

June 27, 2024

The Honorable President Joseph R. Biden Jr.
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden,

We write to you today on behalf of 26 faith-based organizations with heavy hearts, compelled by the harrowing tales of suffering and devastation unfolding in Sudan at this very moment. The anguish and agony endured by the people of Sudan are beyond words, yet our faiths compel us to convey the gravity of their plight in the hope of inspiring decisive action to alleviate their suffering.

We also want to take this opportunity to thank you for appointing a Special Envoy for Sudan to lead your administration's engagement on Sudan. While this is an important step at elevating attention to the conflict in Sudan, decisive actions are needed to ensure an initial cessation of hostilities is followed by sustained peace in the country.

The situation in Sudan demands urgent attention and concerted efforts to bring peace and stability. We urge your administration to work with the international community to hold violators of the Darfur arms embargo accountable, including U.S. partners and allies, and to expand the arms embargo to the rest of the country. Furthermore, we ask that you work with the same to ensure that actors who violate human rights, commit crimes against humanity and other mass atrocities are held accountable. We further implore your administration to press for and ensure inclusion of women and youth representatives in the ongoing peace negotiations, their perspectives and experiences are vital to building a sustainable and inclusive peace in Sudan.

The need for humanitarian assistance in Sudan has reached staggering proportions, with millions of people facing unimaginable hardships in the present moment. Starvation grips the land as food and water become scarce commodities amidst the chaos of conflict. The World Food Program estimates 40% of the country, roughly 18 million people, face acute food insecurity.ⁱ Disease and malnutrition continue to claim lives of the most vulnerable, including innocent children and the elderly, as the Sudanese healthcare system has effectively collapsed. The WHO reports that 70 percent of healthcare facilities in conflict-affected areas are partially or not functional, and shortages of critical medicines and medical supplies are rampant.ⁱⁱ

Schools are closed, leaving a generation of children deprived of basic education and exposed to unimaginable violence and trauma. UNICEF estimates that 90 percent of Sudan's 9 million children have no access to formal education, and 4 million children under five are suffering from acute malnutrition.ⁱⁱⁱ Displacement is a grim reality for over 9.2 million Sudanese, forced to flee their homes in search of safety and sanctuary.^{iv} Refugee camps in neighboring countries overflow with the displaced, their makeshift shelters offering little protection from the elements or the pervasive sense of fear and uncertainty that haunts their every waking moment. The pressure these refugees face in the Central African Republic, Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia, Uganda, and South Sudan add further stress to already fragile and conflict-affected states.^v Because of all these factors, we urge the administration to increase humanitarian support and ensure the people of Sudan have access to it.

Moreover, as Secretary of State Antony Blinken determined in December, both the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) have committed war crimes and the RSF and its allied militias have perpetrated ethnic cleansing.^{vi} The specter of ethnic cleansing and genocide looms large over the region of Darfur, where innocent civilians are systematically targeted and slaughtered simply for

their ethnicity or beliefs. We call on you to leverage your influence and do everything you can to ensure that history does not repeat itself in Darfur.

As people of faith, we urge you to take decisive action to address the ongoing crisis in Sudan and alleviate its people's suffering. We implore you to work with the international community to ensure humanitarian aid reaches those who need it most and protect civilians from harm. Further we urge you to work with the same, to hold those who violate human rights, commit crimes against humanity and other mass atrocities and those who violate the Darfur arms embargo accountable.

Additionally, we urge your administration to ensure inclusion of women and youth representatives in the ongoing peace negotiations, in line with the Youth, Peace and Security agenda (UNSC 2250) and Women, Peace and Security agenda (UNSC 1325), as well as your administration's USAID Youth in Development Policy^{vii} and U.S. Women, Peace, and Security Strategy and National Action Plan.^{viii} The two warring generals and their armies and militia allies do not represent the people of Sudan, and their actions have only served to deepen the suffering of innocent civilians. Our faith calls us to act in the face of human suffering and we urge your administration do more to seek peace in Sudan.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter. We stand ready to support your efforts to promote peace and justice in Sudan and worldwide.

Sincerely,

Africa Faith and Justice Network
Alliance of Baptists
American Friends Service Committee
American Hindu World Service (AHWS)
Church World Service
Disabled Children's Fund
Dorothy Day Catholic Worker, Washington DC
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Faiths for Safe Water
FIACONA--Federation of Indian American Christian Organizations of North America
Franciscan Action Network
Freedom Road, LLC
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Hindus for Human Rights
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
National Council of Churches
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
Pax Christi International
Pax Christi USA
Peoples Federation for National Peace and Development (PEFENAP)
Presbyterian Church, (USA), Office of Public Witness
Sojourners-SojoAction
The United Church of Christ
The United Methodist Church — General Board of Church and Society

CC: Secretary of State Anthony Blinken, National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan

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- ⁱ World Food Programme. (n.d.). *Sudan* | *World Food Programme*. Retrieved June 12, 2024, from <https://www.wfp.org/emergencies/sudan-emergency>
- ⁱⁱ World Health Organization. (2023). *Sudan Health Emergency Situation Report No. 4*. Retrieved June 12, 2024, from https://www.emro.who.int/images/stories/sudan/WHO-Sudan-conflict-situation-report-15-December_2023.pdf
- ⁱⁱⁱ UNICEF. (n.d.). *An entire generation of children in Sudan faces a catastrophe as the war enters its second year*. Retrieved June 12, 2024, from <https://www.unicef.org/sudan/press-releases/entire-generation-children-sudan-faces-catastrophe-war-enters-its-second-year>
- ^{iv} UNHCR. (n.d.). *Operational Data Portal: Sudan situation*. Retrieved June 12, 2024, from <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/sudansituation>
- ^v Africa Center for Strategic Studies. (2024, May 31). *Sudan conflict straining fragility of its neighbors*. Retrieved June 12, 2024, from <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/sudan-conflict-straining-fragility-of-its-neighbors-displacement-refugees/>
- ^{vi} Blinken, A. (2023, December 6). *War crimes, crimes against humanity, and ethnic cleansing determination in Sudan*. United States Department of State. Retrieved June 12, 2024, from <https://www.state.gov/war-crimes-crimes-against-humanity-and-ethnic-cleansing-determination-in-sudan/>
- ^{vii} USAID. (2022, May). *USAID Youth in Development Policy*. Education Links. Retrieved June 12, 2024, from <https://www.edu-links.org/resources/usaaid-youth-policy>
- ^{viii} The White House. (2023, October 31). *FACT SHEET: Release of the 2023 Women, Peace and Security Strategy and National Action Plan*. Retrieved June 12, 2024, from <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/10/31/fact-sheet-release-of-the-2023-women-peace-and-security-strategy-and-national-action-plan/>