

## Sudan Press Conference: Statement of Rep. Barbara Lee (D-CA)

Thank you very much, Felice, and good morning. And let me just thank all of you in the commission for your steady, steady, steady hard work. And just know that all of us are looking at these recommendations and heed your call.

I also want to just thank my colleagues, Congressmen Smith and Wolf, for their leadership, because this genocide that's taking place in Darfur and our response to this has been bipartisan. Their efforts, along with Congressman Payne, who led the charge to declare genocide as taking place in Sudan as part of our foreign policy oftentimes is a lone voice in the wilderness.

Their leadership is so important in this effort, so thank you very much and hopefully we can work together as we look at some of these recommendations and move forward together to try to raise our voices louder and to try to do the work that needs to be done to end the genocide, the horrific genocide that's taking place.

So we stand

here together today at a critical time, united in our determination to bring the genocide in Darfur to an end. I've been, like many of us have, to Darfur, Chad, Sudan, and the IDP camps now myself three times. I have seen, heard and felt the devastation from the survivors of the genocide, and with Khartoum now continuing - continuing to obstruct the deployment of peacekeeping troops, we need very bold action now to change the dynamics on the ground and to bring an end to the violence. And let me just thank you, John, for your leadership and for staying strong in helping move this forward to address the terrible humanitarian crisis that's taking place with your brilliant recommendations on what we need to do. I think we all know what we need to do; it's just a matter of the will to do this, and so thank you, John.

Many of us

have been involved, as you know, for a new direction, for policy changes and for us to really do the right thing here. And oftentimes it's been difficult to move forward, but again, we have now a new administration, a new Congress, so let's hope that we can take bold actions. Let me just remind you, though, last Congress we did enact legislation that many of us co-authored, I authored, to protect the 61 universities, 27 states and 23 cities choosing to divest from companies doing business in Sudan while also banning new federal contracts with offending companies, and two separate resolutions calling for action on the part of the League of Arab States and the government of China to use their leverage with Sudan to end the genocide.

Both of these were passed by the House, and I think it's important for us to make sure that we exercise some oversight on the actual bills and legislation that have been signed into law, to make sure that at least this portion of what we said we needed to do is being complied with by the United States government. We have a lot of work to do, though, but we're committed to achieving that peace. So we stand ready to work with the Obama administration to address this issue and to bring about a swift resolution.

And so let me just applaud the Commission on International Religious Freedom for presenting these recommendations, and I just want to assure you that every effort to end the genocide in Darfur, which you're so steadily and consistently working on, that will bring us closer to our goal of peace and stability in the region. And so we will continue to move forward in a bipartisan way to try to address these recommendations, as well as other actions, in a very bold and in a bipartisan manner. Thank you, again, very much.