



Committee on International Justice and Peace

3211 FOURTH STREET NE • WASHINGTON DC 20017-1194 • 202-541-3160

WEBSITE: WWW.USCCB.ORG/JPHD • FAX 202-541-3339

October 22, 2014

Ambassador Donald Booth
Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan
State Department
2201 C Street
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Ambassador Booth:

As Chair of the Committee on International Justice and Peace of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, I write to thank you for our informative and productive meeting last month. As a follow up to our meeting, I also want to transmit a Pastoral Message of Hope from the Catholic Bishops' Conference of South Sudan. The bishops are forthright in their condemnation of all parties and individuals who persist in prosecuting the war at the cost of thousands of deaths and hundreds of thousands of people forced from their homes. They are equally straightforward in their condemnation of corruption and tribalism as forms of governance that give power and wealth to the few to the detriment of the common good of all South Sudanese.

The Bishops do not offer specific political solutions to the national crisis, but they do offer guidance. They appreciate the support of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the international community, and call upon them to provide emergency assistance to address the crisis and to continue development programs where possible to prevent a backward slide into greater poverty.

They also call on their political leaders to stop the fighting immediately and replace it with dialogue and compromise, and urge their leaders to trust their people and give them the chance to determine their own future with the help of traditional leaders, faith communities and civil society actors.

During my meetings with faith leaders in Juba this summer, it was clear that they look up to the Catholic Church and to Archbishop Paulino Lukudu Loro, in particular, to lead the faith communities in their efforts to end the civil war and find long-term solutions to the country's crisis. I urge you to continue your work with IGAD to intensify your combined pressure on the South Sudan government and opposition leaders to halt the fighting. This will be crucial as the country enters the dry season when combat may increase. We also urge you to engage and assist faith leaders in envisioning a new future for the country and mobilizing their people to realize that new vision. We are grateful for your collaboration in these efforts with Catholic Relief Services, one of the Church's trusted partners, and hope will you continue this partnership. In concluding, let me reiterate our commitment to work with you to bring peace and prosperity to South Sudan.

Sincerely yours,

+ 

Most Reverent Richard E. Pates

Bishop of Des Moines

Chair, Committee on International Justice and Peace