

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 17, 2023

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden:

Sudan's precarious situation necessitates prompt, high-level diplomatic intervention. Now in its sixth month, the conflict has caused widespread atrocities, displacing nearly five million people, exacerbating a humanitarian crisis, and threatening regional stability. The risk of an expanding civil war, potential state disintegration, and genocide is alarming. To that end, we urge the immediate appointment of a U.S. Presidential Special Envoy to Sudan within the Department of State.

While the United States and Saudi Arabia held talks in Jeddah in an attempt to make progress, they failed to deliver any meaningful ceasefire. The Jeddah Process was not structured to deal with halting such conflicts raging outside of the national capital area that often involve militia and paramilitary groups backed by belligerents who may not abide by a ceasefire. Officials from many African governments continue to voice concerns that the Jeddah Process undermines their efforts at peace.

The U.S. Congress has consistently backed Sudan's journey toward peace by enacting significant legislation, funding humanitarian and development initiatives, and conducting numerous oversight hearings. The administration must demonstrate unwavering diplomatic leadership, reinforcing Congress's dedication and underscoring the U.S.'s commitment to resolving this issue. A pivotal move is the rapid designation of a Special Presidential Envoy, equipped with the required qualifications, authority, and resources.

On May 10, 2023, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee convened to explore solutions for the Sudanese conflict. The committee emphasized civilian protection, holding the Sudanese military junta accountable, and reevaluating U.S. policy. Many advocated for a U.S. Special Envoy for Sudan who reports directly to you. Media reports<sup>1</sup> indicate that the State Department contemplated naming the U.S. ambassador to Sudan, John Godfrey, as this envoy. While Ambassador Godfrey is esteemed, this role demands an individual with extensive diplomatic leadership, especially given the current circumstances. We require an envoy experienced in handling intricate regional crises and possessing significant diplomatic expertise in Africa, akin to past U.S. special envoys such as Richard Williamson, John Danforth, and Princeton Lyman.

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<sup>1</sup> Gramer, Robbie, and Jack Detsch. "U.S. Envoy Pick Reveals Battle over Sudan Policy." *Foreign Policy*, 29 June 2023, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/06/29/us-sudan-policy-state-department/>

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This special envoy should do more than merely report to the Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs. Direct access to the Secretary of State is crucial. Engaging top administration figures, including those at the White House and State Department, is essential for policy reevaluation, asserting the administration's stance on Sudan, ensuring proper resource distribution, and fostering collaboration with pertinent agencies and global partners.

Sudan is at a crossroads, grappling with the ramifications of a brutal conflict. The United States plays a vital role in championing peace, supporting the creation of a genuine civilian government, providing humanitarian aid, and holding perpetrators of atrocities accountable. These multifaceted challenges demand a comprehensive U.S. strategy spearheaded by an adept senior official.

We urge immediate action on this matter.

Sincerely,



JAMES E. RISCH  
Ranking Member  
Senate Foreign Relations Committee



TIM SCOTT  
Ranking Member  
Africa and Global Health Policy Subcommittee



JOHN CORNYN  
United States Senator



M. MICHAEL ROUNDS  
United States Senator

CC: The Honorable Antony J. Blinken, Secretary, United States Department of State