

## March 21, 2001: Commission Issues New Recommendations on Sudan

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Repeating its view that Sudan is "the world's most violent abuser of the right to freedom of religion and belief," the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom today called on the Bush administration and Congress to step up efforts to help end that country's 18-year civil war. The fighting has killed some 2 million people and displaced 4 million others. In a series of recommendations, the Commission called for the appointment of a prominent special envoy to work for an end to the war but urged the President not to name an ambassador to Sudan at this time. It also recommended increasing the amount of food aid to be delivered outside channels that the Khartoum government can veto and stepping up assistance to southern Sudan and the opposition National Democratic Alliance. Other recommendations include diplomacy to pressure Sudan's government into stopping its slave raids and its air raids on civilian and humanitarian targets; strengthened economic sanctions; and a new requirement for foreign companies doing business in Sudan to disclose those activities to American investors when raising funds in U.S. capital markets. The recommendations follow up on those the Commission made in its first Annual Report delivered May 1, 2000. "The government of Sudan continues to commit egregious human rights abuses - including widespread bombing of civilian and humanitarian targets, abduction and enslavement by government-sponsored militias, manipulation of humanitarian assistance as a weapon of war, and severe restrictions on religious freedom," the Commission found. "While the Clinton Administration did take some steps to address the situation ... its actions fell well short of the comprehensive, sustained campaign that the Commission believes is commensurate with the Sudanese government's abuses. The Commission urges the Bush administration to mount such a campaign." Commissioner David Saperstein, speaking for the Commission at a press conference, urged the following: The U.S. government should appoint a nationally prominent individual who enjoys the trust and confidence of President Bush and Secretary of State Colin Powell and who has appropriate authority and access whose sole responsibility is directed to bringing about a peaceful and just settlement of the war in Sudan and an end to the religious freedom abuses and humanitarian atrocities committed by the Sudanese government. The U.S. should not appoint an ambassador to Sudan at this time. The U.S. government should continue to increase the amount of its humanitarian assistance that passes outside of both Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS) and should press OLS to deliver aid wherever it is needed, especially the Nuba Mountains, with or without the approval of the Sudanese government. The U.S. government should increase its assistance to southern Sudan and the opposition National Democratic Alliance. The U.S. government should launch a major diplomatic initiative aimed at enlisting international pressure, to stop the Sudanese government's bombing of civilian and humanitarian targets; ground attacks on civilian villages, feeding centers, and hospitals; slave raids; and instigation of tribal warfare. The U.S. government should strengthen economic sanctions against Sudan and should urge other countries to adopt similar policies. The U.S. should prohibit any foreign company from raising capital or listing its securities in U.S. markets as long as it is engaged in the development of oil and gas fields in Sudan. The U.S. government should not issue licenses permitting the import of gum arabic from Sudan to the United States. Companies that are doing business in Sudan should be required to disclose the nature and extent of that business in connection with their access to U.S. capital markets. The U.S. government should intensify its support for the peace process and for the Declaration of Principles, and make a just and lasting peace a top priority of this administration's global agenda. The U.S. government should work to increase human rights and media reporting on abuses in Sudan, including supporting, diplomatically and financially, the placement of human rights monitors in southern Sudan and in surrounding countries where refugee populations are present. Commissioner Laila Al-Marayati issued separate concurring opinions regarding Recommendations 3 and 5. The complete text of the Commission's latest report on Sudan can be obtained on its Web site at [www.uscirf.gov](http://www.uscirf.gov), or from the communications office at (202) 523-3240, ext. 27.

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