

## February 14, 2000: Hearing on Religious Persecution in Sudan

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom will hold its first hearing on Tuesday, Feb. 15 to examine religious persecution and the 17-year civil war in Sudan. The hearing is scheduled from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. in the Senate Commerce Committee hearing room, SR-253, in the Senate Russell Office Building. A featured witness is Bishop Macram Max Gassis, exiled Roman Catholic Bishop of El-Obeid, Sudan. His testimony will be particularly timely, as last week Sudanese government aircraft bombed an elementary school in his diocese, killing 14 children and a teacher. The witnesses and schedule are as follows: 9:00-9:15 Opening Comments: Rabbi Saperstein, Chair; Elliott Abrams, Commissioner Panel I: 9:15-10:15 Bishop Macram Max Gassis, Roman Catholic Church, Sudan; Professor Gáspár Bíró, University of Budapest; Mr. Francis M. Deng, The Brookings Institute 10:15-10:30 Break Panel II: 10:30-12:15 Baroness Caroline Cox, UK House of Lords; Ms. Victoria Ben Ding, Christian Sudanese exile; Mr. Adlan Abdelaziz, Muslim Sudanese exile; Dr. Eric C. Reeves, on leave from Smith College 12:15-1:15 Lunch Panel III: 1:15-2:45 Mr. Roger Robinson, Jr., RWR Inc.; Prof. John Voll, Georgetown University; Mr. Ezekiel Gathkuoth, United Democratic Salvation Front 2:45-3:00 Break Panel IV: 3:00-4:45 Mr. Dan Eiffe, Norwegian People's Aid; Mr. Roger Winter, U.S. Committee for Refugees; Ms. Jemera Rone, Human Rights Watch; Mr. Steve Rickard, Amnesty International 4:45 Closing Statement of Michael Young, Vice Chair The hearing is held under authority of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998. Reporters and producers wishing assistance in arranging interviews with witnesses or Commissioners may contact Communications Director Lawrence J. Goodrich, (202) 523-3240.

Rabbi David Saperstein, Chair

- Dean Michael K. Young, Vice Chair Hon. Elliott Abrams Laila Al-Marayati, M.D. Hon. John R. Bolton Firuz Kazemzadeh Archbishop Theodore E. McCarrick Nina Shea Justice Charles Z. Smith Ambassador Robert Seiple, Ex-Officio Steven T. McFarland, Executive Director