

**A/S Schwartz's Opening Statement
for the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission
Thursday, September 30, 2010, 2:30p.m.**

Good afternoon, it is a pleasure to be here today to testify on the refugee situation in the Sudan and its neighboring countries. The Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, provides a range of multi-sectoral assistance for refugees and conflict victims across Sudan and in neighboring countries, amounting to well over \$100 million in fiscal year 2010. There are over 4.5 million refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Sudan and from Sudan in the neighboring countries. Our ultimate goals are to enable the protection of their basic human rights and dignity and to facilitate durable solutions to their displacements. To this end, we support critical protection and assistance activities for these vulnerable populations. Let me briefly describe our key issues and populations of concern and share with you some thoughts on future planning and programs. I hope to visit Sudan later this year, and would very much welcome your insights and recommendations today.

SOUTHERN SUDAN

With just over three months to go until the referenda on southern independence, Sudan has entered a critical make-or-break period. The U.S. government is firmly committed to the North-South peace process in Sudan, and is using all the tools we have to help ensure that the January referenda in the South and Abyei occur on time and reflect the will of the Sudanese people. We have stepped up our diplomatic efforts, and are working with other nations and international organizations to help prepare for the referenda. We recognize that the ultimate solutions to humanitarian problems are good, smart, and inclusive political agreements and a reconciliation process.

At the same time, and no matter what political events transpire over the next several months, we will remain directly focused on the humanitarian situation. In southern Sudan, we are supporting refugee return and reintegration and, in light of the upcoming referendum on southern Sudan self-determination, ensuring contingency planning for the potential of renewed displacement. We are also focused on preventing statelessness – should there be a vote for independence – of southerners who want to remain in the north and northerners who want to remain in the south, and of refugees still outside of the country. During the most recent Sudanese civil war between the North and South, more than 4.5 million people were displaced. However, since 2005, more than 2 million people have returned to their homes in southern Sudan and the Three Areas of Blue Nile, Abyei and Southern Kordofan.

Cementing the transformation of southern Sudan from war to peace remains one of the U.S. government's top foreign policy objectives. The successful return and reintegration of refugees is PRM's signature contribution to this policy priority. Since the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in January 2005, more than 330,000 refugees have left camps and settlements in Ethiopia, the Central African Republic, Uganda, Kenya, Egypt, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to return to southern Sudan. Our assistance, channeled through international organizations (IOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), is helping to meet the basic needs of returnees and provide them with a start on livelihoods to sustain them in the future. With the referenda for southern Sudan and on the status of Abyei

scheduled for January 9, 2011, returns have significantly slowed down. Should the referenda unfold peacefully, PRM will certainly provide support for the remaining 100,000 Sudanese refugees who could be returning next year -- from Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, and Egypt.

We are, of course, also aware of the potential for pre- and post-referenda-related violence, and are working within the U.S. government as well as with our international and non-governmental organization partners to ensure emergency preparedness for a range of scenarios. Of particular concern are the estimated between 1.5 and 2 million southern Sudanese living in northern Sudan, and a much smaller number of northern Sudanese living in the south. Depending on the environment surrounding the referenda and their outcome, southern Sudanese in the North are at risk of violence and intimidation (as are northerners in the South), and – in the absence of agreed upon measures relating to citizenship status – could be at risk of statelessness should the referendum be in favor of secession. To mitigate this risk, the U.S. government continues to press the Government of Sudan and the Government of Southern Sudan to address these citizenship and nationality issues now, in order to prevent statelessness in the future.

DARFUR

As eyes around the world focus on southern Sudan, the United States has not forgotten the pressing humanitarian situation in Darfur. As we work toward providing life-saving services to the most vulnerable populations in Darfur, we do so always with an eye toward durable solutions. As President Obama stated last week in New York, no lasting peace in Darfur is possible without accountability for the crimes committed, and that “rules and universal values must be upheld.” Ensuring humanitarian access and preserving the sanctity of human rights and other universal values for those displaced from Darfur is an ever-present priority for the U.S. government.

In Darfur, we assist internally displaced Sudanese—victims of various conflicts between and among the Sudanese government, Sudanese rebel factions, Chadian rebels, and intra-tribal conflict—, and also provide support for approximately 40,000 Chadian refugees. PRM itself provides support through two partners, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and works closely with USAID which is supporting other IOs and NGOs. The situation in Darfur continues to pose significant challenges to the humanitarian community. Ongoing conflicts between the Sudanese government and Darfur rebel groups, as well as sharp political divides among Darfuris have often limited humanitarian access and made project implementation and monitoring a challenge.

Just as in Darfur, providing protection and assistance for some 270,000 Sudanese refugees in eastern Chad is also challenging given insecurity and difficult environmental conditions. Conflict between Chadian rebels and the government has created some 170,000 internally displaced Chadians, many of whom are co-located with the refugees. In fiscal year 2010, PRM provided nearly \$50 million in support for these populations for programs focusing on protection, healthcare, education, water, and sanitation. We also provided support, through the UN Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT), for police protection of refugee and IDP camps and relief operations in eastern Chad. With the withdrawal of MINURCAT starting next month, we are currently focused on mechanisms for ensuring continued protection. Among these mechanisms is the Chadian Integrated Security Detachment (DIS), the Chadian special police force that is in the process of assuming protection responsibilities in eastern Chad from MINURCAT. Over the last three years, PRM has provided

\$4 million toward DIS operations and we have been deeply engaged in working with our partners to come up with effective and creative solutions to security challenges faced by refugees, internally displaced persons, and humanitarian workers in eastern Chad; and we remain committed to our continued involvement in this cause

Though the Administration is pressing hard for a resolution to the conflict in Darfur through the ongoing peace process in Doha, and by pressing the Government of Sudan to do what it can to improve the security situation on the ground, we do not foresee an immediate resolution to the refugee and IDP situation. Resettlement of some especially vulnerable Darfur refugees to the United States is one durable solution that we hope to expand in 2011.

REFUGEES IN SUDAN

Sudan has been a long-time host to refugees fleeing conflict in neighboring countries. At present, these include over 160,000 Eritreans in the east, some 20,000 Congolese and Central Africans in the south who have fled Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) attacks in their home countries, and some 12,000 Ethiopians who fled ethnic conflict in their home area of Gambella and who have found themselves in the midst of ethnic conflict in southern Sudan.

In eastern Sudan, new Eritrean refugees have been arriving at the rate of nearly 1,800 per month, adding to a long-standing population which has been in Sudan now for three decades. UNHCR and its Government of Sudan counterparts are pursuing comprehensive solutions for this population, of which 62,000 are camp-based. Plans include improving standards in existing camps, increasing protection and basic services, advocating for adequate asylum legislation, enhancing livelihoods opportunities, and negotiating durable solutions.

The situation in eastern Sudan continues to warrant close attention, although we have faced challenges accessing this population due to security, visa, and internal travel permission constraints. We are concerned not only by the reported serious gaps in basic services – notably food distribution and water, sanitation, and health – but also by the increasing number of unaccompanied minors moving across the border into Sudan, many fleeing the abusive national service program in Eritrea. Our goals for 2011 include supporting UNHCR's efforts on local integration for Eritreans and pursuing U.S. resettlement. We will interview several hundred Eritreans this fall, but anticipate increased referrals from UNHCR in coming years.

SUDANESE REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT

The United States has resettled more than 30,000 Sudanese refugees over the last two decades. While the vast majority were admitted from camps and urban areas in Kenya, Egypt, and Ethiopia, they hail from a total of 54 countries of first asylum ranging from Armenia to Zimbabwe. Most of them are now U.S. citizens, and have developed vibrant communities in Omaha, Seattle, Dallas, and dozens of other cities and towns across the United States. While many of those resettled to date are Dinka and Nuer from southern Sudan, we are also admitting a small but increasing number from the Darfur region of Sudan, primarily from the camps in Chad.

CONCLUSION

Sudan is both a significant generator of refugees, as well as a host to large refugee populations from neighboring countries. These diverse groups of refugees and conflict victims require unique approaches which reflect the differing natures of the persecution and conflicts

from which they are seeking refuge. At the same time, our responses must recognize the connections between these groups and conflicts in order to better support protection and durable solutions in the country as a whole. Ultimately, the solution to these conflicts and resulting humanitarian crises is political resolution that includes accountability and reconciliation. While working towards this end, though, we will continue to play our part in the international community's humanitarian response -- providing robust assistance to these populations and continuing to support bilateral and multilateral efforts to seek durable solutions for these difficult challenges. Thank you for your time this morning, and I look forward to answering your questions.