



Committee on International Justice and Peace

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October 11, 2013

Ambassador Donald Booth
Special Envoy to Sudan and South Sudan
U.S. State Department
2201 C. Street
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Ambassador Booth:

As Chair of the Committee on International Justice and Peace of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, I congratulate you on your appointment as the Special Envoy to Sudan and South Sudan. Your appointment comes at a particularly crucial moment in the history of both countries.

The outbreak of protests resulting in the deaths of about 50 demonstrators at the hands of Sudanese security forces is only the most recent violent incidents in Sudan. The military and bombing campaigns in Darfur, Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile date back years, killing and displacing hundreds of thousands of people.

South Sudan faces challenges in building a transparent, responsive and inclusive government that promotes ethnic harmony. I recently visited South Sudan. While in Juba, I met with government officials, Church leaders, Catholic Relief Services staff, and Ambassador Susan Page. I was particularly encouraged by the support Ambassador Page has demonstrated for the works of the Catholic Church and Catholic Relief Services in South Sudan. It was good to learn that Ambassador Page's top priorities were to resolve the status of Abyei through a referendum this month and to address corruption and ethnic conflict in Jonglei State.

The welfare of the peoples of Sudan and South Sudan are longstanding concerns for our Conference of Bishops. We have hosted numerous Church delegations from Sudan to the United States to meet with government officials and have made numerous solidarity visits to Sudan. Our Conference was represented in Juba in 2011 to witness the great moment when South Sudan celebrated its independence and started to chart its own destiny.

We assure you of our support for your work to ensure that South Sudan's newly won independence creates peace and prosperity. We similarly back your efforts to end the fighting in Darfur, Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile in Sudan and to resolve the disputes between Sudan and South Sudan over oil exploitation and the border territory of Abyei.

We would be pleased to meet with you at your earliest convenience to discuss how we can work together to promote the common good in Sudan and South Sudan.

Sincerely yours,

Most Reverend Richard E. Pates
Bishop of Des Moines
Chair, Committee on International Justice and Peace