

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

August 8, 2013

His Excellency Salva Kiir Mayardit
President of the Republic of South Sudan
Office of the President
Juba, South Sudan

Dear Mr. President:

We write to express our deep concern with the deterioration of human rights conditions in the Republic of South Sudan.

As you know, the United States Congress has long supported the people of South Sudan in their struggle against the oppressive regime in Khartoum. As strong supporters of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, we welcomed an independent South Sudan. Our support was justified by the years of human rights abuses and political and economic manipulation imposed by the regime in Khartoum. We have provided significant support to your nascent government as you set out to build a nation devastated by decades of war, and we perceived an abiding commitment by the Government of South Sudan to make a clear break with the past, and to protect and provide for its citizens without regard to gender, ethnicity, or religion. However, we believe that recent events call your government's commitment into question.

We are very distressed by the violence in the eastern state of Jonglei. Multiple reports indicate that factions of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) have engaged in or provided support for gross human rights violations against civilian populations and have incited ethnic violence. Many humanitarian groups seeking to provide emergency services to communities affected by violence have been denied access by those same security forces, and government-imposed restrictions have severely hampered the ability of United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS) peacekeepers to fulfill their civilian protection mandate.

Reports of ethnically-motivated violence directed against the Murle ethnic group are particularly disturbing. You fought against a regime that sought to destroy populations based upon their ethnic identity, and to engage in such practices now betrays the spirit in which the country of South Sudan was born and the historical basis for the United States' support.

In the absence of marked improvements in the rule of law, and in the presence of continued violence, we fear South Sudan may be headed toward a longer and entrenched period of instability.

In order to avoid this course, we urge you to immediately take corrective actions to ensure South Sudan does not slip into further chaos, including by:

- Reassigning commanders of the SPLA responsible for the eastern portion of the country and holding accountable forces who have engaged in violations of human rights and ethnically-motivated violence;
- Allowing unrestricted humanitarian access to all affected communities;
- Removing restrictions on the movement of UNMISS personnel;

- Convening and deploying a high level peace delegation to Jonglei state; and
- Relocating military garrisons outside village centers.

We believe implementing these recommendations would be a step in the right direction.

As strong supporters of South Sudan, we would be remiss to not share our concerns, as many in Congress are alarmed by your government's troubling direction. We hope the Government of South Sudan can change course and remain committed to the ideals of peace and prosperity set forth two years ago at independence. Thank you for taking our views into consideration.

Sincerely,



EDWARD R. ROYCE
Chairman
Committee on Foreign Affairs
U.S. House of Representatives



ROBERT MENENDEZ
Chairman
Committee on Foreign Relations
United States Senate



ELIOT L. ENGEL
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BOB CORKER
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