Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 30, 2012

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

CC:
Secretary of State Hillary Clinton
Ambassador to the United Nations Susan Rice

Dear President Obama:

We write to express our serious concern for the ongoing human calamity in the Sudanese border areas of South Kordofan, Blue Nile, Abyei, and Darfur, and in Yida and other refugee camps in South Sudan. The Sudanese government continues to target civilian populations through the use of indiscriminate bombing and the denial of humanitarian aid. These actions have left nearly half a million people at risk of starvation in the coming weeks and months. Sudan's impending rainy season, and resulting poor road conditions, will soon make the delivery of any aid extremely difficult, if not impossible.

We applaud your recent actions demonstrating your firm commitment to ending the humanitarian crisis in South Korfodan and the border areas. There are two upcoming opportunities for the United States to further support a humanitarian agenda emphasizing aid delivery and access to these border areas. First, the United States will assume the rotating presidency of the United Nations Security Council in April and secondly, the United States will host the G8 summit at Camp David in May.

We hope that the United States will take advantage of both platforms by demanding full and unimpeded access for international humanitarian organizations to the border regions, while calling on Khartoum to agree to a concrete timeline to implement the United Nations-African Union-League of Arab States Tripartite Proposal. Specifically, we request that the United States ensure that Sudan and South Sudan are placed as a priority on the U.N. Security Council agenda during the U.S. presidency. These efforts will complement and further advance the message on Sudan you delivered this week to Chinese President Hu Jintao during your bilateral meeting in Seoul.

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Khartoum's notorious ability to delay and its failure to honor agreements suggest that a more robust, consistent and coordinated approach is needed to protect the lives of vulnerable populations. We have seen such sustained international coordination led by the United States in both negotiating the Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed in 2005, and in helping to implement the successful South Sudan referendum in 2011.

Now is the time to act. Affected areas of South Kordofan and Blue Nile reached emergency levels of food insecurity in March, and the situation has continued to deteriorate. This is one level short of famine. The remaining areas within South Kordofan, as well as much of Blue Nile state, are facing crisis levels of food insecurity.

Recognizing the concrete steps your Administration has taken to spare the lives of vulnerable populations and prevent further conflict, we ask that you use the upcoming opportunities at the United Nations Security Council and the G8 summit in May to leverage multilateral pressure on the Government of Sudan and its supporters. We appreciate your ongoing commitment to that goal.

Respectfully Yours,

BARBARA LEE
Member of Congress

JAMES P. MCGOVERN
Member of Congress

MICHAEL E. CAPUANO
Member of Congress

AL GREEN
Member of Congress

KAREN BASS
Member of Congress

HOWARD L. BERMAN
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ANDRE CARSON
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