



Congressman Donald Payne

Tenth District - New Jersey

For Immediate Release
November 10, 2010

Contact: Algene Sajery
(202) 226-7812

Payne Calls on Sudanese Leaders to Finalize Agreement on Abyei and South Sudan Referenda Calls for Accountability and Peace in Darfur

Washington, DC – *On January 9, 2011, the people of South Sudan and Abyei will vote in a referendum to decide their political future, according to Sudan’s Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA.) This week, the United States reiterated that the National Congress Party (NCP) and Sudan People’s Liberation Movement (SPLM) should agree on the details of the referendum on Abyei while noting an alternative plan may be possible.*

Congressman Donald M. Payne, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health, released the following statement:

“In two months, the people of South Sudan and Abyei will vote in a referendum to decide their political future, according to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). Unfortunately, we have witnessed over the years that the National Congress Party (NCP), the ruling party in Sudan, signs agreements but rarely honors them.

“The NCP regime has put forth one obstacle after another on the issue of Abyei. In July 2005, the Abyei Boundary Commission (ABC) issued its final report on settling the dispute over Abyei. The ABC was mandated to “define and demarcate” the area known as the nine Ngok Dinka Chiefdoms transferred in 1905 to Kordofan in North Sudan. According to the CPA, “upon presentation of the final report, the Presidency shall take necessary action to put the special administration status of Abyei Area into immediate effect.”, but the Bashir government never implemented the ABC’s decision.

“In May 2008, Government of Sudan forces destroyed the town of Abyei, displaced over 60,000 people, and killed over a dozen. Abyei town was largely burned. In June 2008, the government of Sudan and the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement (SPLM) signed an agreement on “defining and demarcating” the Abyei area. The parties agreed to refer the Abyei dispute for arbitration to the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA). In late 2008, the parties presented their oral arguments before the Permanent Court of Arbitration, and a final decision was made in June 2009, providing more territory to the NCP government. The NCP initially accepted the PCA decision but later reneged on that agreement as well.

“Two months before the Abyei referendum, the NCP is still obstructing and renegeing. The Abyei Referendum Commission has not been setup because the NCP has rejected several candidates chosen by the Government of South Sudan. They are now demanding more concessions. The NCP obstructionism over Abyei is designed to delay the referendum in both Abyei and South Sudan. The NCP strategy is also focused on dividing the South Sudanese people by holding Abyei hostage. The NCP continues its aggression because it knows that there are no consequences for its behavior. Unfortunately, some people believe that the more you reward the NCP, the better the situation. The reverse is true.

“If the NCP hates to see a democratic process in Abyei and refuses to allow a referendum, it should then hand over Abyei administration to South Sudan so that the people of Abyei can vote in the January 9 referendum. It is critical that -- as much as we are eager to offer carrots to a regime at war with its people -- we also make the consequences clear. Acceptance of the referendum outcome by the NCP should not be the only demand. We must also demand a just peace in Darfur and accountability.”

###