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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6225

December 17, 2024

The Honorable Antony J. Blinken
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C St. NW
Washington, D.C. 20451

Dear Secretary Blinken:

I was pleased to learn that the U.S. will convene a Ministerial-level meeting on Sudan on December 19 during the United States' Presidency of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). As you know, Sudan is the world's worst humanitarian crisis, and the continuing conflict is slowly extinguishing the light of hope for tens of millions of Sudanese inside and outside the country.


I write to urge you to take the opportunity to ensure the Security Council not simply discusses Sudan on a monthly basis but begins to pursue meaningful action to save lives and prevent further atrocities in Sudan. An updated atrocity determination, delivered at the UNSC would demonstrate the United States' continued commitment to deterring further atrocities and pursuing accountability. While the Administration has limited time to execute a strategy, the ministerial offers a chance to present an ambitious, robust template for coordinated multilateral actions that begins to put the protection and survival of Sudanese civilians at the center of international action and endures beyond this Administration. In the absence of any cease-fire or any peace support operation in the near to medium-term, we must find other ways to provide immediate support to civilians. I hope that at the ministerial you will push Security Council Members to agree to the following:

- **Provide for Civilian Protection:** In addition to a mechanism to provide for physical protection, members should agree to test localized models of protection developed by local actors, which could include restoring and expanding access to telecommunications necessary for the effective coordination of humanitarian action; supporting early warning measures for communities at risk of attack; facilitating mobile banking transfers; and bolstering documentation efforts and evidence gathering to support both truth-telling and accountability.

- **Support Humanitarian Access and Assistance:** Ensure that member states uphold their financial pledges in a timely fashion to allow rapid and robust scale up of response, including expanding cash transfers to local responders on the front-lines of humanitarian response. Surge the humanitarian response to stave off starvation, meet the escalating health needs, including front-line response to survivors of conflict-related sexual and gender based violence. Ensure local, regional and national access agreements are respected and adhered to.
- **Enforce the existing Darfur arms embargo:** Credible public reports -- including those funded by our own government-- detail continued arms flows to the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) from external partners abetted by neighboring counties. The provision of arms is a blatant violation of a 20-year arms embargo. The impunity must end, and the Council and member states must hold accountable those violating the embargo. Proper enforcement alone could have a significant impact on the conflict, including on the types and levels of violence and impact on civilians, and willingness to seek a peaceful solution.
- **Build regional and multilateral consensus to extend the embargo to cover all of Sudan:** Darfur is not the only point of entry for arms. New weapons and technology have expanded the war to multiple fronts, amplifying the suffering of Sudanese now subjected to more aerial bombardments and more firepower, expanding the war front, sparing no parts of Sudan and its inhabitants, of the destruction.
- **Hold perpetrators of atrocities accountable:** The UNSC, bilateral actors and regional organizations all have the authorities and ability to hold perpetrators accountable for arms embargo violations, the uses of food and rape as weapons of war, and other abuses of International Humanitarian Law through sanctions and other punitive measures. What is needed is the individual and collective will to exercise these authorities without further hesitation. It's time to put the Sudanese people first and consistently deploy all of these mechanisms in a coordinated fashion to stifle and avert the harm being done to them.

The people of Sudan deserve far more from the international community has offered. In the last weeks of this Administration, I encourage you to take advantage of the international stage provided by the Council Presidency to boldly lead actions in the Security Council that will keep the light of hope alive for tens of millions of Sudanese.

Sincerely



Benjamin L. Cardin
Chairman