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# **Subcommittee on International Human Rights of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development**

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**EVIDENCE**

**Thursday, February 16, 2017**

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**Chair**

**Mr. Michael Levitt**



## Subcommittee on International Human Rights of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development

Thursday, February 16, 2017

• (1305)

[English]

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Levitt (York Centre, Lib.)):** Good afternoon, everyone. Welcome to the subcommittee on international human rights. We are beginning our first day of testimony on our study of the human rights situation in South Sudan. This is a topic that we've had on the docket for several months now. We consider it extremely important for us to examine the ongoing situation in South Sudan, particularly the issues of displaced persons, child soldiers, and the escalating risk of ethnic violence deteriorating even further. We're looking forward to undertaking this study.

Beginning it as we often do, we have three representatives from Global Affairs Canada joining us here today. From the Department of Foreign Affairs, we have Edmond Wega, acting director general, southern and eastern Africa bureau. We have Eileen Stewart, acting director, South Sudan development division. We have Sacha Levasseur-Rivard, deputy director, southern Africa, southern and eastern Africa bilateral relations division. Welcome to you all.

Let's begin by having maybe 10 to twelve minutes. We can possibly go a little over. Perhaps you can give us some background and an overview of the situation and then we'll open it up to the members with questions.

[Translation]

**Mr. Edmond Wega (Acting Director General, Southern and Eastern Africa Bureau, Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development):** Mr. Chair, subcommittee members, hello.

Thank you for this opportunity today to provide an update on the human rights situation in South Sudan. I am accompanied, as the chair pointed out, by my colleagues Eileen Stewart and Sacha Levasseur-Rivard.

I will begin by providing an overview of the current political context in South Sudan and the factors that have thrown the country into crisis. I will then talk about human rights in the country and present the actions being taken by the international community to hold the South Sudanese authorities to account. I will end by highlighting Canada's efforts to support human rights and to find a sustainable solution to the conflict in South Sudan.

In December 2013, a civil war broke out in South Sudan, only two years after the country's independence. After a short period of tenuous calm following the signing of a peace agreement in August 2015, fighting erupted again in July 2016 between the forces who remain loyal to President Salva Kiir Mayardit and those loyal to

former vice-president Riek Machar. Serious weaknesses in the chain of command on both sides of the conflict resulted in widespread attacks, including against civilians and humanitarian workers.

During the outbreak, Machar fled to the neighbouring countries of Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan and South Africa, where he remains today. In November 2016, with Machar still in exile, President Kiir appointed a former mining minister, General Taban Deng Gai from Machar's opposition group, as first Vice-President, prompting Machar's supporters to call for a return to war.

There has been widespread impunity and lack of accountability for human rights violations throughout the conflict. The African Union Commission has made little progress toward establishing a hybrid court in South Sudan to investigate and prosecute crimes committed during the conflict, as was called for in the August 2015 peace agreement.

The government of South Sudan expressed a renewed commitment to the hybrid court during the UN Security Council's visit to Juba following the July 2016 hostilities, but no concrete actions have been taken by the government to date.

In December 2016, President Kiir announced a national dialogue process to complement the implementation of the August 2015 peace agreement and negotiations with armed groups. The success of this national dialogue will depend greatly on President Kiir's ability and willingness to make this process inclusive. The situation in South Sudan remains of great concern. The conflict has displaced more than 3.3 million people, some 1.8 million of whom have been internally displaced, and more than 1.4 million of whom have fled to neighbouring countries. Approximately one third of the population remains in critical need of emergency food aid. All of this has been exacerbated by a recent economic collapse in the country.

As to the human rights situation, South Sudan was recently the subject of a number of high-level human rights reports, notably by the UN and reputable human rights organizations. These reports documented large-scale violations. Tens of thousands of people have been killed since December 2013, and attacks against civilians and humanitarian workers have still not ceased.

•(1310)

The reports highlight patterns of human rights violations and abuses committed by soldiers, police officers, and members of the National Security Service, as well as by opposition and militia groups. Civil society organizations have been targeted, as have human rights defenders and journalists. Some have been killed and many have fled the country.

As flagged in November 2016 and reiterated earlier this month by the UN Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, there is a heightened level of ethnic hate speech and ethnically motivated violence taking place in South Sudan against civilians—including notably sexual violence against women and girls—that could evolve into genocide.

Also in November 2016, a UN inquiry found that UN peacekeepers failed to respond to an attack on civilians by government troops at the Hotel Terrain in Juba in July 2016, less than a mile from a UN Protection of Civilians site.

During the attack, civilians, including foreign aid workers, were subjected to and witnessed human rights violations, including murder, intimidation, sexual violence and rape, and acts amounting to torture perpetrated by armed government soldiers. Moreover, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, UNMISS, documented 217 victims of rape, including gang rape committed by government troops and other armed groups during and after the July 2016 hostilities in Juba.

•(1315)

[*English*]

The international community is taking actions to hold the government of South Sudan accountable. In response to the July 2016 hostilities, the UN Secretary-General called for an arms embargo and additional targeted sanctions on the South Sudanese leaders who were blocking the implementation of the peace agreement. The Security Council also authorized the deployment of a regional protection force of 4,000 troops to help secure Juba and strengthen the existing 13,000-strong UNMISS force.

However, to this day, the Government of South Sudan has failed to provide its full co-operation, not only with local and international aid organizations, but also to UNMISS, thus preventing the mission from fulfilling its mandate, which includes the protection of civilians and monitoring of human rights abuses.

In December 2016, the United Nations Security Council voted on a resolution proposing an arms embargo and targeted sanctions on South Sudan. The resolution failed to be adopted, which reflected the divisions in the council on this matter. However, all members called for the council to continue to closely follow developments for the Government of South Sudan to exercise its responsibility to protect civilians and bring perpetrators to justice and for a political solution to the ongoing crisis.

The situation in South Sudan is complex and has resulted in Canada's engagement on multiple fronts. Canada has been actively engaging at multiple levels in the country's political process for a peaceful resolution to the conflict. Canada currently sits on the Joint

Monitoring and Evaluation Commission, the principal oversight body established under the peace agreement.

The Government of Canada has publicly expressed on numerous occasions our deep concerns over continued gross violations of human rights in South Sudan and support for the peace process. This includes within the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, where Canada has urged for durable peace throughout the country to ensure the protection of the human rights of South Sudanese people. Beyond our recommendations in the universal periodic review, Canada co-sponsored initiatives of the commission on human rights in South Sudan, established by the Human Rights Council, and made statements on the human rights situation during a special session on South Sudan held by the Human Rights Council.

We have also been actively contributing to UNMISS since its outset in July 2011. We currently have 10 Canadian Armed Forces personnel deployed to the mission and have voiced our support for the United Nations Security Council resolution to strengthen the mandate of UNMISS.

Canada currently has in place targeted sanctions against individuals on each side of the conflict. In addition, the Government of Canada has publicly voiced support for efforts to implement an arms embargo in concert with the international community.

Between 2012 and 2015, Canada's international assistance to South Sudan totalled approximately \$275 million. Our bilateral development assistance program, about \$61 million in 2014-15, has focused on supporting the poorest and most vulnerable, particularly women and girls. We have done so by improving access to basic health care, including sexual and reproductive health care, and training of health workers. We have worked to improve food security and to reduce the risk of famine by boosting food production and protecting livelihoods. We have also worked to strengthen the media and increase the government's understanding of the role of media in a democracy.

In 2016, Canada also provided over \$45 million in humanitarian assistance to help improve access to emergency food, shelter, medical care, safe drinking water, sanitation, and protection for conflict-affected populations. We continue to provide significant funding to United Nations organizations and partners to meet the needs of refugees in the region, including those from South Sudan.

In conclusion, Mr. Chair and subcommittee members, the human rights situation in South Sudan is alarming. Please be assured that we are taking the grave violations being committed in that country very seriously and that we are working tirelessly to try to find a sustainable solution to the conflict in collaboration with the international community.

Thank you.

•(1320)

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

We will now begin with the first round of questioning.

MP Genuis is going to start.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Thank you for your testimony.

I have a lot of questions I want to get through.

First of all, the previous office of religious freedom ran a project in the plains region of Nigeria that brought together community leaders on the Christian and Muslim side and built networks between them to effectively defuse conflicts when they emerge. From what I understand, this model is working very effectively in Nigeria. I'm curious if you're familiar with the model that was used by the office of religious freedom there and if it might be useful as part of defusing ethnic tensions in South Sudan.

**Mr. Edmond Wega:** In terms of assistance, the former religious freedom fund did not fund any projects in South Sudan. It is certain that we're looking for options and different opportunities to further strengthen the protection of human rights in the country. We have been exploring options, including through a group of churches there that are supporting the peace process. We will certainly be looking into the experience in Nigeria to see if there are some lessons learned that can be applied, and we will discuss these with our colleagues who are currently in South Sudan.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Just to clarify, I wasn't so much talking about inter-religious dynamics, but more about whether the model that was used for facilitating inter-religious dialogue might be applicable to facilitating dialogue between different ethnocultural communities. I would encourage you, if you're not immediately sure about the applicability of that model, to provide some information back to the committee later on that.

Some of the briefing materials that I've read talked about the role of Sudan and the role of external powers. I wonder if you can tell us a little bit about the role of other powers in the region that may be fomenting some of this conflict.

**Mr. Edmond Wega:** As we know, the conflict in South Sudan has some ramifications, and a number of countries in the region have a role to play in that. Specifically, the situation with respect to Sudan, as we know, has been quite challenging because there are some issues with Sudan per se. At the African Union level, the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, IGAD, regional bodies have been playing a key role in support of the peace process in the country. With respect to Sudan there are some border disputes between the north and the south that have been problematic. We know there are some issues regarding fees related to the pipeline. We know the situation today with about 1.4 million displaced people who are in different countries, the majority in countries like Ethiopia but also Sudan, as of today, and Kenya. Those situations are creating some additional problems for the international community.

Canada, working with others, has been trying to provide support to refugees through support that we have been providing through UN organizations and other partners. We know that Uganda has been receiving a number of refugees from South Sudan. I think the majority of them are based there, and that situation has also created some problems for the country itself. Through support provided by the international community, the country has been able to cope with some of those problems. It is clear that the situation in Sudan cannot be addressed solely in Sudan, and that's why the role of the African

Union, the intergovernmental authority, and all the international players are important to bring stability and peace to the country.

● (1325)

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** With respect to Sudan, I wonder if you can be a little bit more specific about what Sudan may be doing inside of South Sudan to foment conflict. I've read some things about the Government of Sudan, for instance, supporting particular combatants within the conflict in South Sudan. Also, how does the culture of impunity around the President of Sudan, who is wanted by the ICC, contribute to a general sense of impunity regarding human rights violations that may exist in the region?

I would appreciate your thoughts on that.

**Mr. Edmond Wega:** Mr. Chair, regarding the situation in Sudan, allegations have been made around the world for a number of years regarding Sudan in South Sudan. We know there are a number of unresolved border issues and that there are issues around the fees that are affecting.... We have heard allegations that Sudan has been fomenting some security issues in South Sudan, but we cannot really go as far as commenting on whether or not those are true.

With respect to the second part of the question, regarding the ICC and the situation of impunity, it is clear that both in Sudan and in South Sudan institutions are extremely weak. The sense of impunity has certainly not helped in terms of addressing the current security situation. That's why we have been working with partners, including the African Union, to see how quickly they can establish structures like the hybrid court that is supposed to be established in South Sudan specifically to investigate and address some of the issues that have been raised there around human rights.

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

We're now going to go to MP Tabbara.

**Mr. Marwan Tabbara (Kitchener South—Hespeler, Lib.):** Thanks to all of you for being here today as we conduct this study on the human rights violations in South Sudan.

My first question will be about the displacement. We've seen a lot of displacement with the Syrian and Iraqi refugees leaving to go to Europe.

We're seeing a huge displacement in South Sudan. We know that they're going to neighbouring countries: to Uganda and, in the north, to Sudan. Can you briefly talk about the internal displacement?

Also, I've been seeing news reports that there are a lot of South Sudanese and North Africans fleeing to Europe as well, on makeshift boats, and overwhelming Europe with refugees. Can you tell me about the situation that's happening within neighbouring countries and within South Sudan on the displacement?

**Mr. Edmond Wega:** There are about 3.3 million people who are displaced in South Sudan, about one third of the population. Out of that, we have about 1.48 million who are fleeing to neighbouring countries. As I said a few minutes ago, the majority of them are in Uganda, Ethiopia, and then Sudan, but we also have some people in Kenya and in the DRC.

That situation is quite problematic, as you can imagine. Canada, with the support of the international community, has been very active in supporting those people, either through humanitarian assistance—we provided about \$45 million in humanitarian assistance in 2014-15 to South Sudan—or through supporting a number of UN organizations that are providing assistance to refugees in the neighbouring countries of Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda. In 2016 alone, Canada provided about \$11.3 million to Ethiopia through the UNHCR, the WFP, and others to support refugees in Ethiopia; about \$9.5 million to support refugees in Kenya; and \$3 million to support refugees in Uganda.

We've been very active in helping to really focus on the poorest and the most vulnerable, wherever they are. With the support of the international community, we will continue to support those people.

•(1330)

**Mr. Marwan Tabbara:** It's great to hear that there's support going to South Sudan, but one thing I wanted to bring attention to is the food insecurity that's happening in South Sudan. I've been reading that it's a very dire situation. Many people are very malnourished. I think this needs urgent action. Within the short term for this conflict in South Sudan, I think food insecurity is an issue that we need to resolve. Can you elaborate on how Canada can assist still further in this matter?

**Mr. Edmond Wega:** Mr. Chair, it is clear that the food insecurity situation in South Sudan is really problematic. What we understand is that the situation is actually worsening rather than improving.

Canada, through our development assistance programming, has been supporting South Sudan in helping to improve food security by helping farmers to increase their productivity in order to address those issues, but also by improving the livelihoods of communities that are the most vulnerable and the poorest. We have been doing that for a number of years. We have achieved a number of very good results in that regard, and, moving forward, we hope to continue to work in that area.

I know that other partners are also interested in supporting these areas.

**Mr. Marwan Tabbara:** My third question is regarding the escalation of the conflict. I want to quote from Miss Sooka, "Forced recruitment of youth and children, as well as forced conscription of adult males is taking place." Another quote, "South Sudan stands on the brink of an all-out ethnic...war".

These are disturbing words. I know the conflict is ongoing. How has the conflict escalated since the summer?

**Mr. Edmond Wega:** Up to 2016, most of the conflict was focused around the greater Nile region, which borders Sudan where a lot of the oil reserves are. Since then we've seen an escalation of the conflict, mostly in the Equatoria region, which is in the middle. The situation in Juba is stable, and we have been hearing about the ethnic characteristics of the conflict there as well, which are very problematic.

We have been working with other partners in support of UNMISS, which is the UN mission to South Sudan, but also in support of the deployment of the regional protection force in the country, which is supposed to be made up of 4,000 additional troops to make it 17,000.

The reality is that even with 17,000 troops, who are mostly focused on the protection of civilians, it is not enough to address that issue. We are counting on the government and on different forces to abide by their own commitments related to the peace process and to secure the different areas so as to address the security situation and improve the prospect for peace in South Sudan.

•(1335)

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

We're now going to move to MP Quach, please.

[Translation]

**Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to thank the witnesses for being here to report on the situation in South Sudan.

My first question pertains to the children who are recruited by government forces. In one document, I read that close to 17,000 children had been recruited.

What is the international community doing to address this crisis and put a stop to it? What can Canada do? I saw there is a group called War Child Canada. Have you studied the impact that Canada and the international community have had in preventing children from being involved in this war?

**Mr. Edmond Wega:** The issue of children involved in conflicts is something that Canada takes very seriously, and it condemns any such involvement.

As you know, Canada and the international community have imposed sanctions against individuals in the various parties in the conflict. We maintain that an arms embargo, imposed with the international community, would certainly be very effective in minimizing the risk of that kind of thing. We regret that the Security Council was not able to vote for the resolution that was put forward in December and supported by Canada.

**Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach:** What? The international community, the UN, did not vote...

**Mr. Edmond Wega:** There were seven votes in favour of the resolution and eight abstentions. It was because of those abstentions that the resolution was not adopted. This is unfortunate, but we continue to work with our partners through the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission, which monitors the implementation of the peace agreement. We must ensure that this kind of thing does not increase in South Sudan and that, once the offending parties are identified, they are brought before the appropriate authorities.

We also try to work with the United Nations Mission and with the other partners that are implementing these initiatives on the ground. They report information to us that helps us raise these matters. The Canadian government has very clearly stated its position on these matters and will continue to do so.

•(1340)

**Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach:** Very good. Thank you.

You talked about sanctions taken against both camps, but what is Canada doing to collect and preserve the facts and evidence in South Sudan?

Sexual offences and the wartime rape of women and girls are often mentioned. You also mentioned the hybrid court.

Is Canada taking action to make sure this court is used or improved?

What is it doing to make sure criminal sanctions are imposed?

**Mr. Edmond Wega:** Canada is very active both diplomatically and politically. It has also been very active in the development initiatives we are working on. As to the hybrid court, that commitment was made in the peace agreement that was signed. We are working with the African Union to ensure that all the measures stipulated are implemented as quickly as possible. Thus far, the Union has faced a number of challenges, but Canada has clearly stated its position on this issue, and on all matters involving individuals who committed crimes or violence being brought before the appropriate authorities.

As I said earlier, Canada supports the United Nations Mission in South Sudan. Our officials look after intelligence, planning, and other logistical issues. All of this helps inform the appropriate authorities that everyone will be aware of the abuses committed. Canada has supported the United Nations reports on South Sudan. We are working with the others to make sure that the recommendations put forward are implemented by the various authorities.

**Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach:** Do we know how effective these strategies are in gathering evidence?

Is the evidence mounting?

Do we know if there has been any improvement in this regard?

**Mr. Edmond Wega:** The published reports have highlighted a number of abuses, backed up by evidence. Together with the other members of the international community, we ensure that the abuses are reported. As I already said, we are members of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission. Through this body, we can find out what is happening and determine where the most pressing problems are.

[English]

**The Chair:** We'll leave it there, thank you.

We are now going to go to MP Sheehan.

**Mr. Terry Sheehan (Sault Ste. Marie, Lib.):** Thank you to this committee for undergoing such an important study, and thank you very much to the presenters.

Until about December 2016, humanitarian workers killed in that area numbered approximately 67. Can you tell me what groups are targeting these humanitarian workers and what is being done to stop the violence against humanitarian workers?

**Mr. Edmond Wega:** Mr. Chair, the issue of humanitarian workers has been at the forefront of our discussions, both diplomatically and on the ground. We have voiced our concerns and have been keeping the pressure on the Government of South Sudan to provide humanitarian access for humanitarian workers.

We have certainly heard about what has happened to humanitarian workers in South Sudan. It is difficult to know exactly who has committed those crimes, but we hold the Government of South Sudan accountable because the government is responsible for

ensuring the safety and security of humanitarian workers who are there to support the people, the poorest and the most vulnerable.

This is an issue we have discussed and one of the key elements of the peace agreement. It's an area where a lot of work still needs to happen in order to ensure that access is provided and that humanitarian workers can actually do their work without being afraid of some of the issues we have heard about.

● (1345)

**Mr. Terry Sheehan:** Earlier, there was a discussion about child soldiers. As a father, it's something that deeply bothers me.

We touched on some of the issues, but one of the questions I have is about what is being done by the international community to help child soldiers who are transitioning away from being child soldiers. For those who have decided not to continue or who have been helped to stop, what kinds of supports are there for child soldiers in the international community?

**Mr. Edmond Wega:** Mr. Chair, there are a number of partners currently working in support of those children who have been involved in conflicts. UNICEF is one of the key players in that regard. As we know, Canada has been supporting UNICEF in different forms.

There are also some non-governmental organizations that are very much involved in helping those children who have been involved in conflict to really take their future into their hands and start doing something more reflective of what children of a certain age should be doing to contribute to the development of their country.

Canada certainly has been voicing concerns about child soldiers. As I said, the international community is seized of that issue and has been working to assist, wherever this situation is found.

**Mr. Terry Sheehan:** During your presentation, a number of times you mentioned sanctions that are being applied in the region. Could you give me a little more detail and describe those sanctions? Perhaps you could describe the Canadian ones. I know the United Nations has applied sanctions, as well.

**Mr. Edmond Wega:** Mr. Chair, there are apparently some sanctions in place, established by the United Nations, against six South Sudanese individuals on each side of the conflict. We have also been pushing for an arms embargo, as I mentioned a few minutes ago, which unfortunately was not passed in December 2016. We take those issues very seriously. As I said, Canada has targeted sanctions against those people, and we have been very vocal about the need for an arms embargo.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

MP Sweet, go ahead.

**Mr. David Sweet (Flamborough—Glanbrook, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Wega, for coming in and testifying. I am certain that it is a very difficult situation that you and the department are in, a quagmire such as this.

I doubt you have these numbers with you, so I'm going to ask, through the chair, if you would just table a couple of facts that I think we'll need for the report. One is the estimated strength of the government forces and of the opposition forces. If you could get that to us, that would be great. We have an idea of the combined forces with the UN, so we won't need that.

Also, could you give us a regional breakdown? You mentioned the 3.3 million displaced, but if you could get us a more accurate regional breakdown about where you think those numbers of displaced people or refugees are, that would be essential information for us as well.

I'm going into my 12th year on this committee. At one time, one of my staff, who was with me for just one year, actually looked at some of the cases here and said, "How do you endure this?" When I get to a case like this, I often ask myself how I endure this.

I want to ask for some clarification. On the one hand, you mentioned that Juba is stable, but in your remarks you said that this could evolve into an all-out genocide. We've had four years of conflict, 17,000 child soldiers, rape being used as a weapon of war, 3.3 million displaced people, and tens of thousands who are dead. When does the third pillar of the right to protect actually become something that Canada begins to shout very loudly about, where, if the state itself is not willing to protect its own citizens, then the international community has the responsibility to take action, first peaceably, and then, if it's required, with more coercive measures.

If we are on the precipice of genocide here—and certainly everything you've testified to gives me that...your estimation—when do we begin to really ramp it up, particularly because we are also investing significantly here and putting our own citizens at risk?

• (1350)

**Mr. Edmond Wega:** Mr. Chair, the situation of internally displaced people will certainly provide the information. Of the 3.3 million, about 1.48 million are actually outside of South Sudan. The rest are within the country, so they are internally displaced. There are some in the protection of civilian camps or sites in the country itself.

In terms of genocide, as I said before, the ethnic characteristics of the conflict have raised ongoing concerns, given the featuring of hate speech and violence. The UN special advisor on the prevention of genocide stressed that there is a strong risk of violence escalating along ethnic lines with the potential for genocide. We are monitoring the situation very closely, and the next few months will give us a sense of the state of play there and what else the international community can do.

As I said, there are about 13,000 UNMISS forces there today. We are expecting another 4,000; hopefully, that happens soon. On the other hand, we are certainly pushing to have a permanent ceasefire, which is essential if we are to really implement the peace process. The national dialogue that was called by the president in December is a good first step. Now we are discussing that to see how it can be a bit more inclusive, because as of today our understanding is that it is mostly government represented.

There are a number of steps ahead of us, and there are processes that we hope will lead to positive outcomes before we can assess the situation and see what else can be done. As I said, the African Union

commission has also recently announced that former president Konaré will now be the special representative on South Sudan. He's doing quiet diplomacy and trying to bring the key players around the table for a peaceful resolution of the situation, which is, in our sense, the only sustainable way to address the issue in South Sudan.

• (1355)

**Mr. David Sweet:** Can I just encourage you to strongly encourage the minister that those steps that you're talking about.... I think the time has come to take those steps very rapidly. The human carnage here is to a degree that I don't think we can delay anymore.

**The Chair:** Before we go to MP Fraser and the last question, MP Sheehan asked about sanctions. Just so we close out that issue, can you tell us maybe just a couple of details regarding Canadian-imposed sanctions and SEMA, the Special Economic Measures Act?

**Mr. Edmond Wega:** Canadian sanctions related to South Sudan were implemented under the Special Economic Measures Act. We started our own sanctions with a list of two people, and after that, the UN sanctions kicked in with six people, including the two people we had already included in our own sanctions. So the fact is that we have been applying the UN sanctions...a list of six people.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

MP Fraser.

**Mr. Sean Fraser (Central Nova, Lib.):** Thank you very much for being here. I really appreciate the work that you're doing. I'll try to be quick because I only have a few minutes.

First, on the arms embargo, which I also support, I'm wondering if it's worth lobbying members of the Security Council again because of the periodic change in membership or if you believe that this is said and done. As part two of that question, if you believe that would be unsuccessful, are there other ways we could achieve an arms embargo through diplomatic relations?

**Mr. Edmond Wega:** On an arms embargo, we're still very supportive of an arms embargo in South Sudan because we believe, if it's done through the UN or through the African Union, it will be more effective. We still hope something like that can happen.

Now what will happen in the next few months is difficult to know. There are processes under way as of today. Your question is, "Are there other ways to do that?" We strongly believe they are more effective when they're done collectively, when they're done on a multilateral front so everyone can actually apply the same decision that has been made.



**Mr. Sean Fraser:** I guess I'll just reiterate part one of the question. With the potential for changes in membership, knowing that the vote was seven in favour and eight abstaining, to me if there's one new member who sides with those in favour of an arms embargo, we could achieve this as long as none of the big five exercise the veto power. Is there any hope that it could take place?

**Mr. Edmond Wega:** This process was certainly a UN-led process, and we will need to continue the conversation with other members of the international community to see what's the most appropriate next step, given the situation.

As I said, there is a lot of hope placed in the national dialogue that was called in November or December of 2016, and there are some discussions under way to make that national dialogue more inclusive. We still hope through that process we can get to a ceasefire and the situation will certainly improve.

**Mr. Sean Fraser:** Very quickly, on the issue of food security, you mentioned there was some great success in terms of supporting local food production. Are there any steps being taken from a security perspective to ensure that those success stories don't fall victim to the conflict as well?

**Mr. Edmond Wega:** You are raising a great question.

Mr. Chair, the whole issue of sustainability of results in South Sudan is a big question. It's a fragile state. It is difficult to talk about sustainability, so we have to constantly apply the conflict sensitivity to our programming to ensure that what we do is actually benefiting the most vulnerable and be able to repeat that when we feel it is needed, because we cannot assume that what will work in South Sudan today is what would have worked in another country that is more stable and at peace.

• (1400)

**The Chair:** It looks as if we're right on two o'clock.

I want to thank the three of you for being here today and, again, getting our study rolling. We may even require some additional information from you as our testimony rolls forward, but I thank you for being here.

With that, we shall adjourn.

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