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May the blessings of Christmas be with all of you who are working, in so many different ways and in so many different places, to respond to Jesus' call to be peacemakers!

Sudan Bishops Urgent Appeal for Peace

At their annual plenary meeting, the Catholic Bishops of Sudan issued a major appeal for peace amidst renewed violence in Southern Sudan. Among many issues addressed, the bishops emphasized the importance of free and fair elections in April 2010 and the referendum on self-determination in 2011, decried a coordinated campaign to undermine the Comprehensive Peace Agreement as well as attacks by the Lord's Resistance Army, and urged more international engagement in addressing these and other urgent issues. The full text of the statement is attached to the end of this e-mail.

Mexican Clergy Seek Global Help As Violence Grows

Mexico's Roman Catholic clergy met to address violence inflicted by the nation's drug cartels. See ["Mexican clergy seek global help as violence grows."](#)

Catholic Social Ministry Gathering

The annual Catholic Social Ministry Gathering will be held from February 7-10, 2010. The theme is *Charity in Truth: Seeking the Common Good*. It will be held at the Hyatt Regency Washington on Capitol Hill. RSVP by Monday, January 25, 2010. For more information, go to www.catholicsocialministrygathering.org.

Teaching Peace in the 21st Century, Kroc Institute, June 13-18, 2010

The Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame invites teams of college and university faculty from any field to apply to its 2nd Annual Summer Institute for Faculty in Peace Studies Program Development. This intensive week-long 'summer camp' will bring together small teams of academics who want to launch a peace studies program at their institution; strengthen a small or new peace studies program; or take an established peace studies program to the next level of design and rigor. For more information, and to apply, visit <http://kroc.nd.edu/newsevents/events/2010/06/13/614> Applications are due by March 1, 2010.

Reconciliation in a Divided World, Duke Divinity School Summer Institute, May 31-June 5, 2010

The 2010 Summer Institute, which is limited to 250 people, will include in-depth teaching, prayer, worship, shared meals, and reflection on one's own vocation. For more information go

to: <http://www.divinity.duke.edu/learningforlife/programs/summerinstitute>.

***Driven from Home: Protecting the Rights of Forced Migrants*, edited by David Hollenbach, SJ**

Driven from Home, edited by CPN Steering Committee member David Hollenbach, will be published by Georgetown University Press in June 2010. According to Ken Hackett, President of Catholic Relief Services, "In this globalized world, too many people are forced to leave their homes, displaced by conflict, disasters or harsh economic conditions. This volume raises challenging questions and offers keen insight into expanding our understanding of 'the protection gaps' as we strive to assist some of the most vulnerable people in our world." For more information: <http://press.georgetown.edu/detail.html?id=9781589016460>.

New Journal: *Solidarity: Journal of Catholic Social Thought & Secular Ethics*

Solidarity will be a refereed academic online journal published bi-annually to provide a forum for the discussion of social ethics, social justice and Catholic social thought. *Solidarity* will be hosted by the University of Notre Dame Australia (UNDA), in association with the Justice and Peace Office of the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney. For details/inquiries contact: Assoc. Professor Sandra Lynch, Director of the Centre for Faith, Ethics and Society, email: slynch@nd.edu.au.

The Catholic Peacebuilding Network (CPN) is a voluntary network of practitioners, academics, clergy and laity from around the world which seeks to enhance the study and practice of Catholic peacebuilding, especially at the local level. The CPN aims to deepen bonds of solidarity among Catholic peacebuilders, share and analyze "best practices," expand the peacebuilding capacity of the Church in areas of conflict, and encourage the further development of a theology of a just peace. While it is a Catholic network, the CPN believes that

authentic and effective Catholic peacebuilding involves dialogue and collaboration with those of other religious traditions and all those committed to building a more just and peaceful world.

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SUDAN: Catholic Bishops of Sudan Statement TORIT, December 18, 2009

(CISA<<file:///cisa2009/Cisa2009/Cisa/CISA/Bulletins%20Out/http://www.cisanewsafrika.org/>>)-Here is a statement of the Catholic bishops of the Sudan on the situation of peace process in the Sudan.

FOR A JUST AND LASTING PEACE (Lk: 14:27)

To: Christians, Political leaders and People of Good Will!

Grace and Peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ! (Eph.1:1)

We, the Catholic Bishops of the Sudan, meeting in Torit for our Annual Plenary from 5th – 15th December 2009, reflecting and deliberating on the current situation of our country and mindful of our duty as spiritual leaders, wish to bring the following urgent and pertinent concerns to the attention of our Christians, political leaders and all citizens.

1. Current Situation of the Country

The political situation in our country has reached a crucial and decisive moment due to non implementation of some key component of the protocols:

a. the demarcation of the North and South borders

b. repeal of repressive laws and promulgation of referendum bill

c. forthcoming elections far behind schedule might affect the Referendum in 2011 and popular consultation for Southern Kordofan and Southern Blue Nile States

d. the crisis in Abyei and the conflict in Darfur.

The delay of in the implementation of the above items creates sentiments of anxiety and fear among the people. We comment all initiatives taken by the two parties to implement the CPA.

2. On National Elections and the role of Civil Society

The CPA remains a valid and relevant road map for a just and lasting peace in Sudan. Both the CPA and the Interim National Constitution confirm the right to vote as a fundamental right of Sudanese citizens. The holding of free and fair elections is a key provision of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). Citizens should have the opportunity and the responsibility to exercise their right when elections are held under free and fair conditions. Derailing the forthcoming election is unacceptable to Sudanese people and will be inconsistency with the peaceful and stable Sudan. Unfortunately, voters' civic education was not disseminated on time. Consequently, many people missed the right to register. For those who registered, we urge them to be vigilant and to exercise their constitutional right to vote.

3. Referendum and Post Referendum

The CPA provides for the right to self determination to the people of Southern Sudan through the international monitored referendum at end of the interim period which is only fifteen months away. The delay of the promulgation of the Referendum bill and the establishment of the Southern Sudan Referendum Commission are of great concern to all Sudanese. We therefore call upon the National Legislative Assembly to speed up the process in order to avoid the unnecessary consequences that will be detrimental to the future of the country. We urge all Sudanese to be vigilant and not to give way to those who may drag the Country back to war.

4. No return to War!

It is painful to recall the memory of the two bitter wars (1955 – 1972 with about 1.6 million lives lost and from 1983 – 2005 with about 2.5 million lives lost and more than four million displaced) and the tragedy and devastation caused on human life, infrastructure and environment as we can still witness in many parts of Sudan today. War is evil and we cannot accept any return to war. The interim period

has brought stability and tangible development in the history of the Sudan, and we earnestly urge all the Sudanese to reject war and strongly call on parties to the CPA and the people of the Sudan to safeguard peace and find peaceful means to resolve pending issues. The recent second assembly Synod of Bishops on Africa addressed with great concern the plight of Africa in their message: "Africa, rise up! The Synod is sad to note that the situation in many countries is a great shame.... This Synod proclaims it loud and clear: it is time to change habits, for the sake of present and future generations." (Nuntius, art. 36 – 37).

6. Ethnic Violence

We follow with great concern that, since the beginning of 2008 and 2009, there have been increased attacks on civilians and Government installations, internal and external ethnic violence. These are not isolated incidents, but appear to be a coordinated campaign by the enemies of peace to oppose the CPA to destabilize the country. We urge both perpetrators and the victims that are caught up in these cycles of violence to denounce senseless killings, to seek reconciliation and to respect human life.

7. External Aggression

The Lord Resistance Army (LRA) aggression on innocent civilians especially Western Equatoria and Western Bhar El Ghazal States has created untold suffering and displacement to many people. We call upon the government of Uganda and the Lord Resistance Army to resume peace talk.

8. The Government of National Unity

We acknowledge that some items of the CPA have been successfully implemented, although many key items of the protocols remain unattended to. Considering that the interim period ends in fifteen months, we urge the Government of National Unity to expedite and honour the implementation of the remaining vital issues in the protocols.

9. The Government of Southern Sudan

We acknowledge that in this interim period there have been many tangible developments in Southern Sudan, notwithstanding the challenges faced, such as corruption, tribalism, nepotism, idleness, lack of patriotism, the lapse of security in enforcement of law and order. We therefore call upon the Government and community leaders to be diligent in the practice of good governance and the rule of law. To govern means to serve honestly and to ensure the common good of the people entrusted to their care. The just enforcement of law and order remains a primary duty of the government and the community leaders.

10. The Religious Leaders

We appeal to the religious leaders in the country, that is, Christians and Muslims, to claim and adopt the spirituality which promotes tolerance, harmony, mutual respect and peace. Together let us foster dialogue as a means to handle the negative scenarios which are emerging in the Country due to the current situation and convert them into elements of peace. Peace must be based on a policy of “verify, then trust”.

11. The International Community

Soon after the CPA was signed, the International Community turned their attention to the Darfur conflict. While not neglecting Darfur, we appeal to the International Community to engage Khartoum government to peacefully resolve the Darfur, and recommit themselves to the CPA within the next fifteen months and to pressure the two signatories to implement all the protocols of the CPA to guarantee peace in the Country. The Sudan seems to be on unstable ground. This sign of danger calls for urgent intervention by the International Institution that assisted the Sudan to achieve CPA.

12. The Humanitarian Assistance and Rehabilitation

The rehabilitation programs for refugees and IDP's have failed as the resources have hardly been availed. A proper resettlement and rehabilitation is necessary to allow all Sudanese to in exile and Internally Displaced of their origin. The apparent lack of rain this year and incursion by LRA caused a humanitarian crisis. We appeal to the international community to avail assistance to this needy people.

13. A Call to Prayer:

“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Mk 1:15).

We are approaching Christmas a time that prompts us to feelings of peace and joy. It educates us to solidarity with our Brothers and Sisters and to an awareness of the needs and sufferings of our people. We remember that Christ, the Prince of Peace, came among us as one who was lowly, humble servant. He is the Messiah who came to take away our sins and bring us into the Kingdom of Peace.

In this holy season of Advent, we exhort you to pray for a just and lasting peace in our Country. This moment of expectation of Christ, the Prince of Peace, has a great appeal to our hearts and is one of peace, calm, joy and hope. Advent is a time of conversion. John the Baptist's proclamation, “prepare the

way for the Lord, make his paths straight! (Lk: 3:4), is an exhortation to genuine conversion and reformation of life. In our Country, the reality of the present situation never seems to match our expectation and our dreams for a just and lasting peace.

We your Bishops rely on Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace. Let us unite in prayer for peace, harmony, and justice. We pray for a just and lasting peace in the Sudan, we your Spiritual leaders, conscious of the fate in which our Country finds itself, we exhort our faithful and people of good will to be vigilant in prayer (1 Pt. 5:8-9) during this decisive moment of our Country. Especially as we approach Christmas, let us recommit ourselves to be peacemakers. Blessed be the peacemakers; they can be recognised as children of God (Mt. 5:9).

We entrust our prayer through the intercession of Our Lady Queen of Peace, Saints Josephine Bakhita and Daniel Comboni to intercede for the Sudan!

H. L. Bishop Rudolf Deng Majak Bishop of Wau and President of SCBC

H.E Gabriel Cardinal Zubeir Wako Archbishop of Khartoum

H. G. Archbishop Paolino Lukudu Loro Archbishop of Juba

H. L. Bishop Erkolano Lodu Tombe Bishop of Yei

H. L. Bishop Macram Max Gassis Bishop of El Obeid

H. L. Bishop Caesar Mazzolari Bishop of Rumbek

H. L. Bishop Daniel Adwok Kur Auxiliary Bishop of Khartoum

H. L. Bishop Antonio Menegazzo Apostolic Administrator of El Obeid

H. L. Bishop Johnson Akio Mutek Bishop of Torit

H.L. Eduardo Hiiboro Kussala Bishop of Tombura - Yambio

Msgr. Roko Taban Mousa Apostolic Administrator of Malakal

H. L. Bishop Vincent Mojwok Nyker Bishop Emeritus of Malakal

H.L. Bishop Paride Taban Bishop Emeritus of Torit

H.L. Bishop Joseph Gasi Abangite (Sick leave) Bishop Emeritus of Tombura – Yambio

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