

The Honorable Barack Obama
President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Obama:

You are no doubt aware that conflict continues to plague the people of Sudan and South Sudan, even in the wake of South Sudan's July 9th declaration of independence. While there are a number of distinct areas of Sudan that currently require our ardent attention, we write to you today regarding the appalling violence in Southern Kordofan. We thank you for your Administration's continued commitment to Sudan and South Sudan – including Ambassador Rice's July 22 statement on Southern Kordofan, and we urge you to raise your voice once again to call international attention to ongoing injustice.

Fighting between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA)-North broke out in many locations across the border state of Southern Kordofan in early June. Civilians have borne the brunt of attacks by the SAF, who have engaged both aerial bombardments and ground troops in a campaign that human rights observers have called "ethnic cleansing" against the Nuba people. United Nations (UN) staff on the ground have been harassed and threatened, and over 73,000 people have already been displaced.

On July 13, the Satellite Sentinel Project released images of what it reports to be mass graves in Southern Kordofan, consistent with reports of summary executions and wide scale violence perpetrated by the SAF. We understand that this evidence cannot be verified by the U.S. government due to lack of access to many locations on the ground; however, these serious allegations appear to be supported by corroborating information in the form of eye-witness accounts of crimes in the region.

The UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) recently conducted a report in which it found that attacks in Southern Kordofan "may constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity." We do not deny the political motivations for some of the fighting – SPLA-North- aligned Nuba rebels are struggling to come out from under the control of Khartoum as the SAF assault continues. While the UN names attacks by both the SAF and SPLA-North in its report, it is abundantly clear that the majority of violations have been carried out by the SAF, who have shown no regard for the safety of civilians or the protection of rights ostensibly afforded to all citizens of Sudan. We have seen Khartoum's aggression against Sudan's marginalized people manifest again and again. The current attacks on the Nuba people are no different and demand a vociferous response from the United States.

As such, we ask that you personally make a strong public statement condemning the violence in Southern Kordofan and unconscionable attacks on civilians. Your Administration has already stated that recent events in Abyei and Southern Kordofan will prevent any progress on discussions of normalization of relations between the U.S. and Sudan. Please maintain that stance and stress to the regime in Khartoum that Americans will not stand idly by as these horrors unfold. The international community typically looks to U.S. leadership in Sudan; this is a time for us to set a clear example.

The people of Sudan desperately need our continued assistance. Thank you in advance for your efforts toward that end.

Sincerely,

Cc: The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton, Secretary of State
The Honorable Princeton N. Lyman, U.S. Special Envoy for Sudan