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**“Southern Kordofan: Ethnic Cleansing  
and Humanitarian Crisis in Sudan”**

*Excerpts of Remarks by Chairman Chris Smith  
Africa, Global Health and Human Rights Subcommittee  
August 4, 2011*

Good morning. We have called today’s emergency hearing because of the escalating crisis in the Sudanese state of Southern Kordofan. This crisis first arose in June of this year, shortly after the military forces of the Republic of the Sudan attacked the Abyei region, apparently as a provocation to South Sudan’s Sudanese People’s Liberation Movement, or SPLM. South Sudan was about to become independent, and these attacks may have been intended to provoke a fight that could derail their independence. At the same time, Sudanese attacks on SPLM-North members in the Sudanese state of Southern Kordofan were increasing.

Because of the fighting and the displacement of Sudanese and foreigners from Southern Kordofan, no one is estimating how many people have been killed in that area. We do know that more than 73,000 people have been displaced. Whatever the numbers involved, we can be sure that the suffering of the people in Southern Kordofan, especially the Nuba people, has been catastrophic.

This latest violence is a tragic resumption of a prior war by the Khartoum government on the Nuba. Beginning in the 1980s, Islamist elements in the North began an eradication campaign against the Nuba – pitting Northern Arabs against Africans to the South. Unfortunately for the Nuba, they are not Southerners, even though many fought with the Southern army during the North-South civil war. But neither are they accepted by the elements ruling the North, even though many of them are Muslims.

This left the Nuba on their own to suffer the onslaught of the Khartoum government. The strategy of cultural cleansing pursued by the government involved harsh attempts to depopulate vast areas, killing potential combatants, as well as many others, and herding survivors into tightly controlled government refugee camps. When jihad was declared by the Government of the Sudan in 1992, even Nuba Muslims were targeted, with the rationale that Muslims in SPLM areas were not true Muslims. Rape of Nuba women has been a central component of the government’s strategy, aimed at destroying the social fabric of Nuba society. Almost every

woman who has been in one of Khartoum's so-called "peace camps" reportedly was either raped or threatened with rape.

According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, between 30,000 and 40,000 people, out of a population of 60,000 in the Southern Kordofan capital of Kadugli have fled the town. Many of the attacks in Southern Kordofan were indiscriminate, including aerial bombardments and artillery fire by the Sudanese Armed Forces. Bombings have been reported in five villages south of the state capital of Kadugli, as well as in Talodi, Heiban, Kaudo and other towns. The UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights told the UN Security Council on July 29<sup>th</sup> that there were reports, as recently as July 27, of aerial bombings forcing civilians to flee into the Nuba Mountains.

Some are trying to down play the overwhelming responsibility of the Sudanese government for the devastation taking place in Southern Kordofan by referring to the refusal of the SPLM-North to lay down their arms to negotiate with Khartoum. But there is no moral equivalence between the SPLM-North's actions and those of the government. SPLM-North members are not bombing people indiscriminately, driving Arabs off their lands and out of their homes nor going door-to-door to identify their perceived enemies and execute them. The Government of Sudan's military forces are. And we will soon see photographic evidence of these atrocities.

In addition, the recent attacks on Southern Kordofan have disrupted the planting season and will have a long-term negative impact on the ability of its people to feed themselves. In parts of Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya, people suffer from drought made worse by conflict. In Southern Kordofan, the national government is creating a similar humanitarian crisis.

The death and destruction to which Sudanese Africans have been subjected was thought to have ended with the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005 to end the North-South civil war. However, the genocide in Darfur diverted the international community's attention away from the unresolved issues between North and South. These lingering points of contention threatened to derail independence for South Sudan just as the independence process was coming to a conclusion. And now the struggle over Abyei threatens to stifle the suffering cries and pleas for help that are arising from the Nuba people as they are dragged into a resumption of the Northern war against them.

We discussed this war during the Subcommittee's June 16<sup>th</sup> hearing on South Sudan. At that time, the fighting in Southern Kordofan was as horrific as any attacks waged by the Khartoum government. The testimony that will be presented today by witnesses who have seen the carnage will reveal the horrific extent of this situation.

I welcome today's testimony to reveal the depth of this tragedy and to discuss ways to address the suffering in this particular region of Sudan.