

Dear Senator,

October 3, 2017

As you are aware, since 1955, the Khartoum regime in Sudan has been conducting a racist genocide against its indigenous black population – be they Christians, Muslims, or Traditionalists - resulting in the deaths of over four million black Africans. This sad truth has been acknowledged by successive Presidential administrations. In 1993, Sudan was placed on the U.S. list of State Sponsors of Terrorism for its role in hosting terrorists, most notably Osama Bin Laden. In 1997, sanctions were imposed on Sudan; additional sanctions were added because of Khartoum's violence in Darfur, which was recognized as genocide in the Darfur Peace and Accountability Act of 2006. It is important to note that in 2009 and 2010, the International Criminal Court indicted President Omar Al-Bashir and issued arrest warrants to him and his cohorts for genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Khartoum refuses to allow any appreciable humanitarian assistance into the Nuba Mountains, the Blue Nile and Darfur. In Darfur an estimated 2.7 million displaced persons are living in squalor and starvation inside and out of Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps. Cholera is prevalent in Darfur, which Khartoum intentionally refuses to acknowledge, so that it cannot qualify for medical resources from the World Health Organization. The number of Sudanese refugees is huge; in Chad alone the number exceeds 370,000. In September, 2016, Amnesty International issued a 109-page report that documented the ongoing violence in Darfur, which included probable evidence of chemical warfare. The massacre in the Kalma IDP camp in Darfur, September 22, 2017, reminds us that it continues.

Religious freedom is seriously challenged in Sudan, as noted by U.S. Secretary of State Tillerson only six weeks ago on August 17, 2017: “The government arrests, detains, and intimidates clergy and church members. It denies permits for the construction of new churches and is closing or demolishing existing ones.” Freedom of speech is also threatened: many Darfuri students have been killed, and 37 detained in recent weeks.

In January, 2017, without any substantiated decline in violence, or improvement in humanitarian access, a presidential Executive Order (EO) mandated provisional lifting of sanctions. In July, 2017, another presidential EO postponed the final decision on lifting sanctions to October 12, 2017. Sudan and its advocates, Squire, Patton, Boggs, have been pushing Congress hard to lift sanctions, but a number of Congressional representatives have spoken out against it. The decision on lifting of sanctions is imminent. Except for a small cadre of Congressional staffers in Foreign Affairs and Relations, who have been briefed by the policy leaders—Defense, Intelligence, State and others— the overwhelming majority of Congressional representatives has not been consulted or briefed on this issue. As our representatives, you are effectively being excluded; and therefore so are we, the American people.

The moral position, based on the record, is to refute the narrative promoted by Khartoum and **oppose** the lifting of U.S. sanctions. Lifting of sanctions would: (i) allow the Khartoum regime more access to financing to carry out the ongoing racist genocide against its own people; and (ii) cede any leverage we might have on Sudan. Lifting sanctions would indicate to the world that the U.S. is unconcerned about Khartoum's genocidal behavior or its accountability for it and embolden other oppressive regimes. We need to maintain our moral vigilance. Congress and the Senate must weigh in and demand to know, through open hearings and unbiased briefings, the details of the monitoring and the bases on which we are even considering excusing this criminal regime. You must do everything in your power to ensure that we, the American people, are not participating in the shameful acquiescence to a racist genocide.

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