



**STATEMENT OF
U.S. REPRESENTATIVE JAMES P. McGOVERN (MA)
CO-CHAIR, TOM LANTOS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION**

**Press Conference on Release of New USCIRF Recommendations for Peace in Sudan;
Wednesday, February 11, 2009, 10:30-11:30 AM
2247 Rayburn House Office Building**

Madame Chair –

- I would like to thank the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom and all of your Commissioners for your longstanding commitment and your hard work on Sudan.
- I am grateful for this timely press conference on the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, when this fragile peace accord between the Northern and Southern regions of Sudan needs our full support and renewed engagement to ensure it overcomes severe challenges in the lead-up to the referendum on the legal status of Southern Sudan in 2011.
- The Comprehensive Peace Agreement encompassed a whole collection of carefully negotiated agreements which were finalized on December 31, 2004 and formally signed on January 9, 2005, by the Sudanese government and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement / Army.
- We should not fool ourselves that these complicated agreements could not easily falter, that the North-South fault lines of tension and deep mistrust have disappeared, and religious intolerance has faded away.
- This is why our new Administration must make a commitment now.
- Only the full engagement and pressure of the international community brought about this historic agreement which formally brought an end to Africa's longest-running civil war, in which over 2 million people lost their lives, and over 4 million were displaced from their homes.
- With the ongoing Genocide in Darfur as a daily reminder of the evils that humans can commit against one another, and the world's attention captured by this never-ending stream of human suffering, we must not take our eyes off the ball when it comes to the fragile state of the CPA.
- As the Khartoum government undoubtedly will increase its pressure on the oil-rich Southern region during the time leading up to the 2011 referendum, only the full engagement of the international community, including high-level engagement of our new Administration and all relevant bodies of the United Nations, will ensure that the CPA agreement will hold and a successful, free and fair referendum can take place.
- Madame Chair, we cannot simply assume that keeping our fingers crossed will do the trick in Sudan. It never has, and never will.