

SECAM -AMECEA PASTORAL VISIT TO SUDAN: SOLIDARITY MESSAGE

Dear Brothers in the Episcopate

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Faith

Beloved People of Sudan

We, Church leaders from the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM) in collaboration with the host Regional Association of Member Episcopal Conferences of Eastern Africa (AMECEA) and representatives of priests, the religious and the laity, urged by the love of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:14) have come to be in solidarity with you as you approach an important historic moment in your lives.

We are here in solidarity to accompany you the People of Sudan in your quest for peaceful navigation of the country through the final stages of implementing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) of 2005. We recognize and appreciate the efforts that have been made internally and externally to implement the Comprehensive Peace Agreement which put an end to the protracted conflict that lasted 38 years out of 48 years of Sudan's independence.

We highly appreciate the contribution of the Church in Sudan to the promotion of human dignity, peace and integral development in Sudan. We make this pilgrimage of hope in the land of Saint Josephine Bakhita whose name means good luck and an icon of true freedom. We give homage to Saint Daniel Comboni the great missionary in Sudan whose fruits are tangible and plausible. Responding to the call and invitation of praying and journeying with the People of Sudan, we have come to amplify the voice and concerns of the Church in the Sudan and Africa at large. We emphasize that not only civic but also religious rights of Sudanese be respected

even during this period as you move towards taking a crucial decision for the future of Sudan.

We express our concern on some of the unresolved issues that may undermine and threaten the option for a peaceful referendum; these include:-

Strained relationship between the National Congress Party (NCP) and Sudan Peoples Liberation Movement (SPLM) with regard to the post referendum issues currently under mediation by the African Union (AU)

Border demarcation process between North and South remains incomplete and disputed and there are doubts as to whether the process will be completed before the referendum.

Lack of an agreement on the sharing of oil revenue in the post referendum era.

The “citizenship package issues” popularly known as the “four freedoms” which have not been resolved. These are: freedoms of movement, residence, citizenship and employment for Southerners in the North and Northerners in the South in the event of separation.

We beseech the God of truth and justice to guide the Sudanese people to do what is right at this momentous time. We reiterate the call that the Sudanese Bishops made in their recent Pastoral Letter that the referendum process must be conducted peacefully, transparently and on time, upholding values of honesty, integrity, tolerance, respect and compassion especially for the weak and the poor.

- We appeal to the leadership of Sudan to focus on making sure that the common good of Sudanese People prevail over personal interests. Among the short-term issues that need immediate attention are, working out a comprehensive resolution to peace in Darfur and averting a relapse to war after the 2011 referendum.
- We call upon the international community especially those handling delicate issues of technically advising on sharing revenues of oil, debt relief and border demarcations to work in a neutral and impartial way. Uncontrolled exploitation of natural resources which has subsequent impacts of destroying

the environment must be checked. Investors be put to task to prioritize the rights and interests of Sudanese people rather than aim at mere maximization of profits. It is not right that the desire for profit take precedence over the well being and the common good of the Sudanese. The people of Sudan need development that is integral, i.e., responding not only to economic and material needs but also to the cultural, affective, ethical and spiritual needs of the human being.

- We call upon the African Union Panel on Sudan to step up efforts in ensuring that African Countries will be more proactive in supporting the course of holding a peaceful referendum and accompanying Sudan in the post referendum era.
- We appeal to the International Community to commit itself to be more proactive and accompany the people of Sudan in their quest for peace and development.
- We call upon and encourage the Catholic Church and other Christian Churches in the Sudan to continue being a voice of reason in their prophetic roles; seasoned by Gospel values. May the Church leadership continue to rise above ethnic and regional interests in addressing the challenges confronting Sudan..

It is our conviction that the forthcoming referendum will be taken as a means of achieving the common good of the people of Sudan and not an end per se!

We commit ourselves:

1. To express solidarity and accompany the Church and people of Sudan in their quest for a lasting peace during and after the referendum.
2. To amplify the voice and concerns of the Church in Sudan in the Eastern Africa region and in Africa at large in order to mobilize regional and international action for a peaceful transition in Sudan.
3. To promote synergy between institutions of the Catholic Church and other Ecumenical bodies for advocating priority issues of the Sudanese people.

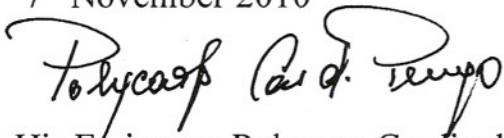
4. To place at the disposal of the Sudanese Bishops, relevant expertise and technical support in their endeavors.

The Risen Lord promised peace that the world cannot give John:20:20. This peace that has been given to us is both a gift and an obligation. Peace is not something we can simply wish for; it is something we pray for, something we make, something we do, something we pledge to be and something we are supposed to give to others. We are all committed to accompany the Sudanese people so that peace may reign.

We pray and entrust the Church and the People of Sudan to the Almighty God through the intercession of Mary Queen of Peace and Africa.


Rumbek, Sudan

7th November 2010



His Eminence Polycarp Cardinal **PENGO**

President SECAM



Most Rev. Tarciso **ZIYAYE**

Chairman AMECEA