

#### **R-4 Prayer and Action to Respond to Ongoing Massacres in Sudanese Civil War**

**Resolved** by the 231<sup>st</sup> Convention of the Diocese of Virginia, that we acknowledge with deep sorrow the news over the past two weeks of ongoing massacres of large numbers of unarmed civilians, including many children, in El Fasher, Sudan, recently fallen to the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), one of the two major combatants in the current Sudanese Civil War, begun in April 2023; and be it further

**Resolved**, that we request our Bishop to designate a day of prayer across our Diocese in the near future for peace in Sudan and for the relief of the millions of displaced people and refugees fleeing that ongoing conflict; and be it further

**Resolved**, that we urge our clergy and people to reach out to members of the Sudanese diaspora, many of whom are members of our congregations, to learn more about this conflict and to help support those whose kin and friends may be among those who have been killed, injured, displaced, or made refugees by this war, and be it further

**Resolved**, that we urge our clergy and people to review General Convention Resolution 2024-D047, adopted last year as the policy of The Episcopal Church urging action by the United States Government and others to bring about peace in Sudan, and to contact their elected representatives urging the United States, consistent with D047, to take a more active role in seeking to bring about peace in Sudan and to bring the perpetrators of these atrocities to justice, and be it further

**Resolved**, that consistent with that General Convention Resolution, we urge our congregations and people to donate to organizations such as Episcopal Relief and Development (ERD) and the American Friends of the Episcopal Church of the Sudans (AFRECS), and similar organizations that will help provide relief to the displaced persons and refugees from the Sudanese Civil War, and are advocating for peace in Sudan, and be it further

**Resolved**, that we ask our Bishop, working with appropriate colleagues in the office of the Presiding Bishop, to contact Archbishop Ezekiel Kondo, Primate of the Episcopal Church of Sudan, to provide a copy of this resolution, and to learn what tangible support our congregations may be able to offer to our lay and clergy colleagues in the ECS through prayer, donations, support for Bible translation, and advocacy.

Respectfully submitted,  
The Rev. Marian K. Wendel  
Mr. Russell Randle

#### **Required Statements:**

This resolution has no financial impact on the Diocesan Budget.

This resolution does not conflict with the Constitution or Canons of The Episcopal Church or The Diocese.

**Explanation:**

Since at least 1998, the Diocese of Virginia, our congregations, clergy, and people have actively worked with the Episcopal Church of Sudan, and after the division of Sudan into two countries in 2011, the Episcopal Church of South Sudan as well. We have persevered with this work through the brutal civil war that began in 1983 and ended in 2005, as well as the subsequent division of the country, and the civil war in South Sudan (2013-2018).

We have visited in mission trips, formed partnerships, and with our partners there built clinics, churches, and schools, and helped fund the translation of the Bible into tribal languages which did not have the Scriptures in their mother tongue. We have hosted our Sudanese and South Sudanese colleagues to build and sustain our congregations' partnerships with dioceses and schools in Sudan and South Sudan.

Using money raised by our Diocese, our partners in the Diocese of Renk built St. Matthew's Cathedral, which Bishop Frank Gray and others from our Diocese joined with the Archbishops of Canterbury and Sudan in February 2006 to consecrate in Renk, South Sudan. In addition, three of our Bishops – the Rt. Rev'ds Peter Lee, Shannon Johnston, and David Jones – visited Sudan and South Sudan in support of the church in these countries including the 2008 Enthronement of Archbishop Danel Deng Bul.

Some of our people are members of the Sudanese diaspora, who came to the United States as refugees or who were granted asylum because of persecution in Sudan for their faith.

With the replacement of the Bashir regime in Sudan in 2019 and the cessation of hostilities in South Sudan in 2018, hopes rose that these war-torn countries would be able to reap the benefits of peace. Sadly, the civilian government in Sudan was overthrown by the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and their militia counterpart, the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), in 2021. In April 2023, the SAF and RSF began fighting each other for control of Sudan, a war that has devastated that country as detailed in General Convention Resolution 2024- D047 (below). Many atrocities, committed by both sides, have since occurred. More recently, the war in the western part of Sudan (Darfur) has further degenerated into ethnic cleansing, directed by the RSF against Black African tribes there. In the most recent reports, received late in October, the situation has grown even worse, with the fall of El Fasher, the last major city in Darfur held by the SAF. Soldiers from the RSF are reportedly executing large numbers of unarmed civilians, raping many of the women, and holding many other people for ransom. It is feared that thousands have already died, and that many more may soon be executed based simply on their color, tribe, and language.

Given our Diocese's long and deep connections with the Episcopal Church of Sudan, it is important the we reach out to our colleagues, pray for and with them, and take tangible action to help them in this time of great turmoil and distress for their country.

**Resolution Number:** 2024-D047  
**Title:** Advocate for a Negotiated Peace in Sudan  
**Legislative Action Taken:** Concurred as Amended  
**Final Text:**

*Resolved, That the General Convention Lament the overthrow of the civilian transitional government of Sudan in October 2021, and the subsequent April 2023 outbreak of devastating civil war between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Force militia, resulting in the death of tens of thousands of people, the displacement of nearly nine million people, the breakdown of civil society, collapse of the medical system, disruption of the banking system, extensive damage to industrial, agricultural and other infrastructure, including the oil facilities vital to the economies of both Sudan and South Sudan, and the impending onset of famine threatening even more people, with over 18 million reportedly acutely food insecure; and be it further*

*Resolved, That the General Convention salute the courageous work of the Episcopal Church of Sudan (ECS), led by its Archbishop, the Most Rev. Ezekiel Kondo, its clergy, and its lay people in continuing to preach the Gospel and to provide tangible relief to the people of Sudan in these dire circumstances; and be it further*

*Resolved, That the General Convention request that our Presiding Bishop send greetings on behalf of The Episcopal Church (TEC) to Archbishop Kondo, with assurances of our continued prayer for ECS, its clergy, and people, and our continued efforts to provide tangible relief and advocacy for peace on their behalf; and be it further*

*Resolved, That the General Convention authorize TEC's Office of Government Relations to advocate appropriate United States Government and International efforts to bring about a cease-fire and a negotiated peace resulting in the restoration of democratically elected government for Sudan, efforts including but not limited to:*

1. **High level diplomatic engagement (a) to persuade countries supporting the combatants with arms, equipment, and funds to stop doing so, and (b) to mobilize the funds and equipment from many countries needed to relieve the impending famine, to restore medical care, and to reconstruct Sudan;**
2. **Imposition of a comprehensive United Nations arms embargo to cut off the flow of military equipment into Sudan and the hands of the combatants;**
3. **Application of appropriate U.S. and international sanctions (including secondary sanctions on parties in third countries) and export controls to discourage private parties from financing and from providing the combatants with the means to continue the conflict;**
4. **As appropriate, the deployment of peacekeeping forces under the auspices of the United Nations to help stabilize the situation and separate the armed combatants from each other**

*And be it further*

*Resolved, That the General Convention ask the Presiding Bishop to:*

1. **designate a season of prayer later this year by our diocese, congregations, clergy and people for peace in Sudan;**
2. **encourage donations to Episcopal Relief and Development (ERD) and the American Friends of the Episcopal Church of the Sudans (AFRECS) to aid in this effort**

*And be it further*

***Resolved, That the General Convention direct the Secretary of General Convention to dispatch a copy of this Resolution to the Honorable Thomas Perriello, the United States Special Envoy for Sudan, and to the Honorable Anthony Blinken, Secretary of State.***

**Citation:** General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Louisville, 2024* (New York: General Convention, 2024), pp. 472-473.