

2/9/09: SAVE THE DATE: Press Conference on Release of New USCIRF Recommendations for Peace in Sudan

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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2247 Rayburn House Office Building

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) will hold a news conference this Wednesday to announce its recommendations designed to ensure that the fragile peace between the Khartoum government in the Northern and Southern regions is sustained and strengthened.

U.S. leadership is crucial to achieving the gains for peace that have been made to date in Sudan, including the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). The CPA ended Africa's longest civil war, one in which two million people lost

their lives and four million were driven from their homes. Implementing the CPA has reached a critical stage, with a referendum scheduled to take place this year on the future status of South Sudan in 2011. If the CPA is allowed to unravel, the chances of renewed hostilities between North and South Sudan will greatly increase, and the chances of achieving peace in Darfur will be significantly diminished.

Joining USCIRF will be U.S. Rep. Donald Payne (D-NJ), Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee's Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health; U.S. Rep. Frank Wolf (R-VA)**, co-chair of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission and a member of the House Appropriations Committee; and John Prendergast, Co-Chair of the Enough Project, which "is helping to build a permanent constituency to prevent genocide and crimes against humanity."

The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom was created by the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 to monitor the status of freedom of thought, conscience, and religion or belief abroad, as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and related international instruments, and to give independent policy recommendations to the President, the Secretary of State, and the Congress. For more information about the Commission, see www.uscirf.gov.

**Rep. Wolf has been added