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Chair

Mr. Dean Allison

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•(1535)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West—Glanbrook, CPC)): I call the meeting to order.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), we are continuing our study of the implications and ramifications of the referendum in Sudan.

I want to welcome everyone to meeting 30. The delay today is actually my fault. I did not communicate that we were maybe going to have the other witness come for the second half, and he's on his way, so I thought we'd just delay it a bit.

We're going to start with your opening statements, gentlemen, and then, by that time, the other witness will be here and we'll hear from him. As opposed to taking two separate hours, we can do all of this in just over an hour or so.

I want to welcome John Lewis, the program coordinator of human rights for KAIROS, as well as James Davis, the program coordinator for Africa Partnerships for the same organization.

Gentlemen, thank you for being here today. We're going to turn the floor over to you for your opening statement. I believe you're going to share some time, about 10 minutes. Hopefully, by then our other witness will have arrived and we'll have a chance to hear from him, and then, as you know, the way things work around here is that we'll go around the room and ask some questions and do some follow-up.

I don't know who's going to start first.

Mr. Davis, why don't we turn the floor over to you. We welcome your comments.

Mr. James Davis (Program Coordinator, Africa Partnerships, KAIROS): Thank you so much.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify regarding the upcoming referendum in Sudan.

This afternoon I'll raise some of the concerns, issues, and appeals made by a Sudanese church delegation that has just completed a tour of the U.S., including visits with the United Nations Secretary General and the White House. We had hoped to bring to testify before you the Reverend Ramadan Chan, general secretary of the Sudan Council of Churches, a partner supported by KAIROS and its Canadian church members, but for logistical reasons we were unable to do so.

The Sudan Council of Churches represents Christians in north and south Sudan from the Catholic, Protestant, and Coptic traditions. As

a central part of Sudanese civil society, it represents the aspirations of millions of Sudanese. I believe you received a copy of the statement by the Sudan Council of Churches.

There is a real and imminent threat to the security of the people of Sudan and, indeed, the whole region. In less than 90 days, a referendum is due to be held to decide the future of Sudan. If it goes well, bringing peace to a country that has suffered almost five decades of brutal civil war, it will be a beacon of hope to the world. If the promises of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, the CPA, are not honoured and the referendum does not deliver a credible result that reflects the aspirations of the people, then Sudan will descend into violence and instability, which will affect the whole region.

Opportunities to encourage success or prepare adequately for failure are rapidly dwindling. There is no time to waste. The CPA guarantors, the United Nations and the international community, need to demonstrate a renewed political will and commitment to enhance their engagement, not just until the referendum but also throughout the coming months and years of transition.

The Sudanese church, in her prophetic role, has accompanied the Sudanese people in times of peace and war. The church has been building peace, providing basic services, and serving millions of Sudanese people across generations as international aid actors have come and gone. It is an indigenous church, sharing the hopes and suffering of the people and giving voice to those who often are not heard. It represents the vast majority of the population of southern Sudan and a significant number of people in the north.

There's much more I can say about the border areas and some of the other contentious issues, but in the interests of time, let me just mention a few important things or demands of the Sudan Council of Churches and the Canadian churches relating to the church in Sudan as an agent for peace and hope.

First, support is needed for the emergency preparations already being implemented by the Sudanese church with and through its international partners, Action of Churches Together, or ACT, and Caritas. Support is also needed for the people-to-people peace process being implemented by the Sudanese church to alleviate violence in the south and the transitional areas.

Furthermore, the voice of the Sudanese people, as expressed through institutions like the church, must be listened to and valued, rather than relying solely on international reports and analysis.

Lastly, in the development of new funding mechanisms, local organizations, including the Sudanese churches, which are close to the people, represented by its council, must be listened to and funds must be made accessible to them.

I'll end right there. Thank you.

● (1540)

Mr. John Lewis (Program Coordinator, Human Rights, KAIROS): Along with Jim, I'd like to say thank you for the invitation to be here.

Merci, Madame Deschamps, pour l'invitation de Bloc Québécois.

KAIROS, as Jim has said, has a long history of working with the Sudan churches, predating the recent conflict in Darfur. Our relationship with the Sudan Council of Churches goes back more than 25 years.

KAIROS's human rights work has an explicit focus on the rights of women and girls. Our board mandates that 25% of our partnerships around the world are with women's organizations. In its current human rights programming, KAIROS is committed to deepening its research and advocacy on behalf of women, human rights, and peace building. Specifically, we've launched with our partners in Sudan a Women of Courage initiative, which highlights the work of women in defending the rights of women and building peace. The focus of this project is to develop strategies for overcoming gender-based violence, by drawing upon international human rights instruments like UN Security Council Resolution 1325.

I think it would be important for Canada to support initiatives coming from women's organizations inside Sudan. I'm very aware that you have already heard from some excellent representatives of that aspect of civil society. Women's organizations, as part of Canada's maternal health initiative, need to go a little bit further and empower Sudanese women, just as they need to empower Canadian members of civil society. We need to encourage our partners in the NGO sector not simply to buy into the service delivery aspect to maternal health without important advocacy on issues related to UN Security Council Resolution 1325—for example, the inclusion of women's rights and women's empowerment in the defence of women and girls.

Finally, I'd like to say a few words about the north. It seems to us that not enough attention is being paid to issues in the north of Sudan. First, as many of you know, there are an estimated 1.5 million southerners in the north. They are people displaced from the decades of war in southern Sudan. There are questions about their future. We need to encourage both northern and southern Sudanese leaders to promise not to expel one another's citizens after the results of the referendum. There are still questions specifically about citizenship rights in northern Sudan. The Government of Southern Sudan, as we just heard an hour ago from members of that government, has agreed to recognize northern Sudanese in the south as citizens. We haven't had the same guarantees from the government in the northern part of the country. Will they recognize those who are called IDPs, or internally displaced persons, in the north as citizens if the results of the referendum go the way most people expect them to?

There is palpable fear when you speak with people in northern Sudan that Sudan without the south could become what they term to me as "another Saudi Arabia", particularly in terms of women's rights. There is a great fear that western governments—and western NGOs, it must be said—will abandon the north to the NCP, which is the government.

Thirdly, related to the north, there are issues in the border area around oil and revenue sharing. We think it's incumbent upon Canada to ensure that both parties agree that any border settlement encourages both parties to work constructively towards monitoring of oil revenues. As well, if Canadian companies are going to invest in Sudan after the referendum, they need to understand the inherent risks of doing so and be careful not to worsen the security situation and the human rights situation.

● (1545)

In conclusion, I'd just like to say that the key message coming from partners in Sudan is that the referendum happen on time. There are already some problems arising around the registration process, we understand, but it's important for them that the referendum, on time, is free, fair, and transparent.

If Canada has one thing to contribute to post-referendum Sudan, our plea would be to support the courageous women's organizations and other civil society organizations in both the north and, equally, southern Sudan.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, gentlemen.

Since our other witness hasn't arrived yet, we'll just get started with the questions, and when he comes in we'll have him make his presentation.

We're going to start with you, Mr. Rae, sir.

Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Welcome to our guests from KAIROS. I'll just say editorially that we're very pleased to have you and your organization with us because of the great work you do not only in Sudan but around the world.

Your presentation is very powerful, and I guess my simple question is this: what do you think Canada specifically, the Canadian government, should be doing to deal with what is clearly an immense challenge over the next several months?

I think the experience of the world in these situations is that a decision to partition a country is almost inevitably followed by a dramatic movement of populations, an uptick or an increase in religious extremism and religious exclusion, and a very real threat of extensive violence. One only has to look through the history of the last 50 years to understand that this is something we know about. The world should be learning from some of the terrible experiences we've had in the postwar era, starting with the partition of India and Pakistan, which was accompanied by the deaths of tens of millions of people as a result of the partition and the movement of the populations.

So the question is what should we be doing? We have the benefit of our historical experience. We don't have to sit back and say, "Well, let's just see what happens." We ought to be able to say, "Let's prevent a humanitarian and political catastrophe as a result of the referendum." We all recognize the referendum is inevitable and needs to happen. Nobody's denying the need for the referendum. It's just that the consequences may be far less benign than many people seem to be asserting.

So either Mr. Davis or Mr. Lewis, since you've posed these problems to us, perhaps you could tell us what you think we should be doing.

Mr. John Lewis: I'll start.

As I mentioned, we've just come from a meeting with members of the Government of Southern Sudan and they mentioned to us that for Abyei, which is this region, a part of Sudan that lies in the middle between north and south, there will be a separate referendum deciding where Abyei goes. The members of what they call the GOSS, which is the Government of Southern Sudan—I think you'll be hearing from one of their representatives shortly—likened Abyei to Kashmir. So I think the analogy of India and Pakistan is probably a correct one, but also disturbing.

What's happening now, and this is encouraging, is that southern Sudanese who are in the north are already being encouraged to leave the north prior to the referendum. I think this is actually in some ways kind of helpful, because—you're absolutely right—we don't know what the consequences will be of the referendum. People tell us that we should know what the outcome is, but the consequences at this point are unknown. There will probably be some violence; how widespread, we're not sure.

One area for us to focus on is this area I mentioned briefly, which is to get the government in the north to agree that southern Sudanese who find themselves in the north, if the referendum goes in the way of separation, are recognized as Sudanese nationals. We don't have that guarantee yet. As I mentioned, we have that guarantee from the folks in southern Sudan, but relating to northern Sudanese, we don't have that guarantee as of yet.

• (1550)

Mr. James Davis: One of the things coming out, which we heard very strongly, is to keep the eye on the ball in the north. During the national elections, the southern Sudanese government said there were some 1.5 million people in the north; the National Congress Party said, no, there were only half a million; and now the National Congress Party in the north is saying, oh, no, there are maybe three million people, or more.

The hijinks there is simply that if they can get enough people to register by making it easy for them and somehow make it at least incrementally more difficult to actually vote, then it will not satisfy the 60% of registered voters going past the mark of 50% plus one. That's a real fear, and we're hearing this all over the place. The key voter education issue is that if you're not going to vote as a southerner, whether you're in the north or the south, don't register.

Because of the history of the National Congress Party, the government is a bit more opaque, I would say, about how these

things play out. It's important that referendum monitors, for both the registration and the voting, are in the north.

We recently heard that the International Organization for Migration was requested to monitor in the north but turned it down, probably knowing how complicated it was going to be. Perhaps the Europeans will take over, but there should be considerable concerted pressure in the international community on ensuring there is adequate monitoring in the north.

Of course in the Abyei area, there may be some possibilities of increasing the capacity, through Canadian resources, of UNMIS, the United Nations Mission in Sudan, in that contested area.

Beyond that there is this issue of preparing for massive migration. As I said in my presentation, the churches have two international groups that they work through—Action of Churches Together, and Caritas—and they develop plans, along with civil society on the ground, to ensure there are adequate contingencies in place.

Lastly, I would say, as John mentioned, giving more than lip service and real traction to United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, there might be areas for Canada to explore increasing its use of women military police in the UN forces. That's not only for the more obvious places, such as the Congo, but also in Sudan.

I'll leave it at that for now.

The Chair: Thank you.

Dr. Patry has a quick question, and then we'll go to Mr. Malok for his opening comments.

Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): We understand the idea of the referendum in the north and the south. But we notice there is a popular consultation with the Blue Nile province and also the southern Kurdufan province.

What are the purposes of these two...? It's not a referendum, because it's not an exercise of self-determination; it's for their aspirations. What are the goals there? Why are they having referendums in these two provinces?

Mr. James Davis: When they got to the Naivasha accord in 2005, there was an impasse on this. This was the most that the north could concede, that there would be popular consultations.

What that means is not immediately clear. I know that the Sudan Council of Churches thinks that the aspirations of the majority of the people in the southern Kurdufan and Blue Nile will probably not all be met. But it was a compromise worked out when the CPA was finalized. So there is no straightforward answer other than...

Now, the elections were thought to be inadequate in the Blue Nile, at least by the Sudan Council of Churches and the rest of civil society in southern Sudan. Popular consultations happen, but it's the legislators who make the decisions. You can see that's already going to be a flawed outcome.

In southern Kurdufan province, things are moving very slowly. They haven't even elected the representatives who are going to vote after the popular consultation, so it's indeed a difficult situation.

•(1555)

The Chair: Thank you, Dr. Patry and Mr. Rae.

Mr. Malok, thank you for rearranging your schedule and coming in a little bit early and adjusting for us. I'm going to give you a chance to make your opening comments now.

Mr. Malok is from the Government of Southern Sudan and is a principal liaison officer.

We welcome you here today. The floor is yours. We'll have you make your opening comments, and then we'll continue with questions and answers from the members of Parliament.

Mr. Joseph Malok (Principal Liaison Officer, Ottawa Liaison Office, Government of Southern Sudan): Thank you so much.

I would like to thank you for this opportunity, and I thank you for inviting me to this hearing.

I had prepared something to deliver to you. I don't know whether to make a comment on the questions you have just asked or if you want me to deliver my opening remarks.

The Chair: If you want to make a comment, go ahead, but certainly we'll also let you make your opening remarks as well.

Mr. Joseph Malok: Okay. Maybe we'll keep it for later.

I hope the clerk has given this document to some of you.

The Chair: We need to have it translated, but it will be sent out to all members once we've done that.

Mr. Joseph Malok: Okay.

Chairperson, Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, honourable members, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the committee for inviting me to this hearing. It is an honour to be here with you to talk about the impact of the referendum on the future of the Sudan.

When the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, CPA, was signed on January 9, 2005, it basically established an autonomous Government of Southern Sudan, GOSS, within a united Sudan. One of the most important provisions was article 46 of the interim constitution of the Government of Southern Sudan that establishes liaison offices abroad. The liaison offices abroad derive their constitutional mandate from article 46 of the interim constitution, which states that the Government of Southern Sudan, GOSS, has the right to establish liaison offices, to engage, develop, and maintain good bilateral and multilateral relations and cooperation with foreign governments, foreign non-governmental organizations and associations for mutual advantage in trade, investment, culture, sports, education, credit, loans, grants, technical assistance, and other fields of developmental cooperation between the Government of Southern Sudan and those countries.

My role and responsibilities, as GOSS's principal liaison officer in Ottawa, is to advocate to the Canadian government on bilateral and developmental issues on behalf of the people and the Government of Southern Sudan and to inform the Canadian government on progress and challenges that are still facing the implementation of the CPA.

The referendum on self-determination for the people of southern Sudan and Abyei is a national exercise that will have a profound

effect on the future of the Sudan as a country. The word "self-determination" is a universal principle that the Government of Southern Sudan has accepted to settle the issue of the war between the north and the south in Nairobi, Kenya, in 2005, during the long, difficult negotiation that was supported generously by the Inter-governmental Agency for Development countries, and the international community, including the Canadian government. And we thank you for that.

The National Congress Party chose the path to self-determination over secularism during the negotiations in Kenya for reasons known to them only. The agreement provided the parties to the CPA with two options during the interim period of six years. First, the unity of the Sudan must be made attractive to the people of southern Sudan by the NCP-dominated government in the north. Secondly, after six years the people of southern Sudan will exercise their democratic rights to either confirm the current unity of the Sudan, if it is made attractive, or they can choose to form their own country through a referendum.

The question is this: how did we reach this stage of a referendum on self-determination for the people of southern Sudan and Abyei?

Ladies and gentlemen, Sudan has been at war with itself for 40 of its 55 years of independence. For the last 22 years, the war in southern Sudan has been about the unity of the Sudan, a Sudan that is secular and democratic, where religion has no place in government; citizenship is not determined by the colour of your skin, religious beliefs, or region; justice, equality, and peaceful coexistence is voluntary; national wealth is shared equally; and development projects are carried out equally in all parts of the country. All of this in the current Sudan remains a dream.

•(1600)

The President of the Government of Southern Sudan, His Excellency General Salva Kiir Mayardit, is prepared to have the referendum conducted on time, as is stipulated in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, CPA. He has established the southern Sudan referendum task force, chaired by the vice-president of the Government of Southern Sudan, Dr. Riak Machar, to prepare the people of southern Sudan for the referendum.

The task force has established post-referendum negotiating teams to iron out the questions of nationality, borders between the north and the south, national debt, national assets, international agreements, oil revenues, etc. Just this month, because of the importance the Government of Southern Sudan attaches to the peaceful conduct of the referendum, the president convened a south-south dialogue with all the political parties in southern Sudan to find a common ground.

He also issued a presidential pardon to those who had rebelled against the government in southern Sudan because of the results of the April 2010 Sudan general elections. His executive pardon was well received. This is in anticipation that the referendum is an historic event and the people of southern Sudan must go to the referendum as one united block.

The NCP has not responded well to the quest for peaceful conduct of the referendum. The borders between the north and southern Sudan should have been demarcated two years ago, but until today this has not yet been agreed upon. The 1956 borders are known to both parties; that is why the 2008 census and the April 2010 Sudan general elections were conducted without borders. The Government of Southern Sudan believes that the referendum can also be conducted without the physical demarcation of the borders.

The registration of voters for the referendum should have been completed three months ago, but as we speak, the registration is only slated for November 14. The Government of Southern Sudan believes in negotiations on any outstanding issues during the post-referendum period, and we appeal to the international community, and Canada in particular, to help both parties during the negotiations.

In regard to the case of Abyei, the international tribunal ruled clearly in 2009 on where Abyei belonged. The NCP accepted the ruling but refused to implement the decision of the International Court. As we speak, the Abyei boundary has not been demarcated and its referendum commission has not been formed. The international community, and Canada in particular, must put political pressure on both the NCP and the SPLM so that the Abyei referendum takes place at the same time as the referendum in southern Sudan. The Government of Southern Sudan, and indeed the international community, does not want Abyei to become a hot spot in years to come.

How will the referendum in southern Sudan affect the popular consultations in the Nuba Mountains, Southern Blue Nile, and Darfur?

Ladies and gentlemen, the Government of Southern Sudan and the SPLM party have said in several public meetings that the popular consultations for the two areas are very important for the people in those areas to decide if the current arrangement is working for them. This is going to be carried out by the elected members of the state legislative assemblies within the respective state parliaments. These popular consultations are to empower them and give them more voice in the decision-making process in their states.

• (1605)

The issue of Darfur is completely different from that of southern Sudan and Abyei, although there are similarities in how the war is being conducted. The people of southern Sudan are sympathetic to the people of Darfur.

His Excellency Salva Kiir Mayardit, President of the Government of Southern Sudan and chairman of the SPLM party, has stated clearly his desire to help in the mediation process, but the offer was rejected by the NCP party.

We hope that the Government of Sudan will use the CPA model in southern Sudan to solve the issue of Darfur.

The conflict in Darfur is all about an equal development and equal political representation in the decision-making process in the centre and an equal share of national resources and wealth. The Government of Southern Sudan will continue to search for peace in Darfur, even if the people of southern Sudan decide to have their own country during the referendum. It is in the best interests of the

Government of Southern Sudan to have a viable neighbour in the north.

Lately Sudan has received political attention from many countries, as demonstrated at the high-level meeting on Sudan that took place in New York at UN headquarters, organized by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. During the meeting the international community, and Canada in particular, stated clearly that the referendum is a very important part of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, and any delay in the conduct of the referendum will not be acceptable.

What else can Canada and the international community do to ensure that the referendum is credible? Ladies and gentlemen, we believe Canada and the international community must send election monitors to both northern and southern Sudan to help in the smooth running of the referendum process. We know that Canada is chairing the referendum basket fund for other countries to contribute money to support the conduct of the referendum. We also know that Canada has prepared a library of documents to support the post-referendum negotiation. Also, CIDA is taking a leading role in the humanitarian development initiative in southern Sudan and the Abyei area.

However, we'd love to see Canada move beyond humanitarian assistance to take a leading role as a middle power and an honest broker in pressuring both parties to negotiate in good faith for the sake of peace in the region. If the referendum is delayed or the result is disputed, the consequence will be great, not only for the people of southern Sudan but for the whole region, given the fact that the former Ugandan rebels—the Lord's Resistance Army, or LRA—is still a menace in some parts of southern Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, central Africa, and now Darfur.

The President of Sudan, General Omar Hassan al-Bashir, is on the record as saying he will be the first to recognize the wishes of the people of southern Sudan should they vote for independence from the north. The people of southern Sudan and the international community will hold him accountable should violence erupt because of non-recognition of the result of the referendum. The President of the Government of Southern Sudan and the people of southern Sudan have stated clearly in many public rallies that they will accept the result of the referendum should the people of southern Sudan choose unity over separation. We expect the same from the north as well, although there are voices in the north that say otherwise.

There are many cynics who say that Sudan is a married couple in an angry divorce. We are frightened of the violent fights, but we see Sudan as a mother giving birth to twins. When the labour pains are over, the two children can grow up as friends.

• (1610)

Thank you for inviting me to this important hearing.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Malok, and thank you also for your flexibility in working with us.

We're going to continue with the questions, and I'm going to turn it over to my friend Monsieur Dorion.

You have seven minutes, sir.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean Dorion (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Mr. Malok, Mr. Davis and Mr. Lewis for being here.

Mr. Malok, you talked about Darfur and even about the sympathy the people of Southern Soudan had for the Darfur people.

Are there any projects for a potential union of these territories? If not, why? What do Darfur and Southern Soudan have in common? Why are they distinct entities? They fight separate wars and they are not allowed the same political status by the international community

• (1615)

[English]

Mr. Joseph Malok: Thank you so much for your questions.

There are similarities between Darfur and southern Sudan in the way the war has been conducted. The demands of the people of Darfur are different from those of the people of southern Sudan, but they share one thing—the unequal development and unequal power sharing within the central government. This is what they share in common.

As you know, the war in southern Sudan started a long time ago, in 1955. The demand of the people of southern Sudan was to have a secular state in Sudan whereby everyone would have access to power and wealth, to have a country that should not be ruled by religions. This is what the people of southern Sudan have been looking for.

Historically, people of southern Sudan have killed themselves alone: there were voices demanding a separation of the south, but the majority were still fighting for a united Sudan. We failed because the government in the centre was not helpful.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean Dorion: I will share my time with my colleague Ms. Deschamps.

Ms. Johanne Deschamps (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to come back to the women's issue. We know that, when countries are at war, women often are the most affected. They are victims of sexual abuse and violence and very often, these despicable acts are unpunished. Before being operational, our Committee had the privilege to have an informal meeting with Mrs Zaynab Elzawi. She really surprised us when she told us that the civil society — and you even spoke about the Soudan church — was not involved in the implementation of the peace accord. I would like to know why.

Also, women from the North and South have cooperated, in spite of their differences, to propose some solutions on the eve of next January referendum. But they have no support, no resources. I think the Canadian government should give them a stronger support.

Finally, I would like to ask another question. It is more a comment about what Mrs Elzawi told us. Talking about the referendum, she said that women will be the losers, once again. Why do they have to

be the ones who will be the most affected and the most victimized by this referendum?

Mr. John Lewis: Thank you for your question.

[English]

I'm going to respond in English.

I read Madam Elzawi's testimony. I know Zaynab reasonably well and some of the women's organizations that work in Sudan, and it's quite powerful to speak with them and hear what they say.

The issues confronting women in Sudan are enormous in both the north and the south. In the north, as you know, there are issues around the legal system, which I think Madam Elzawi spoke about a little bit.

I don't want to make too much of this, but in the south there are some traditional hurdles in the way of the participation of women. Women are often kind of put at a separate table, if you like, during the peace negotiations. The women will sit over here, and then, you know, the serious discussions go on over there.

It's been 10 years since the signing of UN Security Council Resolution 1325. October 31 is the 10-year anniversary. Part of the resolution was that each signatory would develop its own national action plan for making progress on issues of women's participation in peace-building.

Canada has just released its national action plan, which I encourage you all to read. It's quite good. It sets up some guidelines, some indicators, for all of us to begin to follow not just in terms of addressing gender-based violence, but equally importantly, in terms of empowering women and women's organizations to be included at all levels of peace negotiations.

Jim made an excellent recommendation, one that comes directly from the national action plan, which is that in any peacekeeping mission, or any mission abroad, even a humanitarian mission, the member states be encouraged to include women wherever possible. We mentioned the UN police. There's been some experimentation in other parts of Africa with them that have ceded some results.

There's a lot in the action plan that I think we could be doing a lot better. Part of what KAIROS has done over the last five or six years with our partners is some human rights training, specifically with members of the Government of Southern Sudan, on the rights of women. We want to continue that work. It's long-term work. There are some excellent women's organizations that demand our support. We're doing what we can in that regard.

I won't go into all the details of the action plan, but there are a lot of really excellent ideas in this action plan, which I believe was just launched a couple of weeks ago. You can find it on the Foreign Affairs website; you all know this. There are some excellent ideas in there. They are not just about ensuring that issues of gender-based violence are addressed but are about how to empower women to be involved in addressing those issues.

• (1620)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We're going to move back over to this side of the table.

We'll go to Mr. Obhrai.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

As you know, I'm the parliamentary secretary, so I'm well aware of the actions the government has taken. I've met Mr. Malok on many occasions.

I just wanted to give you a small update on the further actions you talked about in reference to the UN high-level meeting that took place that was attended by Minister Cannon himself to address that issue. Many of the concerns you're addressing involve those concerns, so I will carry on and let my other colleagues ask the questions.

I had just gone to Nigeria for the independence day celebrations, and I met the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Africa, Mr. Carson. I had a breakfast meeting with him.

That, by the way, resulted in my missing, by 15 minutes, a car bomb that had been placed in the car. Otherwise, there would have been a byelection in Calgary East, too. It missed me by 15 minutes just because I had breakfast with Mr. Carson, which was a good thing, anyways....

That was true, because then I missed the bus with the president, and I had to go myself over the road where there were two car bombs.

The issue was a very strong concern with the Government of Sudan on fulfilling many of the requirements that you've all pointed out about the referendum coming on time. As you know, Mr. Bashir cannot attend due to ICC warrants, so Mr. Taha, the vice-president, is the person who tends to do all that.

The concern that has come out of this, as you rightly pointed out, is to tell the Government of Sudan that they must hold their referendum and to continue. To that effect, all the ministers who were attending have written a very strong letter, which I delivered to the minister, to Mr. Taha, expressing the international community's very serious concerns in reference to any delay in the referendum and to move ahead. This was in no uncertain terms made very clear to the Government of Sudan, that they have a responsibility to meet their portion of CPA.

We will continue monitoring that. The Government of Canada will continue to remain engaged. We have called in people from both north and south Sudan to train as referendum experts. As you all know, the referendum has to be very transparent, otherwise the north will use it as an excuse to say it won't meet the referendum agreement.

I just wanted to let you know that all these concerns will continue to be addressed. It's a main concern of the government and the whole international community.

With that, I'll stop and let my colleagues go ahead, because I think they have some challenging questions.

•(1625)

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Lunney. You have about four or five minutes.

Mr. James Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni, CPC): Thank you very much.

I appreciate your being here.

It is a challenging situation in Sudan. I'm trying to get my head around the challenges of the referendum, and I'm wondering if one of you could help me. What is the population of southern Sudan and of Sudan in general?

Perhaps Mr. Malok could help me with that.

Mr. Joseph Malok: The census of 2008 shrank the population of southern Sudan to 8.2 million, which was rejected by the SPLM and the Government of Southern Sudan. Nobody agreed with that number.

Mr. James Lunney: What's the population of the whole country of Sudan as it currently exists, or at least technically exists? What's the population of the north?

Mr. Joseph Malok: According to the UN head count, southern Sudan is around 16 million.

Mr. James Lunney: What about the north?

Mr. Joseph Malok: The north is really unpredictable. You never know what the real number is, but they're saying around 21 million or 22 million.

Mr. James Lunney: So you're trying to register people, and the registration process is under way now. Can you give me an idea of how many people have been registered as voters in the south at the present time?

Mr. Joseph Malok: The registration has not started yet. It will start November 14.

Mr. James Lunney: I think there are some real logistical challenges in getting so many people registered and educated and so on.

I wanted to ask about the IDPs, because we have a lot of people there. I understand we were expecting quite a movement of people who had been displaced coming back to southern Sudan to participate in registration and the vote. Do we have any idea how that is happening, or isn't happening, or where we're at with that?

Mr. Joseph Malok: Recently the Government of Southern Sudan, through the Minister of Humanitarian Affairs, made a call to the international community to help in transporting IDPs in Khartoum back to southern Sudan. That is under way. That just started today, to move them to southern Sudan using buses, trains, and ships to go to areas like Upper Nile and Equatoria.

Mr. James Lunney: I have questions on establishing citizenship, because you have also some nomadic people who aren't quite sure where they belong.

I heard a remark earlier, Mr. Malok, that the Government of Sudan's position is that the referendum could go ahead even if the borders were not finally determined. How are you dealing with the situation of citizenship in order to have some idea...? Is the number that I have correct? Do you need 50% plus one of the registered voters in order to have a successful referendum? Do I understand that correctly?

• (1630)

Mr. Joseph Malok: We need a 60% turnout of voters registered. Then, if 50% plus one do vote for one of the options, that result will be recognized.

Mr. James Lunney: So you need 60% participation, and 50% plus one of those, to be considered successful.

Mr. Joseph Malok: Yes.

Mr. James Lunney: Wow.

In terms of the security situation, is there a role for the UNMIS forces or UNAMID, or the UN forces that are there in trying to maintain some...? Have our UN forces been asked to participate in security, particularly in border areas?

Mr. Joseph Malok: There is a concern because the NCP is building up the military on the borders between the north and the south, especially in the area that has the oil and other interests that borders between the south and the north. Last month, during the visit of the Security Council to Juba, the President of the Government of Southern Sudan made an appeal officially to the Security Council to deploy forces between the borders of the north and the south.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: But the Government of Sudan said no to that.

Mr. Joseph Malok: Of course, yes, they always say no. They always say no for anything.

The Chair: Okay, we're going to end it there.

We're going to move back over to Mr. Dewar to finish this round and then we'll get started with another round.

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Thank you, Chair, and thank you to our guests.

I want to start off with just a question on Abyei, and the talks in Addis. As people will know, former President Mbeki is the one who is overseeing that, and as recently as yesterday the talks were suspended.

I'm concerned because you have on the one hand the north saying, we'll abide by the referendum calendar, but I think most would argue that with Abyei still sitting there unresolved and with these talks as recently as yesterday suspended, that there clearly needs to be more pressure put on to get those talks going.

I'd ask Mr. Malok and maybe others if you see that as a role for Canada to play, to support Mr. Mbeki and others to get the two parties to get going on these talks. My information as of yesterday is that they were supposed to start tomorrow. They're suspended indefinitely. Is that what you're hearing?

Secondly, is there a role for Canada to play to get the parties back together?

Mr. Joseph Malok: Of course, Canada has so much to offer in this situation because of the role of Canada—respect and leadership—between the north and the south. Canada has no personal ambitions to pursue either in the north or in the south. All they want is to make sure peace is maintained in Sudan as a country. Also, they can actually put more pressure on both parties, NCP and SPLM, to negotiate the outstanding issues faithfully.

Canada also, at one point, went through a referendum in Quebec. They can also share that experience with the people of Sudan to see how this thing can work.

Mr. Paul Dewar: I would appreciate that as something that we could look at as perhaps a recommendation, because what we're hoping to do is to recommend to government from this committee some things that would be supportive.

I guess Mr. Obhrai might make a diary entry tonight because I am about to laud him and his government for the work they did on the action plan for Resolution 1325. There was a motion by the NDP to study this—more than two years or something, and last year—and lo and behold I saw the action plan, and I think it's great.

So the opportunity is upon us, and I think our guests mentioned that there is an opportunity for Canada to actually put the action plan into place. I too would encourage those who are on this committee that it's a must-read.

I would like to know, I guess from Mr. Lewis or Mr. Davis, is there a list of women's groups that can be specifically identified and involved if the government were to take Resolution 1325 as a lens to actually support what's happening on the ground in Sudan? If you could reference that now or perhaps provide that to the committee, I think it would be enormously helpful.

Do you have some examples of some of the groups you work with that could actually take what the government's put forward as an action plan for Resolution 1325 and realize it on the ground?

• (1635)

Mr. John Lewis: I can definitely send along the names of the organizations we're working with. It's part of our initiative on Women of Courage to canvass the needs of women's organizations operating inside zones of conflict, so Sudan and Congo are two of our areas of concern. We're working with three or four different women's organizations inside Sudan. I can certainly send along the names of those organizations. I don't have them on the tip of my tongue.

There is also a kind of women's department of the national council of churches in Sudan, the Sudan Council of Churches, which is the direct KAIROS partner that we work very closely with.

Mr. Paul Dewar: That would be helpful if you could pass them on to the committee, so that it can be realized in our recommendations.

We've seen a lot of activity in terms of world leaders going to Sudan. We had the president of Russia. We've had Senator John Kerry recently visit. Would it not be helpful if we had some high-profile Canadian representatives, be it the minister or ideally even the Prime Minister, go to the region to support the referendum, support the process, and to put our muscle behind what really is crucial? I think Canadians and most people get it now that if the referendum doesn't go well, we will see a humanitarian disaster in the region akin to the nineties and perhaps worse, in the region, in terms of the spillover effect.

I'm just wondering if there is something else that Canada should be doing in terms of making its presence known as well as its concern known. Should it include a high-profile visit by our Minister of Foreign Affairs or someone else?

Mr. Joseph Malok: Thank you for that suggestion. I think in 2008 the former foreign affairs minister, Mr. Bernier, and the Honourable Deepak visited Sudan, including Juba, and that visit had a very positive impact.

I believe, at this particular time, if Canada can actually visit Sudan again at a high level of representation, that would be something that the people of Sudan could work around.

Mr. Paul Dewar: One of the things that's been mentioned recently upon the visits of the Russian president and others—I haven't heard it in any of the comments, and I'd like your take on it—is the issue of debt forgiveness and when that should happen.

First of all, is that something that's on your radar, to help sustain peace and stability? And if debt forgiveness is a critical issue, when should it be done?

Mr. Joseph Malok: The issue of debt, actually, is a very critical one. Sudan right now is sitting at \$36 billion U.S. Most of the debt was actually taken by the national government in Khartoum, and they want to divide this debt with the south.

The people of southern Sudan believe this money was taken to buy very sophisticated weapons to kill the people of southern Sudan. People wonder, "How can I pay for the things that were actually used to kill my people?" So it is not acceptable.

But for the sake of peace, people will find grounds to negotiate and see how they can settle the whole thing. Anything can be done if people have a political will to negotiate the issue of debt. We'll have to see what kind of projects were actually implemented in Sudan using this money.

Mr. Paul Dewar: Finally, while we're speaking about negotiations, do you have any update on the Doha negotiations, which are again around Darfur? Do you have any update or concerns around that?

• (1640)

Mr. Joseph Malok: I cannot comment on that at all.

Mr. Paul Dewar: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We'll move to the second round of questioning, which will be five minutes.

I'm going to start with Mr. Van Kesteren.

Mr. Dave Van Kesteren (Chatham-Kent—Essex, CPC): Thank you for coming.

I was just Googling a little bit to give myself a little bit more of a history lesson. There's a period I'm unfamiliar with, and that is....

I understand that your independence was in 1956, I believe it was—prior to that as well, too. But in the 1980s, you were involved with a civil war. Was that more or less maybe instigated by Ethiopia? Or was...?

I'm thinking back in terms of the 1980s, when the Horn of Africa was under Soviet influence. Was there a movement to export the revolution into Sudan at that time?

Am I correct in my thinking there?

Mr. Joseph Malok: Unfortunately, there is no connection between what was happening in the international arena in regard to the problem of southern Sudan. As you can recall, the problem of war in southern Sudan started in 1947. In 1955, that was the first guerrilla movement for the people of southern Sudan, actually, to confront the army in the north.

So there is totally no connection and there was no instigation from Ethiopia. Instead, Ethiopia was one of the first countries that accepted the refugees from southern Sudan.

Mr. Dave Van Kesteren: So at that point, then, in terms of the Soviets, you didn't have any influence from the Soviets into Sudan.

Mr. Joseph Malok: No, not at all.

Mr. Dave Van Kesteren: So it's largely been a power struggle between the north and the south. Am I accurate when I say that?

Mr. Joseph Malok: Well, actually, it's not been a power struggle, because southern Sudan has never had a chance to say a word in the whole country since independence. The war has been about equal development and an equal share in the decision-making in the country; people of southern Sudan did not have any intention to fight for any power in Sudan.

Mr. Dave Van Kesteren: Okay.

In Darfur, is it largely Arabic or is it more tribal?

Mr. Joseph Malok: In terms of ethnicity in Darfur, 90% are Africans. Religious-wise, they are 100% or 99% Muslim.

Mr. Dave Van Kesteren: Then my last question would be about the south. Again, I'm just reading this. Am I reading correctly that about 5% of the south is Christian?

Mr. Joseph Malok: In the south or in the north?

Mr. Dave Van Kesteren: In the south.

Mr. Joseph Malok: In the south, the majority are Christian, and the second group is animist. For Muslims, I don't have the exact numbers because we can't tell who believes in certain religions, but all of us, we respect. They don't have that high a percentage.

Mr. Dave Van Kesteren: The reason I'm asking about it is that there's been a power vacuum, I think. Once the United States just abandoned much, much of Africa, those parts of Africa.... Is the vacuum being filled by China? Is China largely influential in the oil exploration at this point?

I heard reports that they're buying land in Sudan, too. Is that happening, and where? Is it in the south or the north, or both?

Mr. Joseph Malok: Well, I have no idea of the process of selling land in southern Sudan. I'm not sure of what is going on in the north. But the Chinese are involved in business with the north... [*Inaudible—Editor*]...than the south.

Mr. Dave Van Kesteren: The south as well, too.

Mr. Joseph Malok: Not from the point where we stand right now because there is nothing that actually links China and southern Sudan directly. There are no negotiations. If southern Sudan becomes a different state, the Chinese are trying to know what the future of their business in Sudan will be.

• (1645)

Mr. Dave Van Kesteren: Finally, are the Americans still somewhat involved in the south, or have they pretty much pulled out?

Mr. Joseph Malok: Could you repeat that question, please?

Mr. Dave Van Kesteren: Do the Americans still have political influence in the south, or have they pretty much pulled out?

Mr. Joseph Malok: Well, the Americans are trying to help the process of peace in southern Sudan, and in Sudan in general. They are not helping one part.

An hon. member: Thank you—

The Chair: Nice try. You're out of time. We'll catch you in the next round, though. You don't share time you don't have.

We'll move over to Mr. Pearson, for five minutes.

Mr. Glen Pearson (London North Centre, Lib.): Thank you, Chair.

I have a couple of questions for KAIROS, if you don't mind. One is about the north and the other is about the south.

Around the south, with the CPA, there were various parts of the CPA that were meant to provide assistance from the various supporting nations in various regions in which there was tension, the border regions and others. A lot of the CPA money didn't go there, and as a result the religious community—the churches throughout south Sudan—had to absorb a lot of the challenges that came with the migration of people coming out of different regions. I know you're in touch with the Sudan Council of Churches and others, but are we in danger of doing that again? As everybody has now become fixated with Sudan in the last little while and people are going to start giving money to it, it seems to me that in the regions I've been to in south Sudan, the religious communities were overrun by the sheer mass of humanity that was there, and their own particular ability to be able to respond—because they were very effective at what they did—was actually not really included as part of the overall thing.

So I'd like to ask both of you, in the south's point of view, are we in danger of seeing all this massive movement of humanity coming again? As an international community we concentrate more on Juba or some of the other places, and not on the particular areas where these people are coming. Is there some way in which we can help these religious communities that are going to absorb a lot of the pain that's happening? That's my first question.

With my second question—and I'll let you answer them both together—I appreciate Ms. Deschamps' question because it's right. These women's groups between north and south Sudan once had a very good and productive relationship. And now we are hearing that the southern women are kind of moving away somewhat as they pursue their own agenda with the referendum, leaving the northern women somewhat isolated.

How could we help? How could CIDA help? Are there ways in which we could help to have conferences, for instance, whether in Nairobi or Khartoum or Nyala or wherever, in which we can find practical means whereby these women can still come together?

I am worried about that. I think we've been talking about the fact that they're under challenge. I'm looking for practical ways in which we could help.

Mr. James Davis: I'll try to answer the first question.

The Church—capital C—while it's engaged and everything, can't be overrun with everything. It just doesn't have the capacity to do that. I suppose during the seventies and eighties and maybe into the nineties, there was the women's desk, there was the income-generating desk, there was this desk and there was that desk. A lot of that just sort of took the focus of the church away from its theological reflection and pastoral responsibilities and prophetic role. So we certainly are mindful of that.

You may remember that during the civil war the New Sudan Council of Churches, working in the SPLMA areas, was operating out of Nairobi. And the Sudan Council of Churches was working out of Khartoum. That's been a long process of bringing these groups together now and sorting out management issues inside and so forth. So we certainly don't want to burden the churches as such with the massive influx of people—IDPs coming from north to south and so forth.

But I think the ecumenical community is set up to have.... Out of Geneva we have the Action by Churches Together, which engages the church partners on the ground but doesn't overwhelm them, or intends to not overwhelm them. The same with Caritas, and they bring in some expertise.

So I think probably the humanitarian side of CIDA would do well to look at how they can help but not overwhelm the Church. But the Church will be there to suffer with the people, whatever happens, and it's basically to give a voice for voiceless people, when their views are not heard otherwise by governments and so forth. That's why they're there, so that's very important.

I don't know if that answers the question. We don't want to overwhelm the Church with what can happen without it, but it needs to be listened to.

• (1650)

Mr. John Lewis: In terms of the second question, I think there's a lot that can be done in helping foster the exchange between women's groups in the south and the north. For example, just in August KAIROS brought a whole bunch of women's organizations together in Colombia to do an exchange on how women in Colombia and in other parts of the world are addressing the conflict there. Part of what came out of that process was simply a strengthened women's movement. There were some concrete things about what people can do, but the linkages between the organizations that came with us to Colombia were strengthened and have resulted in some great initiatives already.

I think that in particular the support of women's issues as between north and south and within each of those regions is something that Canada could champion. We have had a history of championing women's issues in the past in zones of conflict, and there's definitely a role that CIDA could play to help the linkages. You're quite right, I think.

Mr. Glen Pearson: Do you have some examples of what CIDA could do?

Mr. John Lewis: Absolutely. There's fostering some exchange, with women's groups from the north travelling to the south and vice versa, but also accompanied by international actors to help ease some of the tension that is growing. As I said in my presentation, there's a real fear among women's groups in the north that they will be abandoned by not simply the international community but also their partners in the south; that there will be secession, and then southern Sudan will go off on its own.

The Chair: We'll come back as we do one final....

Ms. Brown, did you want a turn? Then I'll do see whether there are any additional questions that we could follow up with to finish off.

Ms. Brown.

Ms. Lois Brown (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you very much, gentlemen, for being here.

I have two questions that I'd like to talk on.

First of all, Mr. Lewis, I appreciate your saying that Canada can play a large part in women's issues. That is an area we've identified, first of all in the child and maternal health initiative out of the Muskoka initiative; I think we're going to see some really wonderful things happen with that. I've travelled in Africa, I've travelled in Bangladesh, and I know there's much to be done. I believe that the expertise we have in Canada, both in health care initiatives and in micronutrients, is going to both save lives and help to nurture those lives. I'm really pleased to see that.

My two questions are these, though. First of all, the instability in Sudan must be having some effects in the countries around it; it must be spilling over. What is the view from the neighbouring countries, and how are they responding to the instability they're seeing in Sudan?

And this is a question, unrelated to that question, around micro-finance. I've seen the success of micro-finance in Bangladesh and in Zambia and wonder whether or not the churches are specifically involved in it. If so, are there any success stories that you can tell us about?

Mr. Joseph Malok: Thank you for bringing up the issue of women in Sudan. The issue of women in Sudan is really a major concern.

You mentioned also the issue of instability. Many of the women migrated during the wartime to neighbouring countries. That has a lot of impact on the role women have to perform. Many children were raised by the women while the men were not around. The international community and the bigger powers, such as Canada and

the United States, have helped in one way or another by providing some of the developmental assistance or microeconomic projects to women.

In southern Sudan after the war, after the CPA, the Government of Southern Sudan and the SPLM significantly recognized the role of women and the importance of women's playing an important role within society. The SPLM has raised the representation of women within the government and other activities by 25%. This year, the President of the Government of Southern Sudan increased it to 30%. So right now, as we speak, we have seven women ministers in the Government of Southern Sudan in Juba, which has never happened; even in Canada I don't see that big a number of women.

Other members have spoken about the women in the north. There is really a challenge for them, and we sympathize with the women in the north. This is something that requires the international community to come in and help.

• (1655)

Mr. James Davis: To respond to the question about the success of income-generating micro-finance work in the churches, that's not an area we work in, but I'm sure some of our international partners—maybe in Europe or the U.S. or elsewhere—who support the Sudan Council of Churches do that. Our area is more around civic education, peace-building, essentially supporting women's empowerment and self-advocacy.

But I want to say something concerning the neighbouring countries. Joseph alluded to the Lord's Resistance Army. It's now a regional phenomenon in Sudan, even up towards southern Darfur, but also in northeast Congo, certainly still in northern Uganda. Increasingly, without being conspiratorial as such, people believe that this is a group that will be an incredible foil by the National Congress Party to wreak havoc in the south.

The Sudan Council of Churches is saying that this can't be solved militarily. But the populations do need to be protected, and so we need to get back to the Juba peace process, which was initiated with the help of the churches, to see whether there's some way to resolve this. This is a group that does not have a political platform or wing. It is self-serving, and the benefactor, one has to believe, may in fact be the National Congress Party. But I'm willing to be disabused of that notion by Joseph.

Ms. Lois Brown: If the churches are not involved in micro-finance, are they involved in skills development for the women? Are they giving them some form of education that they are then able to parlay into a trade or a skill that could go into the marketplace afterwards?

Mr. James Davis: I'm not saying the churches are not supporting that; it's not done through KAIROS. We probably have done this in the past, but that's not the focus right now. There are so many needs, and these are very great. So it's not an area we have focused on, but we would certainly support it and encourage other partners of the Sudan Council of Churches to assist with it.

We have a core group of donors from Europe and North America who meet regularly on all the programming of Sudan, but we have chosen to channel our funds into the peace-building and justice work of the council.

•(1700)

The Chair: Thank you.

I think Dr. Patry had a quick question, and Mr. Dewar had a quick question. Then we'll wrap it up.

Mr. Bernard Patry: *Merci.*

If the referendum passes at, say, 60% or 50% plus one or something like that, and the north accepts it, we've been told that the problem will no longer be north-south but south-south, for many reasons. The first reason is the increased documentation of the population coming from the north and also from the boundary countries such as Ethiopia. There is also the question of how you form a government. Many tribes were not included in the CPA; politically, how do you solve that problem? Is there any danger of a rebellion or even a civil war in the south, just in the south side?

Mr. Joseph Malok: Thank you so much for that question. I think the Government of Southern Sudan in the person of the President of the Government of Southern Sudan has a vision of how to embrace all the southern Sudanese. The question of disclusion of some of the tribes in southern Sudan is not applicable at this particular time. Everybody has a share in whatever small thing we have in southern Sudan, and as I mentioned recently, the Government of Southern Sudan convened the south-south dialogue meeting for bringing all the political parties together and pardoning military groups that actually rebelled against the government. That pardoning and the south-south dialogue were well received and were accepted. Now they have formed a committee with all the political parties for after the referendum, when they will have another election. Then they will form an interim government, so there is no question; southern Sudan has the grounds for them to focus on the referendum.

The Chair: Thank you.

Now we'll have Mr. Dewar and then Madame Deschamps, and we'll wrap it up with that.

Mr. Paul Dewar: Thank you, Chair. I will be quick.

I appreciate that our witnesses have provided this committee with very specific recommendations, and Mr. Malok, I think you've been extremely helpful.

I am interested in issues around not just the importance of having a fair and timely referendum, but also around what happens afterward. As we know, there is a lot of concern over the capacity of the south. I am concerned that if things go according to schedule and we have a referendum result, as most people expect, for separation, there is a potential for a collapse, just because of the number of people who have moved to regions in the south or the capital and the capability to sustain the new country if that happens. I'm deeply concerned. We've seen great violence after partitions, and I'm concerned that the north will then have a premise to say, "See, it wouldn't work. It can't work. They can't govern themselves." So I would appreciate recommendations you have for Canada to help with governance issues post-referendum.

My message to our friends from KAIROS is similar. You've mentioned, and I've already asked for, specific groups that could help not only with supporting the Resolution 1325 approach, but also where we can invest. The referendum is one thing, but the post-

referendum situation is another, so I would like to hear any suggestions you have for that.

Finally, there is the question of how we protect minorities in the north. I still don't have my head around that issue, and I would appreciate any recommendations you have for protecting minorities in the north. Otherwise I think they're given one option, which is to leave, and I don't think that's satisfactory for anyone.

Thank you.

Mr. Joseph Malok: Thank you.

With regard to part of the recommendation, you know that the war in southern Sudan has left nothing. Right now, the international community, including Canada, is asking the Government of Southern Sudan to provide good governance. It is impossible to have a good governance without capacity building. So I would love to see Canada play a role in capacity building to educate southern Sudan on how to build their capacity. Then we could talk about good governance, because good governance comes after capacity building. We want to see Canada helping Sudan in general, and southern Sudan in particular, through development, so we want Canada to play a role in this.

Regarding the protection of minorities in the north, I think there are a lot of things that can be done if Canada can help Sudan to transform itself into a democratic country. Doing that would have an impact on its citizens, not only the minorities. There are other aspects. For instance, cultures are not all the same in Sudan. There are many tribes and many religions in Sudan.

The last thing we want to focus on is that Canada should send a high-level delegation so they can acquaint themselves with what is taking place on the ground. That would really be appreciated. We would like either the Minister of Foreign Affairs or the Prime Minister himself to go to Sudan, because many people have gone to Sudan and southern Sudan and they have come back without anything happening to them. So we'd like to see that. If Canada can do this too, it will be really appreciated.

•(1705)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Paul Dewar: You can just send it to our committee.

The Chair: That would be perfect, and we'll distribute it.

We'll just finish up with Ms. Deschamps.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Johanne Deschamps: We did not get much time, or you were not given enough speaking time. Ten minutes, it goes fast. But then you said that needs were huge. You have a lot of expertise in various countries relating to human rights. I would like you to have the last word.

What are your priorities? What could be done immediately, within the action plan brought forward by the government ten years after the UN Security Council Resolution 1325? Is it possible to do practical things? Does this action plan include financing, without being detrimental to what is being done on site by NGOs? Would we be able to do concrete things, in a short time, with the necessary financing to support immediate actions?

[English]

Mr. James Davis: Without explaining the ecumenical architecture of Africa, I would just say that one of our partners has conducted a workshop in Juba with women from around Africa on UN Security Council Resolution 1325. So there will likely be some follow-up work around that to educate women leaders, and we want to involve those in northern Sudan as well.

Illustrative of the many needs around Sudan, the Sudan Council of Churches has asked us to support educating church youth to be able to go to university in the south. They know only Arabic and not English, and they are the people who feel vulnerable and left out, and who might even be betrayed by the CPA because their aspirations will not be met if they're in the southern part of the north.

There are lots of these little gaps and things to fill in, but I'll leave it there.

Mr. John Lewis: I would simply add—I think you heard this from Ms. Elswawi, and we've also heard this in relation to the situation in the Congo as well—that a lot of money has been given through

international agencies—for example, UNIFEM, or the Multi-Donor Trust Fund. It's not always easy for grassroots organizations like the women's organizations with whom you've met, or the Council of Churches, to access those funds. So we encourage CIDA and other donors to try to find ways to give money more directly to more directly support civil society organizations that are extremely accountable with their funds, and, frankly, more effective.

• (1710)

The Chair: Okay. Thank you very much.

I want to thank our witnesses for being here today.

Mr. Malok, thank you very much once again for adjusting your schedule.

Mr. Davis and Mr. Lewis, we do appreciate that.

We will dismiss now. Thank you very much.

The meeting is adjourned.

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