



Canadian Ecumenical
Justice Initiatives /
Initiatives œcuméniques
canadiennes pour
la justice

Members

The Anglican Church of Canada
Canadian Catholic Organization for
Development and Peace
Canadian Conference of
Catholic Bishops
Canadian Religious Conference
Christian Reformed Church in
North America (Canada Corporation)
Evangelical Lutheran Church
in Canada
Mennonite Central Committee
Canada
The Presbyterian Church in Canada
The Primate's World Relief and
Development Fund
Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)
The United Church of Canada

Membres

Assemblée annuelle canadienne
de la Société religieuse des Amis
Conférence des évêques
catholiques du Canada
Comité Central Mennonite Canada
Conférence religieuse canadienne
Développement et Paix
L'Église anglicane du Canada
Église Évangélique Luthérienne
au Canada
L'Église presbytérienne au Canada
L'Église réformée chrétienne en
Amérique du Nord
(Société canadienne)
L'Église Unie du Canada
Le fonds du Primat pour le secours
et le développement mondial

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January 21, 2014

The Hon. John Baird
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada
125 Sussex Drive
Ottawa, ON K1A 0G2

Re: Canada's Response to the Crisis in South Sudan

Dear Minister Baird,

I am writing on behalf of KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives to express our grave concern over the current political and humanitarian crisis in South Sudan and to urge the Canadian government to take action to help foster a just and lasting peace in this new nation. In KAIROS, 11 Canadian churches and religious organizations from eight denominations work together for justice with partners in Canada and internationally.

We welcome the Government of Canada's condemnation of the violence in South Sudan, issued on December 20, 2013. In light of the ongoing killings and widespread violence, we urge the government to back up this condemnation with a strong statement calling for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire. Canada must call on all parties in South Sudan to commit to a peaceful resolution of their conflicts and grievances. External forces must respect the sovereignty of South Sudan and abide by any ceasefire agreement. In making this request, we join our voices with the South Sudan Council of Churches and its ecumenical plea for peace of December 18.

Canada can play a constructive role, both diplomatically and financially, in supporting the peace negotiations in Addis Ababa through the Intergovernmental Authority on Development. KAIROS is hopeful that the Government of Canada will prioritize the participation of women in this peace process, in line with Canada's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security. For the past few years, KAIROS has supported the Sudan Council of Churches' efforts to reactivate its National Women's Program by enhancing the capacity of South Sudanese women to engage in peace-building, human rights promotion and democratic development. The Government of Canada can further support this capacity-building by ensuring that South Sudanese civil society, including women's organizations, are assured a seat at the peace negotiations table.

KAIROS is deeply saddened by recent reports in the media, and from the UN Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, Ivan Simonovic, that the death toll now numbers in the "many thousands." Women and children are bearing the brunt of this humanitarian crisis, which has seen more than 200,000 people internally displaced or fleeing across borders to neighbouring countries. In addition, we have heard reports from our partners that even church pastors have been targeted by both sides in the violence.

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KAIROS requests that the Canadian government bolster its commitment to humanitarian relief in South Sudan and to the United Nations mission in that country. The UN plays a critical role in protecting civilians from the violence and we urge Canada to expand its support for the mission, both financially and through the deployment of Canadian personnel, expertise and technical assistance.

Furthermore, we call on Canada to assist in the documentation of human rights abuses in South Sudan during this conflict. KAIROS is disturbed by widespread reports of sexual violence and supports the call by UN Assistant Secretary-General Simonovic for an independent and impartial fact-finding commission to investigate such crimes and hold those responsible to account.

We applaud the Canadian government's statement of December 20 saying: "We are deeply concerned by the reports of ethnically targeted violence. Canada calls for the perpetrators of these crimes to be identified and brought to justice." We look forward to hearing what steps Canada has taken to support this call.

KAIROS and its members are hopeful that Canada will play a leadership role in ending the current crisis in South Sudan, assisting with the grave humanitarian situation, and supporting the South Sudanese people on a path towards peace, justice and reconciliation.

I look forward to hearing what actions the Canadian government is taking to respond to this urgent crisis.

Yours sincerely,



Jennifer Henry
Executive Director

Cc: The Hon. Deepak Obhrai, MP, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs
Paul Dewar, MP, NDP Foreign Affairs Critic
Marc Garneau, MP, Liberal Foreign Affairs Critic
Jean-François Fortin, MP, Bloc Québécois Foreign Affairs Critic
Senator Mobina Jaffer, Chair, Senate Human Rights Committee
Senator Salma Ataullahjan, Deputy Chair, Senate Human Rights Committee