By Ethan Cole

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The **US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF)** last week noted that the NCP escalated the tension between the north and south by pushing through the National Assembly – a body the party controls – a Southern Sudan referendum bill with new language that the Sudan People's Liberation Movement did not agree to. The SPLM is the primarily Christian political party that governs South Sudan.

On December 20, the National Assembly pushed through a revised National Security Act that the SPLM also objected to because it did not include any new measures to hold the security services accountable. Sudan's security forces are widely known to abuse their power with impunity.