

Statement of John T. Godfrey
Nominee for U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Sudan
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
May 24, 2022

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be the first U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Sudan in 25 years, and thank you for your strong support for a democratic Sudan. I am grateful to President Biden and Secretary Blinken for the confidence they have placed in me. If confirmed, I look forward to working with this Committee to advance America's interests in Sudan.

I am grateful to share this day with family, for whom public service has been important. My father's career as an Air Force officer took my family overseas for much of my childhood, instilling appreciation for service to country and an abiding curiosity about the wider world. I want to thank my wonderful wife, Jennifer Hall Godfrey, a Senior Foreign Service Officer, for her love, partnership, and support during a rewarding but challenging pair of careers in which we have largely served at hardship and danger posts. I also want to commend our two sterling sons, Nathaniel and Jack, for their intrepid spirit and resilience, acknowledging that if I am confirmed our family will serve apart on two continents, as so many Foreign Service families do.

Much of my two decades of service has been in societies that were closed or in transition during challenging times. That necessitated engaging tough interlocutors on issues they often would have preferred to avoid and high-level negotiations on consequential issues. I am no stranger to Sudan. In pre-revolution Libya I worked on humanitarian and political issues related to Darfur; in the Counterterrorism Bureau I was closely involved in rescinding Sudan's designation as a State Sponsor of Terrorism. In important ways, this nomination represents a continuation of those efforts. If confirmed, I will draw on that broad experience to advance U.S. interests in Sudan.

Sudan is at a moment of great peril: the military takeover on October 25 and lack of an agreement establishing the framework for a civilian-led transition worsened the country's political, economic, and security crises. The devastating human toll of recent violence in Darfur is just one example of the dangers of the current political paralysis. Realizing the promise of Sudan's democratic revolution is important for the Sudanese people, who have consistently and courageously

demanded more human rights respecting, accountable and effective governance; for stability in the strategically important Red Sea region; and as a potential exemplar of the benefits that democracy brings. In a potent example for neighboring countries, the Sudanese people have made clear through four years of sustained activism that they are unwilling to have their demands for civilian rule and democracy ignored or coopted.

The immediate imperative is assisting Sudanese stakeholders in establishing a sustainable civilian-led transition and maintaining regional and international consensus on the way forward. The current process facilitated by the UN, the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development affords the best foreseeable opportunity to establish the framework for an inclusive civilian-led transition, redefine the security services' appropriate role, and advance elections, economic reforms, human rights, justice and accountability, and enduring peace, including in historically marginalized areas like Darfur and the Two Areas.

To facilitate that process, the military government must take steps to foster a climate conducive to political dialogue, including ending violence against protestors, lifting the State of Emergency, and releasing unjustly detained activists.

The rights of all individuals in Sudan, including members of minority groups, women, youth, and those in historically marginalized areas, must be protected and their voices heard in building a new Sudan. If confirmed, I will work with Sudanese and other partners in support of establishing a path to a credible, sustainable civilian-led democratic transition in Sudan.

Doing so is urgently important in light of Sudan's economic and humanitarian crises. Economic reforms that would have led to debt relief and international support were paused due to the military takeover, sparking a fiscal crisis and hyperinflation. Rising prices and wheat shortages worsened by Russia's unprovoked war against Ukraine mean the number of food-insecure Sudanese could double to 18 million by September. If confirmed, I will work with Sudanese and international partners to ensure that humanitarian needs are met and emphasize that resuming paused development assistance is predicated on a credible civilian-led democratic transition. As Secretary Blinken said, "We remain poised to use all tools at our disposal to support the Sudanese people in their pursuit of a democratic, human rights-respecting, and prosperous Sudan."

If confirmed, I look forward to leading our Embassy in Khartoum. My highest priority will be ensuring the safety and security of our American and locally employed staff, and of Americans who live and work in Sudan.

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear here today. I look forward to your questions.