that newspaper is none other than the uncle of the Sudanese President.

The National Congress seeks to use violence and war to maintain their grip on power. They want to take Sudanese people to war to avoid the many the economic and political problems that they created. They talking a lot about the new Republic of South Sudan as an escape goat for their own problems, but it is worth mentioning that the problems in the Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile started twenty-two years ago, which is long before the Republic of South Sudan was born. Also, significantly, the war in Darfur is ten years older than the Republic of South Sudan.

In fact, they started the present war in Nuba Mountains a month before the Republic of South Sudan came into being. As a result of the attacks and the violence, it is essential that South Sudan and the neighborhood of Sudan must be assisted to help thousands of refugees from Northern Sudan.

After a long struggle and fight by Sudanese people against NCP rule for twenty years, the Sudanese people, with the support of the regional and international communities, achieved peace with the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in Navasha. This peace agreement aimed to achieve three main objectives: First, the transformation of policies in Khartoum from war to peace, from dictatorship to democracy and to restructure the center of power; Second, to base unity on the free will of Sudanese people by allowing Southern Sudanese to exercise their right for self determination, and, Third, to resolve the issue of the three areas.

After a long struggle, only one of these goals has been achieved and that was the right of self-determination. Khartoum remains the same and the problem of the three areas has not been resolved. Even the independence of South Sudan remains unfinished business

to Khartoum, which resumed fighting in the three areas, is strengthening its grip in the center, and is currently threatening to take war into South Sudan.

What does that mean? It means more than three hundred thousand people have been displaced in the three areas; an elected governor of Blue Nile has been removed; SPLM-N is being banned; the war is extending from Darfur to Blue Nile in the new South; diversity is being denied and unrecognized; genocide, ethnic cleansing and mass graves are the policy of the day in Southern Kordofan under a governor who is wanted by the ICC and assigned by the NCP to carry-out the policies he practiced before in Darfur; thousands of civilians are being denied access to humanitarian assistance and there is a complete silence worldwide.

Many lost their lives and/or were tortured and detained by orders coming from the Head of State, President Bashir, who, it should be stressed, is wanted by the ICC.

Despite the regional and international effort to negotiate a peaceful settlement that resulted in the Addis Ababa framework agreement, there are some who are asking that he be rewarded.

The SPLM-N exerted all efforts possible to allow the possibility of reaching a peaceful settlement through the Addis Ababa peace process, which ended in vain after being disowned by Bashir. Given this painful experience, we believe the only way left for the Sudanese people is to overthrow the National Congress regime and Bashir.

The question of who is going to replace Bashir is indeed significant and is sometimes even used as an argument to keep him in power, claiming that their might be chaos if he is removed. This is not a worthy position. Sudan is a country that is seven thousand years old. It is much older than Bashir and its fate and future cannot lie on a man who is wanted by the ICC. The Sudanese political life and political actors are much more mature than in many countries that have recently witnessed change.

In fact, Sudan deposed two dictatorial regimes in 1964 and 1985 by popular uprisings. Sudan has had multi-partisan and armed national liberation struggles for many decades in search for freedom and human dignity. Sudan has more mature political organizations with a clear agenda than many other countries. The Sudanese political forces are deeply engaged in a political dialogue that will very soon result in an umbrella for change and for democracy and peace. Without question, this should be supported by the international community.

The United States has been in the forefront in support of democracy and peace in Sudan. That should be the case today. Those are the values shared between the peoples of the United States and Sudan. Permanent peace can only be attained within Northern Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan when there is a democratic government in the Northern Sudan and there are two systems that share the same values in the two countries.

If the National Congress and Bashir continue to remain in power, that is formula for the continuation of war, misery, marginalization, discrimination, genocide and ethnic cleansing. We have to choose between this and the rule of law and democracy. We believe in the people of Northern Sudan, they deserve a system that can cater for their dignity and human rights and that would definitely be supported by the United States of America.

My colleagues and I, in the SPLM-N, believe that Sudan, the region and the world would be better off without Bashir and the National Congress and that Sudan can be re-united again in a union of two independent countries. Sudan can establish strategic relations with its neighbors and can contribute to the peace and the stability worldwide without Bashir and the National Congress.

The most critical issues for us, especially those Sudanese who have opposed Bashir for the last twenty-two years and who are the massive majority, are that we would like to see, on behalf of those who are suffering, that humanitarian assistance should be delivered to the needy people. Such assistance must be provided without allowing Bashir and the National Congress to deny access for relief operations. In addition, there is a need for an independent international investigation on genocide and ethnic cleansing particularly in the Nuba Mountains. It has been proven beyond doubt that the will of the international community to protect civilians can do wonders in the interest of humanity and therefore we call for a no-fly zone to protect the civilians in the zone that extends from Darfur to Blue Nile.

We would like our friends all over the world to continue to defend the rights of Sudanese people for democracy and a just peace. The Congress of the United States has been at the forefront in defending our rights, and indeed names like Congressmen Donald Payne, Frank Wolf, and Jim McGovern hold places of honor in the hearts and minds of the Sudanese people.

Finally, let me express my gratitude and honor for this rare and historic opportunity. It means a lot to the Sudanese people, and for that, I thank you.