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**EVIDENCE**

**Monday, November 19, 2018**

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**Chair**

**Mr. Michael Levitt**



# Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development

Monday, November 19, 2018

• (1535)

[English]

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Levitt (York Centre, Lib.)):** Good afternoon, everyone. We're going to call this meeting to order.

We are continuing our study today on the situation in Somalia, South Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We will have two sets of speakers. We have our first guest with us—we're still waiting for one more witness—and I am happy to welcome Mr. Queyranne, who is the humanitarian manager from Oxfam Canada.

If we can get you to provide eight to 10 minutes of testimony, sir, we will then go to questions. If Ms. A.A.A. Juac comes in the meantime, we'll run her testimony after yours.

With that, please feel free to begin.

**Mr. Gregory Queyranne (Humanitarian Manager, Oxfam Canada):** Wonderful. Thank you.

Dear committee members, thank you very much for the invitation to speak on the situation in Somalia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and South Sudan.

Oxfam works in over 90 countries to support long-term development and provide humanitarian assistance in times of crisis. Our insights and recommendations are informed by our partners working on the ground, as well as my own personal experience, having worked in all three countries and having lived in two.

I will begin with an overview of the context and key issues for each country before highlighting certain crosscutting themes and recommendations.

The situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has become extremely alarming due to a confluence of factors. Conflict has cost the lives of over six million people, more than any other conflict since World War II. In addition to the 4.5 million people currently internally displaced, Congo is hosting over half a million refugees who are fleeing neighbouring crises.

The humanitarian situation is nothing short of catastrophic. Thirteen million people are in need of assistance, including six million people in need of food aid and 2.2 million children suffering from severe, acute malnutrition. In August of this year, a new Ebola epidemic was declared in North Kivu, Beni territory specifically. This is the first time we've seen such an outbreak in an active conflict zone.

Last week, we saw the murder of seven UN peacekeepers in the Ebola-affected area. Conflict is putting the Ebola response at risk, which could lead to the epidemic spreading to neighbouring countries, notably Uganda. Given their traditional role as caretakers of the sick and the shocking level of conflict-related sexual violence that they face, women are disproportionately affected by the Ebola epidemic. Sixty per cent of probable or confirmed cases are women and girls.

However, the impact on women doesn't stop there. As a result of the Ebola outbreak, the Congo's weak health systems are further strained and front-line responders are overwhelmed, leaving many women, particularly survivors of sexual violence, without access to crucial services such as maternal, sexual and reproductive health care.

While Canada's contribution to the Ebola response is most welcome, it will be crucial to ensure additional and sustained commitment from donors like Canada, as the response continues to be critically underfunded. Funding should prioritize the needs of women and girls and should be additional funding, not affecting the already insufficient funding for other humanitarian crises.

Somalia continues to face severe humanitarian development, and peace and security challenges. Armed groups regularly launch violent attacks, notably in the east and the south. Earlier this month, there were the car bombings in Mogadishu, which killed 50 people.

Recurring climate events are causing incredible suffering. Drought has caused many subsistence farmers to become displaced and lose their livelihoods. Right now, 2.6 million people are displaced and 4.6 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance.

The loss of livelihoods has fundamentally altered the social fabric of Somalia and has had a disproportionate effect on women. A recent Oxfam study in the northwestern region of Somaliland found a sharp increase in the number of female-headed households due to family disintegration caused by drought. Men are migrating and are abandoning their families for economic reasons. Women who are left behind are vulnerable and overstretched, shouldering many responsibilities and insecurities on their own. Cultural barriers limit their ability to find alternative livelihood options, and women report constraints in accessing humanitarian services due to their restricted mobility.

This situation underscores the urgent need to combine humanitarian aid with initiatives that will help transform gender roles and relations at the local level.

For over five years, South Sudan has been locked in a year-on-year worsening humanitarian crisis due to prolonged conflict. Over seven million people are now in urgent need of humanitarian assistance. Conflict has made it very difficult for humanitarian aid to get to those in need. In 2017, for the third year in a row, South Sudan was the most dangerous country in the world for humanitarian aid workers, with regular incidences of shooting, detention of staff, looting of humanitarian property and denial of access at roadblocks.

Conflict has also driven the economy into the ground, which has led to widespread hunger. Early and forced marriage, which was already widespread before the crisis, has increased as a result. As poverty rises and livelihoods are disrupted, marriage has become a source of income and survival. Through bride price, which comes in the form of either cash or livestock, families can gain the means to feed themselves, and the marriage of their daughter means they have one less mouth to feed.

Early and forced marriage is the most common form of gender-based violence in South Sudan, with over half of South Sudanese girls married before the age of 18. Early marriage makes girls more likely to die in pregnancy and childbirth, deprives them of the right to education, puts them at higher risk of gender-based violence and has broad negative impacts on the health and education of their children. It perpetuates underdevelopment and fragility.

Hunger and gender inequality are clearly driving early, forced marriage in South Sudan. Once again, the situation points to the need for humanitarian interventions to address gender inequality, as well as humanitarian needs.

Based on what I've just described, I would like to make the following recommendations, which can make a difference for the women and girls in a humanitarian context such as Somalia, DR Congo and South Sudan.

First, we need to tackle gender inequality through humanitarian interventions. Research has found that extreme gender inequality is correlated with conflict and fragility. Investing in women's rights in these countries is a powerful tool to promote lasting peace and development. Canada, with its feminist agenda, including the feminist international assistance policy and the national action plan on women, peace and security, is already leading the way globally on this front. One area that can have profound impacts, but has so far received little attention, is gender-transformative humanitarian action, meaning humanitarian programming that aims to change power relations and aims to empower women.

We are calling on Canada to fund more core gender humanitarian work by establishing a dedicated pool of funding for gender in emergencies. This pool should comprise at least 15% of humanitarian assistance to bring Canada's humanitarian aid in line with the rest of the feminist international assistance policy. This would allow Canada to fund more humanitarian work that transforms power imbalances between men and women. This could, for example, include a cash for work program, where displaced women acting as caregivers for their families are included in cash programming, challenging social norms about what constitutes work.

Broader, system-level interventions are also needed, such as building the capacity of local women's rights organizations to

respond to humanitarian crises, or advocate for the inclusion of women's needs and priorities in humanitarian responses.

Second, we need to increase support for local women's rights organizations doing humanitarian work in these countries. Since they understand local culture, women's rights organizations are often best suited to do the type of gender-transformative humanitarian work I described. Canada and the world have recognized the importance of strengthening local actors in humanitarian responses, committing to directing 25% of global humanitarian assistance as directly as possible to such organizations by 2020. In meeting this commitment, Canada should endeavour to direct one-quarter of its funding for local actors to local women's rights organizations specifically.

Third, we need to ensure humanitarian access and the safety of humanitarian workers. A common trend in the DR Congo, Somalia and South Sudan is limited access for aid delivery, due to the security situations. The Canadian government and its diplomatic missions in these countries should continue to support humanitarian actors to overcome systemic access issues, support on-the-ground access negotiations and continue to promote the safety of humanitarian front-line workers.

I hope that my testimony has shown the urgency and enormity of the humanitarian needs. Humanitarian access must be a top priority.

Lastly, we need to better support refugee-hosting countries. To be comprehensive, this study should also consider how Canada can better support the countries dealing with the fallout of these three crises. Uganda, for instance, is currently home to over 1.3 million refugees from South Sudan, Congo, as well as Somalia. Speaking on the importance of scaling of support for local communities that are absorbing refugees in countries such as Uganda, it is clear that these countries are doing far more than their fair share.

Thank you very much.

● (1540)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Queyranne.

I'd now like to welcome our second witness, Ms. Juac, from the Aliab Rural Development Agency, which is based in Juba, South Sudan.

Ms. Juac, can you give us eight to 10 minutes of testimony and then we'll open it up to questions for both of you.

Please proceed.

**Ms. A.A.A. Juac (Executive Director, ARUDA South Sudan):** Thank you so much.

My apologies for arriving a little bit late.

**The Chair:** No problem.

**Ms. A.A.A. Juac:** My name is A.A.A. Juac. I'm the executive director for the ARUDA development agency.

I recognize the Canadian feminist policy that is being implemented now in South Sudan that focuses on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls to achieve real change, sustainable development and peace, particularly in sexual violence and reproductive health, education and the fight against early child marriage, which is enabling access to formal economic decision-making. Some of us are now decision-makers.

Since the onset of the civil war in South Sudan in December 2013, the parties to the conflict engaged in widespread, systematic and ethnically targeted attacks on civilians, including mass killings and looting, forced displacement, raping of women and girls, and other forms of sexual violence and forced marriages, including sexual slavery. Men and boys have also been the victims of the violence.

On the development side, the lack of delivery of essential services to the population experienced during the conflict has caused huge damage to humanitarian access and the access of civilians to all the services: access to education, access to health and access to food. The impact of this has been a huge famine. South Sudan had a famine last year, which still continues. We thank you for the Canadian support and for the aid that was given last year.

In the rural areas, countless villages have been destroyed. Thousands of children have been recruited into the ranks of child soldiers in the government forces and other various armed groups, which is a serious concern for us. The African Union commission of inquiry has documented these atrocities, and where possible, they identified the people responsible that caused this fight for us in 2014. There is a need for accountability. The African Union commission of inquiry found that international crimes of a widespread or systematic nature were committed, pursuant to or to further the state policy.

In March 2018, reports by the United Nations commission on human rights in South Sudan came to a similar conclusion. All the parties to the conflict were confirmed in having had a hand in these human rights violations. Last month, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights published a report pursuant to United Nations Security Council resolution 2406 (2018). It concluded that the atrocities that have been committed by all parties constituted violations and abuses of international human rights laws.

• (1545)

Among the organizations in South Sudan is Human Rights Watch, and from the time the conflict started, civil society has been really active in pushing for the issues. Therefore, the peace agreement was signed three months ago, and that includes the hybrid court of South Sudan, in article 5.3.2.1 in the recently signed peace agreement.

I think I can now take questions.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much to you both.

We will now go straight to questioning, and we will begin with MP O'Toole, please.

• (1550)

**Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and thank you very much to both witnesses for your testimony today.

Mr. Queyranne, you mentioned the conflict in the Congo and how the violence in some of the various groups is preventing some of the health assistance, with respect to the Ebola outbreak in particular, and you mentioned the death of the UN peacekeepers from Malawi and from Tanzania. Can you speak to how the conflict is impacting all aspects of humanitarian aid and assistance, and what provisions an organization like Oxfam makes when operating under such conditions?

**Mr. Gregory Queyranne:** If I understand correctly, you're asking generally what measures are made to access those in need in the conflict.

The conflict in Congo has become worse. It started in the mid-1990s. Various peace agreements have seen the shifting and the regional elements of the conflict. It was once occupied by a number of neighbouring countries that were for and against the Congolese government, and now we're seeing it has shifted significantly toward local armed actors.

When I was first in the Congo about 20 different armed groups were operating, and when I left earlier this year in April, we're now up to 140 different armed groups, with different levels of interests and ambitions, many of them murky at best.

The presence of armed groups throughout the east of the country, in addition to the southeast and, since 2016, the centre, has reduced humanitarian space, which is the technical term for being able to reach those in need.

The conflict has made it very difficult for humanitarian actors to deliver life-saving services, to move goods into the areas where people are affected, and it limits the presence that humanitarian actors can have. Even in my own experience, I've had to deal with different armed groups that are very violent, that have turned war into a business, that understand the humanitarian system and know that goods are often procured locally in order not to disrupt the local economy but instead to support it, and that have found ways to benefit from that. Negotiating with armed groups, not only for access but also for impartial humanitarian assistance, is critical.

Organizations like Oxfam have very robust security policies to make sure its staff is rarely in harm's way. We have different grades of essential and non-essential staff. When things become very difficult, we evacuate most of the staff but we maintain the most essential, meaning those engaged directly in life-saving assistance. We always have security managers who define the security context and the security rules. We have all the assets that require us to maintain communication such as satellite phones, radio systems, and we rely quite a bit on the coordination mechanisms that exist to ensure that we're always sharing security information with our colleagues through the OCHA system—the cluster system—making sure we're in good contact with organizations that have had much more experience in certain areas, going back to some of the local actors I spoke to who master the areas much better than others, who know the local languages and understand some of the pressure points.

**Hon. Erin O'Toole:** Ms. Juac, could I get your perspective on a similar thing in South Sudan? In your personal experience, do security aspects in a part of the country impact the provision of aid?

•(1555)

**Ms. A.A.A. Juac:** In the last three years we've lost hundreds of humanitarian aid workers because of security. Security difficulties made it difficult for the NGOs to deliver aid. Some of the humanitarian workers that deliver aid were kidnapped, some were killed, and this discourages the big organizations that deliver to rural and local areas.

In some areas there is no network and there are bad roads, and at the same time, the rebels are there—the armed groups. They can detain humanitarian workers to get money. Last year, 12 humanitarian workers were detained and the armed groups asked for money, and all the things being delivered were taken used, for example, medicine and food. It was food that could have lasted six or nine months for the beneficiaries. Security made the delivery of humanitarian aid really difficult.

They were using women to stand in the way and say they don't want this or that. They meet the organizations and convince them, and when they come in they are kidnapped or some of them are shot.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

We will now move to MP Saini, please.

**Mr. Raj Saini (Kitchener Centre, Lib.):** Thank you, both, for being here today.

I want to change the conversation to governance, because you've been talking about security. When we look at governance, if we pick the two countries that you mentioned—it could be South Sudan or the DRC—when we look at South Sudan, we see a country where you have 60 different ethnic groups. There's no unity within it. You have basically one commodity, which they're selling in the world. There's a tremendous amount of agricultural land that is arable. In fact, 70% of the country's land is arable yet only 4.5% is being cultivated. You have an army that has 230,000 troops and you have 600 generals in that army. You also have 10,000 kilometres of road and only 2% of the roads are paved in South Sudan.

I appreciate the humanitarian aid and I appreciate the security, but in terms of governance, if we don't solve the governance issue, if we don't solve the infrastructure issue—the basic nuts and bolts issue—how are we going to move forward and provide credible humanitarian aid? To me it seem like this is a vicious cycle, that no matter how much we try to do here, the capacity of the country is not capable enough. Should we not be focused on the infrastructure first to help in delivering aid?

**Ms. A.A.A. Juac:** Is it to me?

**Mr. Raj Saini:** It's to either one of you.

**Mr. Gregory Queyranne:** Sure, thank you very much.

Absolutely, the context of where the conflicts are is important to understand. The infrastructure, I'm very happy that you highlighted that. I've worked in South Sudan before in rural areas. There are no roads and very little other types of infrastructure. Economic infrastructure isn't there. You can tell that this is having a huge impact, whether or not there is conflict.

I would say that the point made of focusing on infrastructure or other development issues in order to permit humanitarian aid is a wise one and should be dealt with together. This is where we talk

about nexus issues, meeting the humanitarian-development nexus. We understand that in order to have a humanitarian impact, we have to have some of that critical infrastructure in place. If we're talking about doing a water and hygiene response in an emergency, we are saving lives and that is critical, but we're not dealing with the long-standing structural issues that are there that have a large impact on the ability to access those in need.

I would say that we shouldn't be looking at one over the other, but looking at both of them at the same time. Oftentimes this is the case. We do see that organizations like Oxfam have both humanitarian and development programming at the exact same time, sometimes in the same area, because we understand that band-aid solutions aren't enough and that we need to go a little bit deeper and support some of those structural issues. That can come in the form of building roads or delivering more on the water infrastructure systems in order to have more of a long-term impact.

•(1600)

**Ms. A.A.A. Juac:** I can add on.

As he has mentioned, in South Sudan there are generals and they're spending more money on other things. There is a lack of infrastructure and a lack of implementing policies and rules and regulations of the country. Though the country has been in a war, there were rules and regulations in place in order to help the donors who are investing in the country. If you look at the budget of South Sudan, the money that was put in for the last five or 10 years, it's a huge amount of money. If you look at the money that's spent...the quarter that is put for the roads and buildings and everything, even the hospitals, you find 0%. The lack of accountability, there is a need to address this.

**Mr. Raj Saini:** The second part of my question is on the influence of outside actors in place. Right now, you have two main actors who are involved in the affairs of South Sudan. You have the troika—the United States, the U.K. and Norway—and you have China. China's involvement is a little different because they don't have necessarily a political involvement, but they have more of an economic involvement, heavily in South Sudan.

When we look at the DRC, as you can appreciate, the DRC is the sixth-largest producer of copper in the world, and also half of the cobalt in the world comes from the DRC. You can appreciate how critical they are for phone batteries, electric vehicles and other industrial applications.

In this case you have a conflict. You have a conflict of one actor who is looking in terms of pure economics and you have probably the west, if you include the troika but you include other countries in the west also, who are looking at a more humanitarian and a more security or a more institution-building way.

How do you think that conflict is going to resolve going forward when you have one entity that is looking just at the economics and you have another entity that is looking at the humanitarian issue and both entities will not see eye to eye because in some cases the governance model of China is being imposed in certain countries, whereas the west has a more stringent view towards human rights and making sure that there's capacity building on the ground?

**Mr. Gregory Queyranne:** In the case of the Congo, both of those actors you described have a shared interest in both of the topics you described. The west does see the economic potential of the Congo as something that's very important. You hear the term "strategic minerals" once in a while, given the importance that these minerals hold for the global economy. You mentioned cobalt and copper. Those are very important minerals for industry and electronics. Those are not in the conflict-affected regions of the Congo. They tend to be in the southeast in the Katanga province, or ex-Katanga. Now I believe they are called Tanganyika, and a few other names. The provinces have been cut up. The conflict is mostly affecting mining areas, but they are non-industrial, artisanal mining areas. People with very low-skilled technology take this out of the ground and it reaches the global markets. There we do see the impact that has on the security and humanitarian situation.

The other actor that you described in the east also has some humanitarian focus. They are contributing troops. They have troops that are part of MONUSCO, the UN peacekeeping force there. I would say that they do not have the same vision for the country and what that country means to them, but they're both invested in both topics.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

Now we're going to go to MP Duncan, please.

**Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Thank you to both of you for your work. Having worked overseas myself, I think we often give thanks to our troops, as we should, but I don't think there's enough credit given to aid workers, particularly from civil society, so thank you.

It's interesting, Mr. Queyranne, that you raised the issue of security, as has Ms. Juac. Just recently there was a feature article in The Globe and Mail raising exactly that, with aid agencies, civil society, saying that they need somebody to step up because they can't deliver assistance.

I'm wondering if both of you could talk to.... Is there a difference between needing better security for providing what we call the straight aids—in other words, sending in bundles of tents or food and so forth—as opposed to international assistance that tries to get the dollars and the skills to local civil organizations? In this time of strife, does it make more sense for us to be giving more assistance?

Mr. Queyranne, you might have mentioned that you are encouraging more direct assistance between civil organizations in Canada and civil organizations on the ground. Could you elaborate on that a bit? Are you asking for two things? Are you asking Canada to step up and provide peacemakers, in order to deliver the goods, and also asking us to rethink how we are providing the aid?

• (1605)

**Mr. Gregory Queyranne:** I would say both. I wouldn't say that Canada should be considering peacemakers in that sense. I would say more that the context—and it starts from the top, with the government—helps define the security humanitarian challenges, for example, in the Congo.

We know that, often, generals who are sent in to quell rebellions are then found to have turned that into a money-making business by selling weapons to the rebels who are killing the generals' own

troops, in order to make some money. They get a little slap on the wrist when they head back to the capital, and then they're released and end up doing the same thing.

The point I'm trying to make is that local humanitarian actors often understand things better than international organizations. Oxfam has been in the Congo for over 50 years, since the 1960s. We've had quite a bit of experience in understanding the different ebbs and flows of different needs before the conflict, which started in the 1990s.

You made a point about the different types of aid. That nuance is very important. At Oxfam, we don't just provide material aid. We combine that with developing skills, and sometimes distributing cash directly, because we know that cash can provide more opportunities for people, who know their needs a little bit better. It can have an economic impact locally, so long as it doesn't lead to inflation, so long as markets are functioning and the goods are there.

Usually we do a combination, a multipronged approach, to humanitarian systems. For instance, if we are defining the needs as being food insecurity—and there are all sorts of technical ways of doing that—we can provide.... I've done this. I've managed these projects before. We provide cash. We provide food, which is often locally procured. We contract local farmers or farmers associations to provide some of their harvests for distribution. We provide seeds, tools and technical know-how in order to help stimulate the economy and provide some sort of recovery.

**Ms. Linda Duncan:** Would you like to respond to that at all?

Ms. Juac, you mentioned the plight of women in the turmoil and so forth. Canada, as you're aware, now has a feminist international assistance policy. Is there value in giving direct assistance to women in the rural communities or to women in the larger urban areas to try to be a stronger voice for decision-making?

It's my understanding that civil society in South Sudan wants to have that peace, but the government, as you mentioned, is not directing resources towards what civil society is asking for.

Where do you see Canadian aid best being placed? Is it to help the communities push for better governance? What direction do you suggest Canadian aid should go?

**Ms. A.A.A. Juac:** I suggest that the local actors can deliver better.

Investing in them would make a change in communities, because it's all about sensitization. To make a change, you have to act with the local partners. You convince the communities that this is the way to go about it. There are some people who don't know what the policy is or even what their rights are. We make them understand their rights, and they push for change.

The local actors can deliver better.

•(1610)

**Ms. Linda Duncan:** Clearly, deliver the aid directly, as much as possible, to the local organizations but definitely not through the government.

**Ms. A.A.A. Juac:** Yes.

**Ms. Linda Duncan:** Okay, we're hearing that clearly.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

**Ms. Linda Duncan:** Am I done?

**The Chair:** Yes.

We are now going to move to MP Sidhu, please.

**Mr. Jati Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, both, for your hard work.

Mr. Queyranne, you mentioned that on the ground humanitarian workers have a very challenging job. It's not safe. In the same breath, you were answering Mr. O'Toole on the other side that you guys have very good communication among each other. Then, you have experts for this area and for that area you can allocate. Third, you're asking for 25% of the funding to go to these humanitarian workers, if we want to call them that.

Do you have a plan for how to use that money among yourselves? Where is the most vulnerable area where you want to be spending that money?

**Mr. Gregory Queyranne:** I'm not sure how to answer that.

Is the question, what would be the plan?

**Mr. Jati Sidhu:** If you're asking that 25% of the money go to the humanitarian workers, what's the plan? I thought you were saying that you have a pretty good system among each other. You communicate and it works well, but security is the biggest issue. I can see that.

What are you going to do with all the money?

**Mr. Gregory Queyranne:** The vision is that organizations like Oxfam don't necessarily need to be in these countries in the long term. I think that if you have these organizations doing humanitarian assistance in these crises, it means the crises are continuing. We do see an exit for these types of relief operations. I think that providing assistance to local humanitarian actors or local development actors provides that exit strategy.

As you mentioned, there needs to be a plan. What we're doing is mentoring local organizations. We also partner with them financially—you can call them subcontracts—in order to bring them up to the level acceptable to different international donors so that they can be the ones doing the work themselves.

I've worked with a number of local Congolese organizations. We partner with them—the ones that have some capacity—and then we try to train them in order to get them a little more able to respond.

In Somalia, we are starting what's called a twinning project. We are inviting local women's rights organizations to essentially job shadow with Oxfam, partner up with Oxfam or other NGOs, in order to get them used to the types of activities we do, the type of language

we use. It's to get them up to speed to be able to do some of the needs assessments—

**Mr. Jati Sidhu:** Do you have a security plan involved in that plan?

**Mr. Gregory Queyranne:** Yes, that's critical. Somalia is very insecure and Congo is very insecure, so security training has to be part of that.

**Mr. Jati Sidhu:** I was wondering if those three countries have different priorities when it comes to development or if all three countries have the same priority, let's say, roads and bridges and hospitals. How do you compare the three countries?

**Mr. Gregory Queyranne:** That's difficult to say. They all have different levels of available resources to invest in that infrastructure and different will to do so. Congo is probably the richest country on the continent with an estimated 20 trillion dollars' worth of wealth hidden in the ground. The potential is there, but we're not seeing the potential and the available resources matched with the investments in their own critical infrastructure.

South Sudan was mentioned before. They have essentially a one-resource economy and have a lot of revenue generated from that, but we're not seeing that translated into local development infrastructure for a number of reasons.

Somalia is possibly the most compromised one. A large part of Somalia's economy is remittances, money sent home from Somalis overseas. That money tends not to be channelled to authorities, because those are disbursed.

The member mentioned humanitarian aid before and other assistance going through the government. That's only part of the assistance. Our colleagues at Global Affairs Canada can describe this better. We look at a multipronged approach to development and to humanitarian work. The Government of Canada, along with other donors, supports agencies like Oxfam, multilateral agencies such as the World Food Programme, UNICEF, UNHCR, the UN agencies, as well as support to the government.

•(1615)

**Mr. Jati Sidhu:** For my last question, Mr. Chair, I'll go to Ms. Juac.

What's the status of health care systems available to children and women in the region? How accessible is it? Is it more dominated by the male population in the region? How does it work?

**Ms. A.A.A. Juac:** There are no proper hospitals. The few main hospitals were built last year by Canadian funds from the Canadian embassy.

They treat women and children in tents. That has resulted in a lot of deaths. The number of deaths of children, those who are malnourished and getting other diseases from the outbreaks, is not manageable.

For women, there is a high rate of premature deliveries and then death at birth because of lack of reproductive health systems. The donors invested in that, including equipment. The equipment is not based in a good place for it to be used, so it ends up getting spoiled without a proper infrastructure. The health care system is very difficult for the country.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

MP Baylis, please.

**Mr. Frank Baylis (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.):** You mentioned that local humanitarian actors obviously know what's best. You've been involved in these conflicts for decades in Congo. Do you see a path forward for local people? What is the path forward toward peace? If so, what role could the Canadian government play in that?

**Mr. Gregory Queyranne:** If we were to start with Congo, we're seeing that a lot of the issues are starting from the top and there is this vision that if things change there, as described by the Constitution, things would then be felt on the ground. We are seeing a political situation in which the planned elections might not go forward. They've been delayed for quite a few years. That's causing tremendous anxiety in the population. We're seeing a lot of regular protests.

The peacekeeping force as well, MONUSCO, which has about 17,000 troops, the largest peacekeeping force in the world right now, is refocusing their assets, staff and other materials towards the west, towards the capital, away from the conflict zones in order to have more of a political influence. In order to help facilitate the elections, they have tried a number of times to encourage the government to accept their support because they share the belief that if you start from the top and you influence the government, you can have a real impact on the ground in the conflict areas.

Some of the nuances I've learned from working in Congo for a few years is that armed groups don't just exist out of opportunity, they tend to have political linkages. They tend to all have members of Parliament in Kinshasa who essentially represent their interests and give them a reason to exist. A lot of them are also disaffected soldiers who believe that leaving and going to the bush and killing people for a few years can give them space at the negotiation table and then ranks in the army.

I'll let my colleague speak more about South Sudan, but in Somalia as well I'd have to say that the political-diplomatic focus would be the best way forward. We want to avoid just looking at the humanitarian crises and looking at the peace and security crises and really thinking more holistically, which in my view should focus on the political dimension.

• (1620)

**Ms. A.A.A. Juac:** For South Sudan this recently signed peace agreement is not inclusive of all the armed groups, so there are people who are still outside of the agreement and there is the possibility of another gift if this implementation doesn't go well.

The main focus should be on how this agreement should be implemented by empowering the local actors to watch over the agreement and by making the citizens own it. By owning the agreement, I think the implementation will go well, but if it's not inclusive I don't think it will go well.

**Mr. Frank Baylis:** As we're sitting here—you said “diplomatic” and “top down”—what specifically should Canada be doing? We're providing ongoing humanitarian aid and it gets chewed up or stolen or whatever, and then you say that at the top we're just not dealing with it. Let's say we say, “Let's deal with it.” What should we do specifically?

**Ms. A.A.A. Juac:** For the case of South Sudan I think for now there is a need for a focus on governance because if the governance system is not set, all the humanitarian aid and all the plans will not go well, and the relations won't as well.

**Mr. Gregory Queyranne:** For Congo I would add that elections are key. Elections provide confidence in the population that their government, their representatives, respect the Constitution that they themselves have created. As I mentioned, these have been planned for several years and regularly delayed, which causes a lot of frustration and protests. Then the government comes in heavily-handedly and uses live ammunition to put down those protests.

I would say that Canada would need to redouble its efforts, at the minimum, pushing for those governance standards, which start with elections.

**The Chair:** We'll have MP Gladu, please.

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC):** Thank you, Chair, and thank you to the witnesses.

Mr. Queyranne, I listened intently to your testimony. I was astounded with the statistic of about half of girls being in a forced child marriage and the horrible outcomes that result from that. I hope my Liberal colleagues were listening because they've introduced Bill C-75, which is going to reduce the penalty for that here in Canada to a less than two years summary conviction or a fine.

The reasons that people are doing forced child marriage here are different. I understand that in the area we're talking about here today, it's that people can't afford to eat. I have a colleague in my riding that just won the Enactus award globally for lifting 330,000 people in Zambia out of poverty by teaching 75,000 farmers how to do no-till farming and using the profits of that to put in irrigation, expand into peanuts and peanut production, and a whole bunch of stuff, but they would be afraid to do this if there were not a good security plan where they're operating.

Oxfam seems to have a good organization that can get aid to the front and get these kinds of ideas. Are there other organizations and who are they?

**Mr. Gregory Queyranne:** There are many organizations. I don't see them as competitors. I see them as colleagues. If you want me to list some of them—

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu:** Sure.

**Mr. Gregory Queyranne:**—I would include Save the Children, which has a presence here in Canada, in Toronto. We also have the Red Cross, which is a really pre-eminent organization, as well as Care Canada.

There are the Norwegian Refugee Council, the Danish Refugee Council and the International Rescue Committee. There are some French organizations, like Action Against Hunger, which also has a presence here.

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu:** They're all well established and they're able to work, even with the security concerns that are happening.

**Mr. Gregory Queyranne:** Yes.

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu:** Very good.

**Ms. A.A.A. Juac:** Can I add another organization?

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu:** Sure.

**Ms. A.A.A. Juac:** It's Nonviolent Peaceforce.

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu:** Okay.

I wanted to talk a little bit about the Ebola epidemic. I actually heard about this when I was at the World Health Organization. I hadn't heard it previously. What I heard was really scary because, when the outbreak happened, it spread to a nearby city and there were no plans put in place to keep people from travelling away from that city to elsewhere in the world.

Is there a good pandemic response in any of these countries, do you think, for situations like Ebola?

• (1625)

**Mr. Gregory Queyranne:** I think it's compromised by the insecurity. As I mentioned, this is the first time that Ebola has hit a conflict-affected area. I believe there have been 10 outbreaks in Congo since the identification of the disease in 1976. This is the first time in an active conflict zone.

There was an Ebola outbreak earlier this year in the far west, in Equateur province, and then, I think within a week or two of it being declared over, we saw one emerge in this conflict zone.

Beni is the territory in North Kivu province affected by Ebola currently and beset by a number of armed groups, notably the ADF, which is a Ugandan group that has been there since the 1990s and which became very active in 2014. It has stepped up its violent operations since the Ebola outbreak. It was hoped that they would not be getting in the way of any kind of Ebola response, but the opposite has happened. They seem to be more and more active since the declaration of the epidemic.

It's very difficult to stop people from moving. A lot of people in the area rely on trade, notably with Uganda, for their livelihoods, so you have regular commerce people moving with goods every day. As much as you can regulate some of these movements, there are always ways around them. I remember working earlier this year in the northeast of the Congo bordering Uganda, and there was the official border crossing and 10 unofficial border crossings, essentially just paths through the forest.

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu:** We have the same problem here in Canada.

**Mr. Gregory Queyranne:** With a different effect....

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu:** Let me move to another question.

In terms of health care, the other thing I heard was that there is essentially no health care, Ms. Juac, but I also heard that, in conflict areas, doctors are being killed. This was a huge concern that I'd never heard of at the World Health Organization.

Can you give me a sense of whether that is happening in the Congo? Is it happening in Somalia and South Sudan?

**Mr. Gregory Queyranne:** Absolutely, in the Congo we're seeing that. We're seeing health workers being attacked. I think it's both by armed groups as well as by concerned citizens.

There's a lot of miscommunication and misunderstanding about the conflict, so one of the key efforts that Oxfam is making in the Ebola response currently is that community relations and community sensitization work, to explain to people what Ebola is and how you can get it. It's not just about reducing handshaking, increasing handwashing and so on, it also has to do with having confidence in the health care workers. Right now there's this misconception that the health care workers and the hospitals are the ones spreading the disease, so you'll have people preferring more traditional types of health care, which is only aggravating the situation.

**Ms. A.A.A. Juac:** It's the same thing in South Sudan.

Some of the doctors are kidnapped and taken to treat the wounded soldiers where there is conflict. Some of them do die as a result of protecting women or children. The problem is that whenever they know there is a doctor, they have to make use of him, even for things that are outside his mandate.

This is a serious concern. We lost a sister—she was a doctor—in one of the conflict areas. There is a need for proper security for doctors and humanitarian actors. There should be a policy that can protect them.

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu:** There's the Geneva conventions, yes.

Am I done?

**The Chair:** You're done.

Thank you very much.

We have time for a very short question from MP Vandenberg, please.

**Ms. Anita Vandenberg (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.):** Thank you very much.

Ms. Juac, this is specifically about women.

I know we talk about women as the primary victims, the ones who are most impacted, but can you tell me a little about women as solutions? Are women in decision-making roles part of peace processes? Are they elected to office as part of the governance structures, involved in policing...all those kinds of roles that women can play?

I know you were here recently as part of the sister-to-sister program where we met. It teaches advocacy for women. I've also seen programs where women are able to convert their stories at the local level into international language, understanding that this is UN resolution 1325, or being able to translate those stories into language that's understood in the international community.

Can you tell me a little about how Canada can support women to be solutions and not just victims?

• (1630)

**Ms. A.A.A. Juac:** In the peace agreement, women are given 35% participation because of affirmative action. Unfortunately, so far both the government and the parties have not implemented it according to the agreement.

Regarding the army and the other security forces, in the army we have 6% for women at the top level, for the police it is 10%, and for national security it is 15%. In the civil service, 45% of people working in the ministries are women, and for MPs it is 60%. The new changes will actually remove 40% of them, according to the new signed peace agreement.

Regarding women's participation, there is a need for more advocacy. Last year, the Canadian government made a huge event for the women and organizing forces, including women from rural areas, and that raised their understanding of their rights and how they can move on.

**Ms. Anita Vandenberg:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** I'd like to thank both of our guests.

Ms. Juac, I know you came a long way so we're really pleased you could be with us here today. This was important testimony to have from both of you.

Colleagues, we're now going to break for two minutes to get the new panellists in, and we will reconvene. I will now suspend.

• (1630)

(Pause)

• (1635)

**The Chair:** Welcome back, everyone.

We're now going to hear from our second two witnesses. We have Georgette Gagnon from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and Susan Stigant from the United States Institute of Peace.

Ladies, I would ask you to each do about eight to 10 minutes of testimony, and then I know there are going to be lots of questions from colleagues.

Ms. Gagnon, would you like to begin?

**Ms. Georgette Gagnon (Director, Field Operations and Technical Cooperation Division, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights):** Sure.

**The Chair:** Wonderful. Thank you.

**Ms. Georgette Gagnon:** Good afternoon.

On behalf of the UN human rights office, thank you for the opportunity to speak on how Canada can better address conflict,

gender-based violence, justice and respect for human rights in Somalia, the Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan.

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights is heavily engaged in these three countries. In DRC, the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office, with 150 staff in 19 locations, is the main component of the United Nations peace-keeping mission, MONUSCO. In South Sudan, the human rights division of 91 staff in 10 field offices also operates as a component of UNMISS. In Somalia, the human rights and protection group of 33 staff in six locations is part of the UN assistance mission in Somalia.

Our human rights teams, which I have the great pleasure of overseeing globally, are mandated by the Security Council to monitor, investigate, report, mediate and advocate on key human rights issues, and to provide technical support to government, civil society and other stakeholders to end and prevent violations and to change policies and practices, in line with the high commissioner's global mandate to impartially and independently promote and protect human rights for all people, everywhere.

The DRC, Somalia and South Sudan, as you know, remain among the world's most violent and entrenched conflicts. Their civilian populations have borne the brunt of this violence, devastating communities, livelihoods and people.

In our report on recent human rights violations in Unity state, which our colleague just spoke about, my colleagues interviewed a 14-year-old girl from Leer County. She said to us:

All the violence I have witnessed...I can never forget. How can I forget the sight of an old man whose throat was slit with a knife before being set on fire? How can I forget the smell of those decomposed bodies of old men and children pecked and eaten by birds? Those women that were hanged and died up in the tree?

It is our job, our obligation—I submit the obligation of all of us—to not forget, and to use our best efforts to protect and prevent. Protection of civilians in DRC, Somalia and South Sudan is the UN's main goal. We focus on early warning and risk analysis aimed at protecting the civilian population by monitoring, advocating and mobilizing those with power to act to prevent civilian harm.

Human rights intelligence about perpetrators, be they government, pro-government forces, armed groups, or anti-government elements, their methods and conduct—past conduct also—informs the UN's protection of civilian strategy, strengthening physical protection by peacekeepers and the UN's political leverage to prevent mass atrocities.

In DRC, in the first 10 months of 2018, we documented some 5,703 human rights violations, a 14% increase compared to the same period last year—an indicator of deteriorating security in the run-up to the December elections.

In Somalia, our team documented 1,010 civilian casualties. These are deaths and injuries in September 2018, alone, with 55% attributed to al Shabaab and 22% to state actors. This shows the relentless impact of conflict on civilians and that more targeted prevention is needed.

We urge Canada to increase support for improving civilian protection efforts to strengthen early warning leading to early action, and for accountability among you and mission leadership, and other actors, for the protection of civilians.

In Somalia, efforts to restore state authority are encouraging. We ask Canada to prioritize human rights obligations in the counter-terrorism activities it supports through its capacity building with police and security. Without human rights due diligence, these operations risk increasing violence and extremism, and they undermine efforts to strengthen rule of law institutions.

● (1640)

This is a recent example from one of our reports. In July of last year, four male civilians accused of being affiliated with al Shabaab were executed. One of the victims was a Somali who had returned from Ethiopia and had been detained for seven months without charge. Two others had been arrested a few months before their execution. The fourth was arrested the day before his execution. No links between the victims and al Shabaab were confirmed, and the minister for the area said that, in principle, their execution should have followed a determination of guilt by an established court of law. What happened is that the families of the victims received *diya* and the officers were released who put these men to death.

Impunity remains a major concern in Somalia. Extra-judicial executions, abductions, tortures and sexual violence are largely uninvestigated. This impunity affects women and girls disproportionately, requiring extra efforts. In addition to a weak legal framework, customary law contributes to impunity for sexual violence, as traditional leaders mediate between families of sexual violence survivors, a process in which compensation to the family trumps justice to the victim.

As one girl told us, “Four men who gang-raped me were released by the police. This, after my family and the families of the perpetrators agreed to pay compensation. I was not consulted, neither was I given any of the money, and the men were free to rape again. I'm very unhappy with the way this case has been handled and I'm angry with both my family and the police, who are supposed to protect people like me from such incidents.”

Our team supported the Somalian ministry of women and human rights in civil society to draft a sexual offences bill, which cabinet adopted recently but religious leaders continue to oppose. We also support specialized units to address violence against women and children and conflict-related sexual violence. Training is provided to the Somali national army. We suggest that Canada increase support, including to Somali civil society, to address gender-based violence and boost women's and girls' rights.

In DRC, with Canada's support, we are assisting women and girls to gain better access to medical and psychosocial assistance for endemic conflict-related sexual violence. We also provide support to Congolese authorities on protection plans for such victims before, during and after trials of those responsible for conflict-related sexual violence are held. People worry about reprisals, of course.

An encouraging sign is that between August and October of this year, 43 soldiers and 13 police were convicted for human rights crimes, including gender-based and sexual violence.

South Sudan, unfortunately, has had few prosecutions of human rights violations, and in August, President Kiir granted a general amnesty to rebel commanders without due consideration for their possible involvement in international crimes, sending a message that perpetrators will be shielded from prosecution and impunity rules. No progress has been made on establishment of the hybrid court.

Canada could increase support and advocacy on the imperative of accountability for serious human rights violations and war crimes, including sexual violence in South Sudan, Somalia and the DRC.

Another core element of human rights protection and support to national human rights actors is the protection of civic and democratic space. In Somalia, we're promoting women's participation in public life and with the national human rights commission. Canada's support is needed to build and strengthen these civilian institutions.

● (1645)

We're also documenting increasing violations and attacks against free speech.

In South Sudan, intimidation, surveillance, threats and harassment of national human rights activists and journalists has stopped them from exposing the realities of war and corruption and denouncing those who should be held to account. We're interested in partnering more on these issues. In August, Journalists for Human Rights held a forum in Juba aimed at promoting press freedom with support from Global Affairs Canada.

We encourage Canada to support work that protects civic space. In the DRC, with presidential elections imminent, ensuring the electoral process does not restrict civic and democratic space is an urgent concern.

In September, we reported on the government's violent suppression of peaceful protests by civil society and opposition political parties, and urged authorities to respect rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. We and our national human rights colleagues need Canada's support in calling on Congolese authorities to end harassment and intimidation of civil society activists, including incommunicado detention.

The confidence-building measures of the December 31, 2016, agreement on opening political space and respect of fundamental rights and freedoms have yet to be implemented and the election is a few weeks away.

My final point, in answer to how Canada can better address conflict, gender-based violence, justice and human rights in the DRC, Somalia and Sudan, is to say to be a stronger advocate for durable peace and conflict prevention through justice and accountability and improved protection of civilians, and to step up political and financial support to protect civic and democratic space and the participation of women in all forms of public life.

Thank you.

• (1650)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Ms. Gagnon.

We will now move straight to Ms. Stigant, please.

**Ms. Susan Stigant (Director, Africa Program, United States Institute of Peace, As an Individual):** Thank you.

Good evening. It's a pleasure to be here before the committee. Thank you for continuing to bring focus to the situation in South Sudan, Somalia and the DRC.

My name is Susan Stigant and I am currently the director for Africa programs at the United States Institute of Peace.

For those of you who don't know USIP, USIP is an independent, non-partisan institute that was established by the U.S. Congress over 30 years ago with a mission to prevent, manage and resolve violent conflict globally. Given that it's an independent, non-partisan institute, the views that I express here are my own and do not represent those of USIP.

In preparation for today's meeting I've had the opportunity to read the transcripts and the briefs from the other witnesses, and I think they have very clearly documented the fragility in the three countries that are under study. They have underlined the depth of the humanitarian crisis and truly some of the worst things that humans do to other humans around the world.

They have highlighted the critical role of both Canadian and national civil society in designing and delivering development assistance. They have underscored the need for political solutions to conflicts, and they have identified clear opportunities for Canadian engagement around Canadian policy objectives.

Rather than talking about the specific dynamics in each country I thought I would draw out three themes that I think resonate across the three countries.

The first, for me, is that it's helpful to look beyond the horizon, both forwards and backwards. So often we are focused on the

emergency and the urgent matter at hand—and we should be. These are serious human rights and humanitarian situations. But it gives us little time to reflect on where we have come from and where we are going.

For example, in the DRC the focus today is on getting the elections done by December 23, or maybe with a slight delay. This is an awesome task, with 100,000 polling stations, new voting machines, logistics, very little logistics capacity, the opposition efforts to come together falling apart and civil society struggling. The priority has been very much to hold the elections and to ensure that President Kabila does not run again.

The history of elections in the DRC tells us that the international community needs to be prepared for post-election disputes. We know that it's very likely the opposition will reject the results. We know it's very likely that there will be an outcry over disenfranchisement because of violence and armed group action. We know that there will likely be confusion and chaos around tabulation and transmission and counting.

Consistently in DRC we've seen that this has led to people going to the streets to protest and often to heavy-handed response by the government.

Ultimately then we will have a new government that inherits all of the challenges of the past and ends up, in fact, further behind in trying to establish the healthy state-society relationship that we know is needed.

Today what's needed are preparations to know what happens in the immediate post-election period, and then what next. This means sustained engagement and inclusion with civil society as well as with political parties. These transitions that take place very quickly are often the culmination of a very long period of development that we don't always see because we're so focused on what's immediately ahead of us.

Similarly in South Sudan there has been considerable focus on making the revitalized peace agreement work. The narrative that I continually hear is that this is all that we have and it's the best chance for the South Sudanese.

I spent six years living and working in South Sudan during what people call the "good days" after the signing of the comprehensive peace agreement. I will tell you that South Sudanese people hoped for much more than what they're experiencing today.

It's a challenging balance to strike. You clearly hear the hope and determination of the South Sudanese to make the most of the space. The door is open, wedge your foot in, hold it and get as much as you can out of it. But we also see an agreement that does not fundamentally change the underlying logic that puts together a power-sharing arrangement that has failed not once, but twice, and really, the odds seem to be stacked against it.

The guarantors are an unlikely pair of countries—Uganda and Sudan—that have never agreed on very much in the last while, but now have come together towards this. This isn't to say that the international community shouldn't do its best to take advantage of where things are and to make the most of the situation, but it also means that there needs to be a clear plan B.

For example, the end of the peace agreement is premised on an electoral transition in a three-year period. I would recall that this civil war started because of the political competition leading into the anticipated 2015 elections. What is our strategy to get things changed so that the game is played differently and that the result will be different this time?

• (1655)

I also find that there is less attention to some of the dynamics of the political economy of the conflict. The conflict isn't the parallel to the economy. The conflict is the economy. It's important that we understand how assistance and other engagements play into those dynamics.

On the economic front, there has also been little conversation about the massive infusion of funding that will be needed to stabilize the economy. In a workshop that we did recently, we asked people to calculate on the back of a napkin what it would cost to stabilize, and the numbers were around \$400 million for the first year. This is just to back the pounds that are currently in circulation. There's a disturbing article in *The Washington Post* today that says an associate professor at the University of Juba would have to save for more than two months to be able to buy a chicken to feed his family. This is how far inflation has gone in the country.

My second theme is about calibrating regional and transregional dynamics. So often we tend to look at policies and approaches focused on a single country. In the DRC, however, we know that the relationship with Uganda, Rwanda and the other Great Lakes countries is critical, and that the role of South Africa in advancing a political solution will be absolutely critical going forward.

Somalia is particularly interesting in this regard. We've always looked at Somalia and understood its strategic positioning because of maritime security and piracy. There's been less attention to what flows across the Red Sea region. Many times we think of the Red Sea as the border between Africa on the one hand, and the gulf and the Middle East on the other, but increasingly we see that transregional security, economic and political dynamics are impacting peace and security in the Horn of Africa.

For example, over the last year, the division in the gulf between Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates on one side and Qatar on the other, is beginning, it seems, to be reflected in engagement in the Horn of Africa. The federal government of Somalia took a formal position that they would remain neutral in this division in the gulf. However, there was a perception that the Prime Minister received funding from Qatar, and that maybe Qatar was being favoured. Shortly thereafter, negotiations started between the United Arab Emirates and some of the federal member states in Somalia to build ports, a strategic economic and security interest for the UAE in the war in Yemen. This further undermined the delicate balance that is trying to be built between the federal government in Mogadishu and the federal member states outside.

This is a classic multilateral problem that requires a multilateral solution, but at this point there aren't any forums that are fit for purpose. The European Union Council has called for a new Red Sea forum. The African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development are thinking about how to take this forward, but a way forward still very much needs to be identified.

My third theme is the opportunity to link the domestic to the international. I know that many of you in this room have significant populations that come from South Sudan, Somalia or the DRC. We know that conflict and violence are no longer spatially contained. Because of technology and the movement of people, if there is conflict in a country in Africa, it very much affects the populations. We also understand the reverse is possible, where the tensions and dangerous speech that are taking place in the social media space can, in fact, impact the violence in the country.

There are important opportunities to engage diaspora populations and understand that the deep divisions we see in a community are also reflected in the communities in Canada. I would commend to you a recent initiative by the Australian government to try to facilitate dialogue among the South Sudanese diaspora.

In thinking forward, in how Canada could prioritize engagement, I would first encourage a widening of the aperture. So often we are focused on countries, but a regional strategy is really needed. The European Union and the United Nations have envoys who cover the Horn of Africa and look at a broader regional perspective. This allows calibration of priorities across different countries. It allows a single ambassador to travel around and get access to heads of state. This is more than any one, even amazing, ambassador could take on himself or herself. I know that Canada has a past experience of having a special envoy, with Senator Jaffer to Sudan, and then South Sudan, between 2002 and 2006, and that there is the ongoing experience with Bob Rae in Myanmar.

• (1700)

My second recommendation is around Canada's catalytic capacity. I'm struck by the degree of cohesion, and the emergence of a narrative around women's participation and around the Vancouver principles on peacekeeping. I've been struck by the success story I've seen of Canada's engagement in South Sudan. I witnessed that Canada brought together a working group focused on child soldiers and helped to provoke a very important conversation that was not taking place to the degree that it needed to. I witnessed that Canada saw a priority to engage women in the peace process and reached out and worked together with UN women to do that.

But as important as those specific activities are, I was struck at the public diplomacy initiatives that took place where the embassy took visits to the development assistance projects around the country and made them highly visible. Primarily they were around maternal and child health initiatives, so that in communities people were seeing women not just as victims but as survivors.

It also made the point that South Sudan isn't just Juba. It's also about the people who are living outside. It made a clear point that the international community was watching and seeing what was happening outside the capital.

My third recommendation is around Canadian experience and expertise. Canada has unique experiences in managing conflict, diversity and promoting pluralism. This type of approach would be resonant as Somalia continues to figure out their federal system and how to put that into practice. South Sudan is contemplating whether they will keep 32 states or shift to 10 states, but ultimately, this is a question about the relationships between the centre and the state governments.

The role of the Parliament in a federal system is an incredibly difficult and important question, where Canada can play a role.

I will end on something that I think is perhaps the most important, so I saved it for last: a recognition that in these three countries, the population is incredibly young. Africa is going to be the youngest continent. In some countries, more than 70% of the population are youth. In our engagement, we need to think about how we work with that next generation. How do we buffer them from the challenges and the systemic corruption and conflict issues that have plagued the countries, and how can we start to forge relationships with them at an early stage?

I will end on a personal note of thanks. I started my career with the international youth internship program that then-DFAIT ran, where I worked with the parliamentary centre in South Africa. I think that youth engagement very much applies to Canada as well as to our partners in Africa.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much to you both for your highly instructive comments. We will open it up.

MP McCauley, you're kicking it off.

**Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC):** Welcome. Thank you for the information. It's quite overwhelming. I don't even know where to start. You have to bear with me. I'm going to bounce around with different questions and areas.

How much is north Sudan playing into the problems in South Sudan?

That's to either one of you.

**Ms. Susan Stigant:** Sudan hosted the last round of the peace talks and is very much seen by the region as having delivered the peace agreement together with Uganda. We've heard incredible reports that the peace process did not happen in a fully voluntary way. There are reports of intimidation and coercion, particularly of the opposition, which is concerning. Any agreement that's signed under duress we know is less likely to hold.

As part of the normalization of relationships between the U.S. and Sudan, which led to some lifting of sanctions earlier this year, Sudan committed not to interfere, which was defined as not arming opposition groups. The tracking seems to suggest they have been good to their word on that.

Sudan's primary interest is to get the oil flowing again. A lot of money is owed to the Government of Sudan, and the economic situation there is as bad, perhaps even worse, than in South Sudan.

**Mr. Kelly McCauley:** You mentioned the child soldiers. In our briefing document, 99% of the child soldiers kidnapped in Somalia are men. We have a well-based focus on maternal health, young women and young girls. Do we risk perhaps not focusing on the young men as well in how we're approaching things?

It's not to criticize what we're doing with our focus on women. That's very valuable. But are we missing out helping the men, perhaps?

• (1705)

**Ms. Susan Stigant:** I mentioned a situation of "yes, and". We increasingly talk about our work not just as women's peace and security, but as gender and peace building, and knowing that we have to understand the relationships between girls and boys and men and women to create that space.

I think it's an important consideration.

**Ms. Georgette Gagnon:** Yes, and in some of the work that we're doing, we have what's called a spotlight on youth in a lot of our monitoring. We document how children under 18 are affected by conflict, economically and in every other way, with real attention to the way, as my colleague said, girls and boys experience conflict differentially. Girls are still disproportionately negatively affected, which I think is why we often talk about it more.

That's not to say that boys don't need all kinds of support too, especially in education. You know, there's forced recruitment. Many kids are still forcibly recruited.

**Mr. Kelly McCauley:** There's obviously an overwhelming amount of need in the three countries, and we have resources that we're spending there. They're finite. Should we be continuing our path as we're doing, or should we pull back to focus on certain areas? We've talked about the election and about building a civil society, building a structure to deliver services, policing, democracy. Should we focus on one thing and let our allies focus on others?

Are we going down the right path of not a shotgun spread but of apportioning finite resources in so many different areas?

**Ms. Susan Stigant:** I think wherever there's an ability to coordinate with international partners, this is the ideal situation, and there have been some useful experiments and pilots that have been based on a compact and a partnership that's made with the host country. It's very much negotiated, agreed upon and driven by the country.

In my mind, we're all facing resource challenges, every country around the world. I think what's more important is the predictability and the sustainability, rather than trying to do it all. I think what we see, particularly in democracy and governance programs and peace building programs is that a lot of money goes in just before the election, and then in the three years in between, there's very little, and it's very difficult to maintain momentum. There's a lot that can be done with a relatively small amount of money, and I think that's the same in other sectors.

**Mr. Kelly McCauley:** Why do we go down that path where we support up to the election and then just seem to walk away? Is that just because that's what gets the headlines or that's the sexy part, or are we just ignorant on how to properly help?

**Ms. Susan Stigant:** My view is that this is very much driven by... The things that come into the headlines get people's attention. We say in rhetoric that an election is not an event but a process, but that's not necessarily reflected in how the planning takes place, and as you noted, when things seem to be going well... A great example is in Kenya. Kenya has had some very difficult elections over the last few years, but as soon as things seem to be on the right track, the money gets shifted somewhere else where the situation seems much worse. I think it's a lesson in the importance of sticking, and sticking with partners.

**Mr. Kelly McCauley:** Madam Gagnon.

**Ms. Georgette Gagnon:** I don't have much to add to that. I'll just say that it's my experience, in the many countries where I've worked, that donors and member states, as we call them in the UN, do prioritize and take different bundles of work in different areas. So the Canadians will do this and the Swedes will do that, to avoid a lot of duplication and to make sure that projects are long term, not short term, although sometimes you need short-term projects for emergencies or crises.

Building institutions, the rule of law, the security sector reform, the DDR, is long-term, expensive work. Whether anybody likes it or not, that's what it is.

• (1710)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

**Mr. Kelly McCauley:** My time's up. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Now we're going to MP Vandebeld, please.

**Ms. Anita Vandebeld:** I'd like to thank both of you for what was very compelling testimony, with a lot of information there.

Ms. Stigant, you started your career with the youth international internship program of DFAIT, and so did I, in Bosnia with OSCE actually, where I believe, Ms. Gagnon, you've also worked. I believe you were the country director for NDI in South Sudan at the same time that I was the country director in DRC.

A lot of what you said resonates quite a bit, but what is also a little bit frustrating is that I was in those places in 2011 talking about exactly the same things, talking about the sustainability after the election, making sure we're investing in the institutions and governance structures, and women's participation, and it sounds as if we are here seven years later still talking about the same things.

My first question has to do with what Ms. Gagnon said about accountability. You mentioned multiple areas of accountability,

including accountability for the UN mission leadership on protecting civilians. Could you elaborate on that? Then we can talk a bit more about other methods of accountability, but please elaborate in terms of the international community and particularly the UN.

**Ms. Georgette Gagnon:** You may know that over the last year and a half or so, the UN has looked at how UN peacekeeping troops and the troop-contributing countries can do better civilian protection. I'm not talking about SEA—if you know what SEA is. I'm talking about just protecting civilians.

There were a number of studies done, and I was part of two special investigations into attacks on the protection of civilian sites in South Sudan that the Secretary-General launched in 2016. Out of that came what is called the POC, or protection of civilians—accountability framework for mission leadership, meaning that all parts of the mission—the military, the political, the security—are responsible for taking certain types of steps and measures to be proactively and robustly protecting civilians. What these two investigations showed was that there were some failures and some issues with the way that civilians were not protected in those POC sites, as they are called.

There has been a lot of work done on it. The answers are clear; they are there. The UN has taken it very seriously and brought forward this framework, which all generals and political leaders have to sign up to and commit to, and then are held accountable for it.

Then there are other initiatives under way too within the UN.

**Ms. Anita Vandebeld:** Thank you.

Continuing with accountability, I would like to go to Ms. Stigant about accountability of the government.

We know that in multiple places, the armed groups are either tacitly, or even covertly, openly backed by pro-government forces.

How do we ensure that we have a better governance structure? Elections are one large part of that. However, as you noted, just changing the government alone doesn't change all of the dynamics and the pressures. How do we make sure that we have better accountability between government and civilians and the population, particularly women?

**Ms. Susan Stigant:** That is such a great question. It's probably a good dissertation topic.

I think on a very tactical level, if we think about South Sudan, the peace agreement established a ceasefire monitoring mechanism that is there and is working. It has some significant challenges in terms of the timeliness of its reports. That has not been getting faster; it has in fact been getting slower. This is less of a technical problem and more of a political problem, in terms of the regional governments and their willingness to make the reports available.

The second issue is that when those reports come, they tend to be very broad in nature: "All forces should desist from fighting." That's as opposed to being very specific: "This number of forces should move this far from this location in a way that's verifiable."

I think that mechanism could also be strengthened by adding in very specific monitoring around particular issues. There could be more monitoring around vulnerability of groups to recruitment, such as child soldiers. There could be more effective monitoring around gender-based violence. One mechanism is to work with what's there.

In terms of the overall transformation of that relationship, we know that's the key. We know that a healthy state-society relationship makes countries resilient to shocks, whether they're natural or conflict. We know this. We also know that a lot of governments are either unable or unwilling to make that change.

The countries we're talking about are in very difficult neighbourhoods, so the willingness of neighbouring leaders to push for a transformative change is not there.

• (1715)

**Ms. Anita Vandenberg:** Ms. Gagnon.

**Ms. Georgette Gagnon:** I don't have much more to add to that. I think that was a pretty complete answer.

**Ms. Anita Vandenberg:** I would add that in terms of the transformative change, I think having more women in politics and in leadership can often be the thing that causes that.

The other thing I want to ask about is the targeting—

**The Chair:** You have 30 seconds, so it's going to have to be a quick question.

**Ms. Anita Vandenberg:** Then I'll leave it.

**The Chair:** You're going to leave it there. Okay.

We'll move to MP Duncan, please.

**Ms. Linda Duncan:** I want to thank both of you. Obviously, you have many years of solid experience.

I'm hoping you are going to give us your written briefs, because it was hard to follow. There was so much depth there. I really want to thank you.

Ms. Stigant, I noted that you mentioned the Red Sea forum. Our own Library of Parliament, which does research for the committees, pointed out that there are over a million Somalian refugees in the Horn of Africa and Yemen.

Given what's going on in Yemen right now, can you speak to what impact that has on also resolving issues in Somalia?

**Ms. Susan Stigant:** That's a great question. They're very interconnected. If you look at a map, normally people would think that Yemen and Saudi Arabia are closer together, but in fact geographically Addis and Yemen are more closely geographically aligned, as well as Somalia.

There are a few levels of dynamics. One is that, because of the conflict in Yemen and the alliances that have been created, we see that the alliances and the divisions are actually being reflected in the way the gulf and Middle East countries interact in the Horn of Africa. I don't want you to assume that those are malicious intents. I

think there have been some very positive things. The United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia were very catalytic in terms of the Ethiopia-Eritrea agreement that was just reached. If they're not calibrated, in a way, it really does risk further dividing and complicating some of those issues.

In terms of the Somalia-Yemen question, there's a question that probably Georgette can speak to more appropriately, on some of the human rights issues. There have been concerns about the returns of former fighters, and the perception of returns of former fighters and how that can be appropriately managed. I think it's an area that actually needs more work.

What we find in the U.S. government is that this issue falls between the seams of those who focus on Africa and those who focus on the near east, so we've been doing some work to try to see how we could bridge that across those bureaucratic divides. I think that's the same in the United Nations' system, and I suspect it's the same in the Canadian system as well.

**Ms. Linda Duncan:** Yes, I note that both the OECD and Fund for Peace put Yemen ahead of several of these other African countries as to the fragility of states, to add to your additional work that you do.

Ms. Gagnon, I really appreciate all that you've provided. Overriding all the issues that you've raised, are you suggesting that Canada could contribute more to UN initiatives, or are you also, or instead, suggesting that Canadian aid could perhaps target? For example, someone I know who just retired as a prosecutor in British Columbia is being sent by the UN to Myanmar to work for the prosecutors to try to train them on how you deal with human rights violations in the courts.

**Ms. Georgette Gagnon:** Don't get me started on that.

**Ms. Linda Duncan:** I would welcome what exactly it is that you're suggesting Canada might do in the role we play in perhaps focusing more or specific directed aid in those particular countries.

**Ms. Georgette Gagnon:** I wasn't suggesting necessarily that Canada just increase support to various UN agencies. I was suggesting more targeted support for particular types of efforts, whether it goes to civil society, for example, or whether it's funded through a UN agency or other multilateral-type structures. I was looking at it more as sort of themes or types of work that I think Canada should support through whatever way is appropriate. Of course, I would always want more money for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. I'd be letting down my job if I didn't ask for that.

I think it really depends on the type of work and what type of funding mechanism is the best way to actually get a change in policy and practice.

• (1720)

**Ms. Linda Duncan:** Do you actually see hope in aid working with the judicial process? Are they free enough from the government in those countries that it actually could have an impact?

**Ms. Georgette Gagnon:** Again, I think it depends on which country and which region and which state and which court, because you will always find allies. In the DRC, there's actually been some success with the mobile courts on different types of prosecutions of military, of political. That effort I think slowly is gaining ground.

**Ms. Linda Duncan:** I think there might have been earlier witnesses talking about freedom of journalism. Is there also a need for getting the message out more, where good actions are taken, and letting the populace know that in fact people are intervening and there's—

**Ms. Georgette Gagnon:** Absolutely. That's why I spoke about the crucial role of protecting civic and democratic space, which is press freedom, journalists and human rights defenders who are increasingly being targeted and clamped down on in all of these three countries because they're going after their government, which they should do.

We do think there's a lot more support for those types of groups and those efforts needed.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

**Ms. Linda Duncan:** Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** We are going to finish off with MP Baylis, please.

**Mr. Frank Baylis:** Thank you, Chair.

I want to follow up on what Ms. Duncan also asked Madam Gagnon concerning impunity.

You spoke about lack of accountability and impunity and how that has a knock-on effect of “If I can get away with it, what's to stop me?”

What would be the key aspects that you would seek to drive more accountability—you talked about documentation and that—so that even if we can't deal with a perpetrator right now, we establish that they will be dealt with?

**Ms. Georgette Gagnon:** That's one purpose of documenting and having a record, and of course bringing a profile to the situation.

In many of our recent reports on South Sudan, the perpetrators have been named right in the report.

**Mr. Frank Baylis:** That's at the beginning, where you're starting to say, this person's doing this, and then—

**Ms. Georgette Gagnon:** Exactly, it's saying, this commander, in this area, ordered this.

**Mr. Frank Baylis:** Sooner or later that commander's going to have to be dealt with.

**Ms. Georgette Gagnon:** That's the aim. That may be via a court system, or that may be via sanctions or other different types of accountability. It doesn't just have to be through the judicial process.

**Mr. Frank Baylis:** This is the UN that's doing this.

**Ms. Georgette Gagnon:** We are the ones who together with... There are local groups that are also documenting, but you may know that there's a commission on South Sudan that operates out of the UN Human Rights Council and it produced quite a groundbreaking report earlier that really highlighted clearly which military and political leaders were responsible for which crimes.

**Mr. Frank Baylis:** Is this something new, this naming and documenting in this manner?

**Ms. Georgette Gagnon:** Not particularly, but sometimes in the work that we've done the names are in a confidential annex. It was felt by the UN leadership and member states in South Sudan that

naming was very important and could lead to some changes. My understanding is that some military leaders were removed. Others, of course, were not.

Again, that's all a question of political will and then whether the influencers are going to take to task in some form those who are letting these guys keep doing what they're doing.

• (1725)

**Mr. Frank Baylis:** It sends a message that, sooner or later, you're going to be dealt with. If someone thinks, for example, you can rape a young girl and then it's just a payment, quite frankly it becomes a form of prostitution, whether she likes it or not. If there's some kind of accountability there, that, no, you're not going to get away with this, that would add to changing future behaviour as opposed to just letting it happen. You're saying they work right now with impunity.

**Ms. Georgette Gagnon:** That's the whole purpose. It's to prevent and deter.

By holding to account and highlighting that there is accountability and someone actually does go to jail for it or is sanctioned or can't travel through travel bans, or is financially penalized, which I think is what really needs to happen in South Sudan—

**Mr. Frank Baylis:** On the travel ban idea, if the sum total of other nations would say, whether you were paid off or not, as far as we're concerned if you come to our country we're dealing with you—

**Ms. Georgette Gagnon:** Yes.

**Mr. Frank Baylis:** Does that exist?

**Ms. Georgette Gagnon:** Yes, there are such things. There are travel bans.

**Mr. Frank Baylis:** Are we using them to the fullest to make it very clear that if you perpetrate some action, even if, while you're there in your neck of the woods you're safe, the minute you step outside of this area the sum total of the United Nations will deal with you? Is that clear to them, to the perpetrators?

**Ms. Georgette Gagnon:** Yes, I think it is.

**Mr. Frank Baylis:** Are we doing enough there?

**Ms. Georgette Gagnon:** Probably not. The classic example is the president of Sudan, who has all kinds of travel bans. He's been indicted by the International Criminal Court. He cannot travel to some countries or he will be picked up.

**Mr. Frank Baylis:** To some countries, though.... He can't travel to some countries.

**Ms. Georgette Gagnon:** Other countries let him in, and that's the same for some of these individuals who are under travel bans and economic sanctions.

**Mr. Frank Baylis:** Should we be looking at these countries that are not enforcing the ban? Do they have a certain reason for not doing it, or economic...?

**Ms. Georgette Gagnon:** Usually...or they may be friends and allies of that state, but those tools all need to be used. They are still in use and they probably could be used a little more effectively.

My colleague may have something to say about that.

**Ms. Susan Stigant:** I would just say that the follow-up and the enforcement of those kinds of mechanisms solely depends, largely depends, on actions by members of the UN Security Council and diplomatic representatives. The UN system, in and of itself, is not positioned to do that. That falls to member states, and particularly to the Security Council. I think that's—

**Mr. Frank Baylis:** Are there members in the Security Council that are not enforcing this or are being lenient where they should not be?

**Ms. Susan Stigant:** Yes.

**Mr. Frank Baylis:** Why don't we name them?

**Ms. Georgette Gagnon:** They are the usual suspects.

**Mr. Frank Baylis:** Who are they? What countries are allowing these perpetrators to continue in the UN Security Council? That's what we're here for, unless you feel uncomfortable—then don't.

**Ms. Susan Stigant:** It depends very much on the particular country and the case. South Sudan has been a relatively successful case where you've been able to get quite significant action through the UN Security Council. Other conflict situations like Yemen are

much more difficult because there is a greater degree of polarization, where you have the United States, France, the U.K. maybe largely agreeing, and Russia and China often not agreeing.

That is a real reflection of some of the challenges in the multilateral system at the moment, which requires different approaches to diplomacy.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much to both of you. You have travelled long distances, from Geneva and Washington, D.C.

This was two hours very well spent with witnesses who gave us a really detailed look at a number of the issues we are tackling in this committee. I really thank you for making your way here today and for spending this second hour with us.

Colleagues, with that, I have a reminder that on Wednesday the committee is cancelled. We'll be meeting again at the same time next week on Monday.

Thank you very much.

The meeting is adjourned.

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