

**Statement of  
The Honorable Mike Doyle  
PDEC Forum on Sudan and South Sudan  
April 30, 2017**

Thank you, David for the introduction and for organizing this forum. The Pittsburgh Darfur Emergency Coalition has been working persistently on this important issue for years, and I've appreciated the opportunity to work with you.

Good afternoon. I am glad to be able to participate in this forum today. The crises in Sudan and South Sudan are among the greatest humanitarian challenges of our time. The world pays too little attention to what is happening there, and I'm pleased that the Pittsburgh Darfur Emergency Coalition is working hard to raise awareness about this critically important issue here in Pittsburgh.

I want to thank Pastor Bush and the East Liberty Presbyterian Church for hosting this forum here in the Cathedral of Hope this afternoon. I can't think of a more fittingly named place to have this discussion, since the challenge of addressing these crises seems overwhelming, and it is essential that we not give up hope for a peaceful and more prosperous future for Sudan and South Sudan.

I would also like to acknowledge our guests today. Ambassador Malek of the South Sudanese government and Dr. Gang representing the Sudan People's Liberation Movement in Opposition – thank you for joining us today and sharing your thoughts on the situation in your country. I would also like to thank Rubani Trimiew of the State Department, activist Hawa Abdallah Salih, and Brian Adeba of Enough for joining us this afternoon as well and for doing critically important work on this issue.

For far too many years, now, the people of Sudan have been plagued by civil war and the suffering that accompanies it. That remains the case today. In Sudan, ethnic strife continues between the Sudanese government and disaffected communities in Darfur and other regions. This genocidal violence has persisted for well over a decade and has taken the lives of over 300,000 Sudanese. Despite efforts to negotiate a peaceful resolution, the conflict remains unresolved, and the bloodshed continues.

Amnesty International has alleged that the Sudanese government used chemical weapons a number of times in 2016. If confirmed, these attacks are unconscionable - but frankly, ALL attacks against the people of Sudan are unconscionable and must stop.

Meanwhile, the people of South Sudan are suffering from devastating ethnic conflict and famine. Despite being established to bring an end to decades of violence between the government in Khartoum and the people of the South, the world's youngest nation has been embroiled in internal ethnic conflict since its founding in 2011. Last summer, fighting broke out between government and opposition forces in Juba and rapidly spread to other parts of South Sudan. This violence has disrupted agricultural production and contributed to the current famine conditions. UN agencies estimate that approximately 100,000 people in South Sudan are facing starvation and another million are on the brink of famine.

Clearly, the situations in both Sudan and South Sudan are dire.

I believe that the American people have an obligation to stand with the people of Sudan and South Sudan.

We must make it clear through our words and our actions that this conflict must be resolved, that genocide is unacceptable, and that famine cannot be allowed to occur in this modern age. Future generations will remember how we responded to this challenge and we will be judged on our actions.

I'm pleased to report that Congress approved the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act in December, and President Obama signed it into law. Now the President has the authority to apply sanctions on those responsible for committing atrocities. I hope that President Trump will utilize the power granted to the President by this law and swiftly apply targeted sanctions on the travel and personal finances of Sudanese officials who are responsible for genocide and other atrocities. He recently sent a letter to Congress indicating that his Administration was committed to enforcing the law and was proceeding with its implementation. Time will tell.

As I'm sure you know, just last week, the House approved H.Res. 187 – a resolution responding to the famine in South Sudan – with strong bipartisan support, including mine of course! This resolution directs USAID to provide emergency food assistance to the people of South Sudan under the Food for Peace Act. It also formally urges the government of South Sudan to allow unimpeded humanitarian access to affected civilians and commends the efforts of the State Department and international organizations to pressure the parties to negotiate a lasting peace. While this resolution doesn't do nearly enough to address the famine, it is a step in the right direction.

It's imperative that President Trump and Secretary of State Tillerson aggressively address the crises in Sudan and South Sudan, but I'm not convinced of President Trump's commitment to addressing this problem. His foreign policy thus far has been heavy-handed and characterized by a callous disregard for the safety and well-being of those fleeing violence abroad.

A particularly troubling example of President Trump's foreign policy is the series of executive orders banning entry to the United States to nationals of several Muslim-majority countries – including Sudan. These executive orders, which have been stalled in federal court due to their questionable constitutionality, deny entry to refugees fleeing carnage in Sudan. Furthermore, the travel ban sends a terrible message to the people of Sudan and the rest of the Muslim world – namely, that the United States is not their ally, that we don't care about their welfare, and that we're unconcerned about their suffering. I'm a cosponsor of H.R. 1503 – the Statue of Liberty Values Act, which would nullify President Trump's executive orders and send a very different message of empathy and welcome to refugees from Sudan and other Islamic countries.

In addition, President Trump has demonstrated his lack of appreciation for the role of diplomacy in foreign policy by proposing a budget that would cut more than a quarter of the State Department's funding. I find this proposal appalling because diplomacy is a critical tool for American policymakers. Resolving the conflicts in Sudan and South Sudan will require substantial diplomacy, and such budget cuts wouldn't provide adequate resources to carry out these efforts and others like them around the world.

President Trump's proposed cuts to USAID are equally concerning because they would substantially reduce the ability of the United States to combat famine and provide aid to displaced people like those in Sudan and South Sudan.

The Trump Administration has been moving forward with the Obama Administration's policy of eliminating economic sanctions on Sudan in exchange for the cooperation of the Sudanese government in fighting terrorism. We're currently in the 180-day review period, at the end of which the sanctions could be permanently lifted. Whether or not the Trump Administration decides to follow through with this policy, it **MUST** make it clear that the United States condemns the genocidal violence that the Sudanese government inflicts upon its own population in Darfur.

So that's where we are. Where do we go from here?

As many of you know, I've worked with my colleagues in the Congressional Caucus on Sudan and South Sudan for a number of years to promote US policies to help the people of these countries. I stand with the Congressional Caucus on Sudan and South Sudan in urging President Trump to appoint a special envoy to the region as soon as possible.

The Caucus co-chairs recently contacted the President to express our concern over the vacancy. Of the many positions within the Trump Administration that remain unfilled, this vacancy is of particular concern due to the urgent need to address the ongoing crises.

I find it hard to believe that the Trump Administration has proposed deep budget cuts for the State Department and USAID. US foreign aid provides a lifeline for hundreds of thousands of people suffering from famine and starvation, and lasting peace agreements don't write themselves. Fortunately, as the old adage goes, "The President proposes, but Congress disposes." Each year, the President sends a budget request to Congress. Congress is under no obligation to produce such a budget; in fact, Congress jealously guards its Constitutional control over the power of the purse. The actual amount of funding for the State Department and AID next year will be set by Congress over the coming months.

I will fight to maintain funding for US diplomatic efforts and humanitarian aid throughout the upcoming appropriations process - as will many other Members of the House and Senate - and I anticipate that the final level will be significantly higher than the one requested by President Trump.

There's also the question of whether the United States should impose an arms embargo on South Sudan to reduce the flow of weapons into the county. Depriving the warring parties of the arms they need to continue fighting the conflict is one of the most effective ways of curbing the violence of the South Sudanese civil war. Consequently, I support the Congressional Sudan Caucus's call for an arms embargo on South Sudan and will vote for any legislation to do so.

Finally, my colleagues on the Sudan Caucus and I believe that the United States ought to maintain targeted sanctions on Sudan and South Sudan. The Sudanese government has failed to live up to its end of the bargain already - for starters, by denying access to humanitarian groups seeking to alleviate the suffering within their borders. Until the Sudanese government markedly improves its behavior, we believe that all current sanctions should be maintained or tightened. The Caucus believes that the United States should also impose targeted sanctions on the individuals responsible for inciting and directing the ongoing violence in South Sudan. These sanctions could be used as leverage to bring the warring parties back to the negotiating table and open the county up again to aid workers and humanitarian groups.

The American people have an obligation to take action to relieve the people of Sudan and South Sudan of the warfare and famine they have endured for far too long. I will work to persuade my colleagues in Congress to adopt the policies I discussed this afternoon. Additionally, I will speak out against the Administration if it fails to address the crises in Sudan and South Sudan with the seriousness and compassion they deserve.

One day the Sudanese people will know peace and prosperity, and we must act decisively in order for that day to come soon.

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