

**Testimony of Anne C. Richard**  
**Vice President, Government Relations & Advocacy**  
**International Rescue Committee**  
**Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on African Affairs**  
**“Assessing Challenges and Opportunities for Peace in Sudan”**  
**26 May 2010**

Chairman Feingold, Ranking Member Isakson, and members of the committee:

Please let me begin by saying that I appreciate the opportunity to appear here today, along with my colleagues to testify on the issue of assessing challenges and opportunities for peace in Sudan. My name is Anne Richard and I represent the International Rescue Committee.

Founded in 1933, the IRC is a global leader in emergency relief, rehabilitation, protection of human rights, post-conflict development, resettlement services and advocacy for those uprooted or affected by violent conflict and oppression. The IRC is on the ground in over 40 countries, providing emergency relief, relocating refugees, and rebuilding lives in the wake of disaster. Through 22 regional offices in cities across the United States, we help refugees resettle in the U.S. and become self-sufficient.

The IRC has been one of the largest providers of aid in Southern Sudan for 30 years, delivering emergency relief and post-conflict assistance. Today, our programs are designed to save lives, mitigate the effects of conflict and help communities to sustain themselves. Following the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) of 2005, the IRC has focused on four areas: healthcare; governance and rights; child and youth protection and development; and gender-based violence. The IRC directly supports 450,000 people in five states: Central and Eastern Equatoria, Northern Bahr el Ghazal, Unity and Lakes.

Humanitarian, Development, and Security Challenges in Southern Sudan:

IRC has over 250 staff in country. Of this number, over 225 are Sudanese. There are 20 expatriates working for us in Southern Sudan. In looking at the challenges to our work, I think it helps to consider these from the perspective of one of our staff. Put yourself, if you can, in the shoes of a Southern Sudanese staff member of the IRC working in the remote, underserved villages of Unity State in Southern Sudan.

First, you must realize that your job is sometimes dangerous as your fellow citizens are under great stress and living in a pressure-cooker environment. Earlier this month one of our staff members reported: “A beating took place next to our

compound this afternoon, and our guard reported that it was soldiers beating up the SPLA finance guy who was giving them a smaller salary. It sounded quite bad. Again, this was very public and in the middle of the village for all to see.” IRC managers were also receiving reports that soldiers were staying at a nearby clinic—a primary health care unit—and continuing to demand food from women in the community, including the wives of IRC staff.

In Southern Sudan, war and its aftermath has led to the deterioration of traditional ways to mediate disputes. Youth are no longer under the control of chiefs and can instigate or exacerbate violence. Communities have also seen the proliferation of small arms. These facts and the absence of institutions that promote justice and the rule of law (police, courts, prisons) mean that tension can quickly escalate to violence. Once an outbreak of violence occurs, it becomes difficult to break the cycle and stop retaliatory attacks.

Security challenges for humanitarians range from being targets of violence to having great difficulty gaining access to the most isolated of our beneficiaries. According to the January 2010 joint NGO report entitled “Rescuing the Peace in Southern Sudan”, many bush airstrips used to provide humanitarian aid during the civil war have fallen into disrepair. These airstrips once served as a lifeline, as they were often the only access to remote communities. Yet as of October 2009, 75 bush airstrips across Southern Sudan had been classified by the World Food Program (WFP) as restricted.<sup>1</sup>

Second, you also realize that the welfare of your family and friends is in jeopardy because of widespread poverty and the lack of development. Less than half the population has access to safe drinking water. A pregnant woman in Southern Sudan has a greater chance of dying from pregnancy-related complications than a woman almost anywhere else in the world. One in seven children will die before their fifth birthday. Only one quarter of the citizenry in Southern Sudan has access to medical care, and 85% of care is provided by NGOs and church groups instead of the government. Close to 90% of Southern Sudanese women cannot read.<sup>2</sup>

In sum, Southern Sudan is one of the least developed regions in the world. In a region the size of France with only 50 km of paved road, human development indicators sit near the bottom of the scale. Yet this region may soon be its own country. Regardless of what happens after the referendum of January 9, 2011, basic needs for healthcare and clean water will not disappear overnight. Nor will the pressing need for development.

---

<sup>1</sup> Oxfam et al, “Rescuing the Peace in Southern Sudan,” joint-NGO report, January 9, 2010: 17.

<sup>2</sup> Oxfam et al, 3.

Third, you fear for the future of your country. You know that government capacity is weak and you see little evidence that things are improving. Much of the investment taking place has been focused on the town of Juba and there are few signs of economic development elsewhere. The overall amount of technical assistance provided to the government is quite small. A recent report contrasted the 150 foreign technical experts and advisers serving now in the ministries in Southern Sudan to the 3000 that reported to duty in post-war Mozambique in 1990.

You know that you cannot rely on the government to provide you with the services like health and education, roads to market and a functioning police force.

And, finally, you also have a sinking feeling that the rest of the world will soon forget about Southern Sudan. Future aid flows remain uncertain. The 2011 referendum is rapidly approaching and many countries may see this deadline as the end of the peace process and of their interest in Sudan, rather than merely a step on a road toward a better life for the Southern Sudanese.

#### Targeting Challenges: Aid

What can be done to help the people of Southern Sudan? An important step is to improve the delivery of aid.

Over the past two years, the major government donors of aid to Southern Sudan sought to increase aid coordination and intended to shift most of their aid from bilateral aid to pooled funding mechanisms, such as the World Bank's Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF). However, the pooled funding mechanisms have been bogged down in bureaucracy and very little money has been made available through them to date. In addition, the MDTF requires contributions from the government of Southern Sudan (GOSS), which the GOSS has been unable to meet, as GOSS revenue has suffered immensely from the financial crisis and the plunge in oil prices. Currently, many donor governments have concluded that the MDTF has been a failure, and several have pulled out (such as the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, among others).

Discussions continue among donor governments about whether to divert existing funds or contribute new funds into alternative pooled mechanisms that are designed better. However, even if another mechanism or interim solution is devised, it will be at least six months before these funds would flow, as award procedures would need to be developed, calls for proposals released, and awards issued. Pooled funding is a good concept in theory but difficult in practice because it does not allow implementing partners the opportunity to build relationships, report back to and advocate directly with donor governments.

Aid to Southern Sudan also exemplifies a broader challenge across many countries, where there is confusion about when aid for humanitarian purposes and aid for longer-term development are needed. Many donor governments concerned about Southern Sudan would like to see a phase out of humanitarian aid and a move toward programs that promote economic recovery and development. In 2009, however, analysts saw how development indicators fell, tensions rose and humanitarian programs remained vital for many people even as the 2010 elections and 2011 referendum drew nearer. It is very hard to secure multi-year funding in order to run long-term programs to build the capacity of government institutions, strengthen healthcare and educational systems, and contribute to a functioning economy in a setting that desperately needs it when, at the same time, health conditions remain at emergency levels. Donors should recognize the need for both kinds of assistance, especially in such a complex and challenging setting as Southern Sudan.

It is essential that the US government continue bilateral funding to Southern Sudan. We also ask that the US government push the donors that are contributing to pooled funding mechanisms to get them unblocked as soon as possible given that the referendum is just seven months away. The US government should also advocate for both humanitarian and long-term development funding. Finally, US policymakers must be realistic about the large amount of resources, both human and financial, that will be required for rebuilding in the South.

Reductions or delays in the provision of basic services and in building up the capacity of government of South Sudan will exacerbate tensions around the referendum. If secession is the outcome, people will expect a 'secession-dividend' just as the signing of the CPA led to high expectations for an immediate 'peace dividend' – a peace dividend that, five years later, has hardly materialized.

#### Targeting Challenges: Support for a Safe and Credible Referendum

In addition to improving the delivery of aid, other governments and international organizations should do everything possible to ensure that the safe and credible referendum takes place as scheduled. A January 2010 Chatham House report, commissioned by the IRC and written by Sudan expert Eddie Thomas, states: "The international community needs to continue to support Popular Consultations and the referendum while recognizing that these processes will complicate politics in regions of Sudan that are not at peace."<sup>3</sup> Thomas goes on to explain that these processes, which were meant to help Sudanese people determine their own future freely, now run the risk of perpetuating violence. But they must be completed on

---

<sup>3</sup> Thomas, Eddie, "Decisions and Deadlines: A Critical Year for Sudan", Chatham House report, January 9, 2010: 8.

schedule, because the big deadline of the Southern referendum cannot be altered without enormous risks.<sup>4</sup>

It is urgent that the international community, including countries that are Sudan's neighbors, the African Union and the United Nations, provides immediate mediation and support to Sudan's parties to resolve outstanding issues and help stage a referendum. A successful referendum, in which the Southern Sudanese determine their own future, is Sudan's best chance for peace.

The Chatham House report also points out that delays in reaching political agreements and adopting laws on referendums and Popular Consultations will put impossible pressures on electoral bureaucracies in the coming twelve months. Donors should commit now to help mitigate those pressures with their resources.<sup>5</sup>

If the people choose secession, it is imperative that the two parties to the CPA reach deals on security arrangements, oil revenues, water rights, assets and liabilities, currency, nationality and a host of other issues. If the people choose unity, these issues will not disappear and will still need review. Primary responsibility for these processes lies with the two parties, however countries that have supported the CPA, along with foreign investors, need to work together to limit the possibility of failure.<sup>6</sup>

Improving efforts to enhance local capacities for conflict prevention and mitigation, civilian protection, and humanitarian access:

Processes called for in the CPA, such as the peaceful demarcation of a populous and troubled border that intersects millions of lives and livelihoods, require Sudan's ruling class to engage with the population. These are processes that depend on millions of people understanding, calculating, speaking and acting for them to work. The failure to complete these processes is often presented as rooted in the suspicions of the two parties. They are also examples of the state's seeming inability to relinquish coercion and engage with wider populations.<sup>7</sup>

Sudan's powerful elites must avoid perpetuating the politics of exclusion and conflict and help citizens participate in the big decisions facing the country.

Civilian policing, which is the role of the Southern Sudan Police Service (SSPS), is weak. The police have shown limited capacity in regards to civilian protection. Building a trained police force typically takes more than 10 years, however at five

---

<sup>4</sup> Thomas, 16-17.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas, 19-20.

<sup>6</sup> Thomas, 8.

<sup>7</sup> Thomas, 21.

years on the SSPS lack training, equipment, radios, cars, and uniforms and civilians are often better armed than the police. Because this police force lacks the capacity to uphold its mandate, the responsibility of policing continues to fall to the SPLA. This is now, and will continue to be, a crucial responsibility for the SPLA during and after the referendum period.

For improving protection of civilians and to ensure humanitarian access, the UN Mission in Sudan should deploy Temporary Operating Bases (TOBs) and initiate pre-emptive patrolling in 13 areas in Southern Sudan where potential inter-communal violence has been identified in order to provide a deterrent presence. UNMIS should monitor the GOSS-led forced civilian disarmament process in Jonglei, Warrap and Lakes states. They should also expand the contingency planning exercise in Abyei to other areas, by developing concrete local protection strategies to provide safe spaces for civilians in case of an eruption of violence.

The GOSS, with support from international partners, must move beyond a focus on civilian disarmament to strengthening the ability of its military and police to provide effective internal security and protect civilians.

#### Recommendations:

To summarize, the IRC offers the following recommendations:

- The US government and the international community must realize that Southern Sudan cannot move forward without both humanitarian and long-term development funding.
- The US government should continue bilateral funding to Southern Sudan. The US government should also push donors that are contributing to pooled funding mechanisms to get them unblocked quickly as the referendum is only seven months away.
- With support from international partners, the GOSS must move beyond a focus on civilian disarmament and instead strengthen the ability of its military and police to provide effective internal security and protect civilians.
- Numerous agreements must be made on a wide range of complex processes before January 2011. Sudan's ruling elites need to engage with the country's diverse populations, if they are to avoid perpetuating the politics of exclusion and conflict and help citizens participate in the big decisions facing the country.

- To increase humanitarian access to remote communities, the GOSS should start to restore the 75 bush airstrips across Southern Sudan that the World Food Program classified as “no-go” in October 2009. These airstrips once served as a lifeline to hard to reach communities.

As I mentioned before, Southern Sudan is a region where one in seven children will die by their fifth birthday; less than 50% of the population has clean drinking water; and a pregnant mother has a greater chance of dying in child-birth than anywhere else in the entire world. No matter what the outcome, these issues will not disappear come January 2011. Despite a very challenging work environment, our staff and their colleagues from other non-governmental organizations daily attempt to educate children, protect women and girls, provide healthcare and strengthen weak institutions. This corps of humanitarians and development experts – largely made up of Sudanese citizens – are committed to building a country and helping the South recover from years of civil war. The International Rescue Committee urges the US government to remain committed to peace in Sudan also and to continue to play a constructive role in helping to spur development and ensure security, especially in the south.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.