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## Transcript

# Current developments in Sudan

HE Ali Karti

Foreign Minister, Sudan

Chair: Baroness Kinnock of Holyhead

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### **Baroness Kinnock of Holyhead:**

Thank you very much for being here, for what I am sure will be an extremely interesting meeting. I'm supposed to introduce myself: for 15 years I was a member of the development committee at the European Parliament and very actively involved with African, Caribbean and Pacific issues. That, of course, included Sudan. In 2009 I so-called 'retired' from the European Parliament, and Prime Minister Gordon Brown asked me to become a member of the House of Lords. I then joined the Foreign Office for a year.

Now I'm supposed to say – and I'm sure you've all done this because you're used to it – please turn off your mobiles. I think I also have to say that it doesn't mean you just put them on silent or vibrate, but that you actually turn them off, as apparently it interferes with the audio system. And now I would very much like to introduce our guest today at Chatham House – the Foreign Minister of the Government of Sudan, His Excellency Ali Karti. He has extensive experience of foreign affairs and was a founding member of the NCP. He was recently in Washington: many of you will have read about his visit and his meeting with Secretary of State Clinton. We're very pleased indeed to welcome the Minister to the United Kingdom and to this meeting today.

Excellency, it is a very timely opportunity – we were having a discussion over a cup of coffee earlier – to hear your assessment of the post-referendum issues, which of course remain unresolved. You'll also be looking at the current situation in Abyei and also perhaps the need not to allow South Kordofan and Blue Nile to slip from the agenda at this time. I'm sure you'll have a great deal of issues of interest to share with us today, and you'll be able to clarify and develop the questions people will wish to ask after you've spoken – we look forward to that too.

### **HE Ali Karti:**

Well, as-salamu alaykum. I thank you all for gathering today to listen to me and to discuss the current situation in Sudan, and also to concerns of peace, stability in our country, and the region around us. It is a privilege for me to be invited to this very important and prestigious forum to speak to honourable men and women at Chatham House. This is my first visit as Foreign Minister of Sudan, but I've been here before and I have connections in this country and there are British people in Sudan. But this is the first formal visit and I would hope that it will open doors between Sudan and the UK.

We share a history of existence: of British in our country for more than five decades. Throughout that period we enjoyed the company of so many good people who had been appointed to administrate our country, and who had been shouldering so many responsibilities. Our elders still remember those days of support they had from the British while they were there in the country.

Though they were colonisers, good memories are there about the British, and about the good handling of problems throughout those old days, and there were so many problems in such a vast country as Sudan. The British were doing all those jobs, within a very tough atmosphere around them with no roads and no good communications, and it was not easy for them to do that within that context of time. Also, education was implemented in Sudan throughout that period. It connected so many Sudanese and scholars with British culture and English language, and also in other fields of studies – the common law system – I am one of those who had graduated from the faculty of law, Khartoum University. Our cities were planned according to the common law system, and up until now Khartoum University, especially in the faculty of law, the main stream of studies is the common law system. So we have shared this also with the British. Also in the field of trade and economics, our economy was closely connected to the economy of this country.

Our furthest trade partner was the UK for a lot of time. These things have been changing throughout the last two decades. We have our heritage we can base on that. We have from our side the intention and the determination to go back to that history of support and engagement with this country, whether in the field of culture or language, or whether in the field of others – sciences, trade and investment. We hope this visit will be a beginning to move to that dimension of relations between the two countries.

In 2005 the UK was one of the main international players who supported both the parties of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) to agree on the CPA and sign it at last. The UK has also been supporting Sudan to implement that agreement. I had complained so many times that our partners in discussing the agreement or signing had been shrinking away for some time, and they left the two parties to meet the implementation with all its difficulties to do it themselves, without considerable support from us. I know it was very comprehensive, as its name tells, in the details of problems that had not been adequately addressed by the partners, or in the mechanisms of solving problems, or even in the problems of implementation. So we needed the support from friends who had been around us when we were discussing all this. Unfortunately our partners had their own concerns and focuses outside

of Sudan, and for this reason we had our impasses, one time after another, we had the stumbling in stones here or there. Nevertheless, the will that prevailed when we discussed the agreement and signed it – the will not to go back to war – was the main reason that drove the two parties to sustain peace and stability.

Though we have had here and there some incidents of violations, that had been content within the same mechanisms of the CPA of solving the problems of implementation. This is a moment of thanks to the UK and the people of this country for the support they handed to us, and I'm here to thank everyone and begin from that. Yesterday I had a good meeting with the Foreign Secretary and we discussed all things in and around Sudan. To me it was encouraging, and we feel that we had the support that we needed from the Foreign Secretary. I feel it could be a good beginning to come again and again and invite our colleagues from this country – high officials – to come and discuss these matters, and to think how can we revive these relations between Sudan and the UK.

To come back to Sudan, you know and you remember we had been suffering from a long war between south and north, and how this war ended up with total destruction of the economy of the country and so many resources. More importantly, so many chances had also been lost by the two parties, south and north, because if you have war, nobody will come to support you or invest in you, or try to do anything to help you. So the war not only was destroying resources – whether human or economic – but also made a very big loss of chances to both parties of the country. A long conflict like this, with destruction throughout this period, needs more consent from our partners in peace, and unfortunately we did not have that support. Nevertheless we had been committed to that code of peace, and for that goal of peace we in the Sudanese government had sacrificed a considerable part of our country, and a considerable part of our population and resources in the South just to keep the two parts of the country living in peace and to stabilise the situation.

Whether it could be united or separated, as had happened in the referendum, we were committed to the letter and the spirit of the CPA, and for that reason we remember the famous words that had been delivered by our leader, President Bashir when he went to Juba. Nobody was expecting him to go to Juba and say those words. He encouraged the whole process and he changed the whole spirit. So many people around us thought the referendum could be a slow occasion, but it went out to come like this whether by the will of the leaders or by the good words that had been delivered, or by the nature of Sudanese people, whether from the north or the south. The nature of the

Sudanese is not the nature of the neighbouring countries, as you may have seen throughout history. Even elections have been the origin of great destruction to the country in some of our neighbouring countries.

So everything went well, and I would repeat again and again, the spirit of peace prevailed and led us, both parties, to end up with that referendum and you know the result of the referendum, which was welcomed and recognised by the Government of Sudan. Contrary to the expectations of so many around us, all those who had been concerned with Sudanese matters, I would also reiterate our commitment for peace and our commitment for a good neighbourhood with our brothers in the South. We feel that we are one nation, but for historical and political reasons, and other motivations here and there, there was the decision of the people of South Sudan and it was welcomed and well-respected and nevertheless we feel that we lost a lot, but it's good to have a neighbour in peace rather than have part of your population in atrocities and deaths and wars and those things alike.

It's better to have our brothers near us as neighbours having their own country and their own state, and neighbourhood is not a simple thing, especially if you have borders with this new neighbour of almost 2,000km. Our resources are lying there between south and north – whether agricultural, grazing or minerals or oil and gas, whether livestock or the population itself. Very strangely, of the population of the whole of Sudan, a third of it is on or around these borders. It's therefore very important to have a good neighbourhood and we have been through the last three or four months speaking to the mediators and to our partners in the South about how we can use these borders as means of connections and good relations rather than means of tensions and problems.

You may have in your minds what is happening now in Southern Kordofan or in Abyei. We assure you, this is transitional. Though it is a problem, and not an easy one, I will assure you from what we've heard from our partners it could be easily solved with some kind of patience and good mediation, and it will be easy for us to get out of that. Looking to the future is very important to us, and asking; how can we benefit from this neighbourhood? How can we benefit from the resources? And not only the resources but the transfer of resources, and trade, and population, business is very important to us. Security-wise, if we can secure our borders with a co-operation between the two parties of the country now – the two states after 9 July – that could be a good neighbourhood, and I assure you now we're working on that goal. If you hear anytime that there are tensions here or there, that to us is understandable. If you look to the history of tensions between south and north

and if you look to how these people from south and north used to deal with each other – only by guns and by tanks – and if you compare this to the history, you will find it easy, and to us we need more patience, we need more concern from our international partners, especially those who are interested in the North and the South. Recognition of the new state will be there. Nevertheless if there are any problems, I assure you this recognition will be there.

So far as there are no issues that we're being...[inaudible]... throughout the three or four weeks ago and we feel now these issues have been calmed down. I hope by that time we'll be the first to recognise the new state and we'll be the first to open a new embassy, and we're having inputs with the ambassadors and diplomats who have been relocated to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs throughout the implementation of the agreement. They will also be colleagues and diplomats who will be there, and we hope also that diplomats from the South will find their way to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the South. That's an input if you have the same person who has been working in the North having his chance also to work in the South and work closely with his colleagues, that would also open doors.

One issue that just escaped me when I was talking about the borders was to solve lingering and unsolved problems by a kind of opening of the borders, by making them soft and easy for trade and investment to get through the borders rather than going back to the capitals and having visas and formal papers of transfer from one country to another. We would hope our partners in the South will recognise this, because it will open the doors easily, and it will facilitate so many problems – it could be a good base for the discussion of remaining issues, although they are tough. If we look to them through soft borders, whether resources, Nile water or nationality, or other issues, it will be easier. We hope that kind of offer will be welcomed from our partners in the South.

What we feel now is important, which is advice to be given from us and from our partners here: that a transformation of the guerrillas who had been fighting in the jungles throughout the war into a civil society, into a political party, into a formal arm working with rules and regulations – would also help to implement this kind of new governance in the South. We need it. We are not giving lectures or advice on this, though it is very important to give advice – but for the good relations between South and North we have to deal with this component. If we have a regular army here, we need to have one there. If we have political parties really transforming into serious political parties, we

need the situation to be like this in the South because it will facilitate relations, open doors for cooperation and it will be easier to understand each other.

Other than this, you know the CPA could be only a ceasefire. At any time it could collapse, and we don't want to go back to war by a lack of civil understanding of the situation between the two parties. As I mentioned, there are very important post-referendum issues that need more concern and more discussion between the two parties. I would hope that these events happening now would not distract both parties from going the same way up to the goals of implementation and getting to agreement on those issues, and implementation of the declaration of the new state on 9 July. I assure you that even if we were not able to conclude a full agreement on those issues, we remain committed to them. Our goal is to attain peace. We sacrificed a lot and we will not go back to war on differences on these issues, though they are important and vital to the new state in the south and to Sudan losing a considerable part of its revenues, whether from oil or other revenues coming from the south.

Some impediments lie there on the route: the least of them is the ICC making problems here and there, sometimes within the implementation of peace, and implementation of peace in Darfur. It's an area where we need to focus and complete what began in Doha throughout 30 months of discussion and ended up with this stakeholder consultation. The document was passed by all of them, though they came from different parties and different ethnic parts of the country, and different political parties. But we feel like there is a chance of going forward for lasting peace in Darfur through signing an agreement of peace between Sudan's government and those who are taking up arms. Though some of them come and go once and again, and we especially hope the international community and the UK will provide advice: to go and join the talks.

There is no future, and they are relying on support from the South. The government of the South declared so many times that it would not go to war by proxy or by anything with the North. If you are there relying on Chad, you know we had good relations with Chad and we are now monitoring our borders together by drawing forces from Chad and Sudan. We concluded an agreement with [Central African Republic] before two weeks for extending the range of security with the borders with [Central African Republic], and the collapse of the Libyan regime may be the last lesson that should be taken into consideration if all these parts of the world around Sudan are not opening doors. It is not easy for anybody to get any support or get any kind of

residence in these countries, it will be good for them to come and discuss and sign.

The other alternative may be just to live outside in asylums and hotels – this is not the thing we are working for. We hope all of our people, even if we have our differences, come to the country and they begin their political life if they want to become leaders in their countries. It is open for them to initiate political parties, whatever may be the goal of those parties, and to work within the Sudan. So far it is open for them to work as politicians, like those who are there in Sudan, more than two dozen political parties so far working in Sudan. They are doing their job and there are no impediments or problems. More than fifty papers are free to write whatever they wish, and radio and TV broadcast and that of the government is there. Political life is nourishing. Though some may have differences with me, I would say if we compare ourselves now with what had been happening before 10 years ago, it was so different. If you compare Sudan's political life with any neighbouring country, it is so different.

This is the reason why the Arab Spring is moving around Sudan. So many thought that Sudan could be targeted by the Arab Spring, but we are enjoying a stability that had never been before. Not because of the ability of the forces or the army, but because of the situation. If you are allowed the chance to say whatever you want to say, and politically engage yourself anywhere, if you are allowed to work, move, do anything in your country, you don't need to have all these agonies to make a revolt, to change everything or to burn anything. We welcome any change toward the future, but this is a lesson to those who were waiting for Sudan and who were concerned about the political situation in the region. Those countries that had been really under special treatment by some Western countries, they are now falling down. Those regimes, they were ejected from their people. If really the West wants democratisation and good governance, it's good to get engaged with the people of that area. It's very important to consider the history of support to those regimes, simply because those regimes tend to be allied to the West. This is not the right way. People can also be allies to the West. But it is only the regimes that had been suppressing their people for a long time, and not giving them any chance to say or do whatever they wish.

I would like to say a few words about investment in Sudan. I will just say that Sudan is open for people from the UK or from the rest of the world. We have our resources in Sudan: we have minerals, gas, oil and agriculture. From that dimension, I would declare here that we are proposing a conference on oil,



gas and minerals in Sudan in September this year. I would hope it will open doors and transfers between Sudan and the UK.

Quickly I would like to say some words about Abyei. Differences on this area are due to history, yet the coexistence between different people in that area is also history. Unfortunately the problem was politicised because of the fact that some leaders of the SPA are from that area and a lot of concern and focus was put on that area. The situation could easily have been solved by discussion with the populations of that area, and the tribes who had been connected to each other: to the extent that some leaders from both parties have their mothers from the other party. Nobody can understand this if they don't go to that area and find some leaders that are from the Messeriya and the Arabs, and have their mothers from the Dinkas of Abyei. So life was going on in that way and it was easy, but unfortunately politics spoiled things.

Nevertheless we have to have a solution, which will consider the benefits of both parties. After that time, we had been implementing the agreement and Abyei protocol. That is telling us that this area should be evacuated from any arms and troops of any party. And what happened through the time after the referendum troops were coming from the south, and police in uniform and in tanks.

Time after time, violations coming, attacks happening, and we had been telling the UNMIS and others that these violations will not go on, especially if you are part of the population denied the right to fetch water for 6 months. And if you have an input of more forces coming from the South in police uniform, the same people – our people there know them – they come back wearing police uniform in their thousands, filling the area. The last attack was not against the Sudanese army, but the UNMIS force which was escorting the troops outside of the area, as had been agreed in [inaudible] for some days, and that happened. I am here to assure you that that is not the last solution. This is only for the stabilisation of the area, and if you had been told that some people went out by thousands, they had not been chased outside, they can come back and I assure you that nobody will touch them.

If you had been told that by thousands Messeriya came to the area, they will not be there, I assure you. They will not keep there, and the army and the arrangements will be taken at last and anybody who is not authorised to stay in that area. We are the only solution to the inability of UNMIS forces to do anything and to prevent anything from adding forces. Strangely enough when that was refused from our partners in the South and they said policemen were there, it's an excitement that the Sudanese army is now capturing five tanks.

Consider that: a policeman riding a tank. There are problems, and they're not coming out of the blue. There are problems that should be considered, and I assure you we are engaging ourselves into solutions. There are solutions being proposed now by Ethiopians, and the Africa Union and United Nations, we are discussing those solutions. By the time we sign an agreement on that solution, you will find no Sudanese soldiers in that area. Thank you very much.

### **Baroness Kinnock of Holyhead:**

Thank you very much for that overview, Excellency. I now open the floor for questions. Just to say that everything that we've said here today is on the record, and of course as you can see the meeting has been opened to the media as well. We hope we can have a lively discussion between us when we start the questions. Could you please be concise – we don't really want statements; we want precise questions please so that I can get in as many people as possible. If you could give us your name and any affiliation of external connection you might have, that would be useful.

### **Question One:**

I'm concerned about what steps have been taken regarding oil. The oil's in South Sudan, obviously, and the South Sudanese need to go through your territory. I understand there's been talks between both of you, how are they progressing? Have they been productive? My other question relates back to your presentation: what are you doing to rehabilitate child soldiers back into society, are you getting help from overseas countries? This is a big problem which is really understated I think.

### **Question Two:**

Mr Ali, you spoke a lot about peace and you also talked about demobilising or regularising southern guerrillas. You were a founder of the People's Defence Force Militias, which have been used alongside the main army in northern Sudan, in the Nuba mountains, in the south, in Darfur, and in Abyei. Do you also intend to demobilise or regularise those forces?

**HE Ali Karti:**

Thank you for the questions. In fact your second question is not clear to me, but I will elaborate on oil if you have some time. Of course you know more than 70 percent of our oil is produced in the South. And it is the right of our brothers in the South to have their oil after 9 July, as the agreement says. But there are other facilities which are in the North. The reserve oil, refineries, pipeline and exporting facilities are in the north, with the normal way of getting oil to the north and to the ports. Now we are discussing how things will go after 9 July. Could it be agreed that either party will have the same assets as it has now within the region, whether North or South, or are we going to share some acquisition of those assets? Generally things are going towards splitting things according to the assets according to the regionality. That means most of the oil, 70 percent maybe in the South, other facilities are in the North. We are discussing how the South can benefit from these facilities, and how things can go between South and North accordingly. I assure you we are open and there are so many propositions coming from mediators. We hope by 9 July at least a kind of framework agreement will be attained. If there is no agreement, I would not say that the South will be cut off from the ports or the refineries, this will never happen, I assure you.

What we are attaining is trying to get through an agreement getting each part of the country its right over the assets that are in that part of the country. There are other proposals coming from the mediators of a period of support by oil from the South to the North. This is not yet discussed, and it looks that it will not be working. Nevertheless we have our assets here and there, and we have a lot to exchange, whether by oil itself or oil with benefits, so it's open. What is more important is the fact that we agreed to agree on all those issues, otherwise we do not consider ourselves to be agreeing on anything. Agreeing on every detail is maybe the way out of this. If you have so many inputs, you have to put all those inputs into the agreement between the South and the North, especially with regard to financial and economic matters.

With regard to the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration strategy, we are working in the South and in the North, but unfortunately the international community was not delivering enough. Hundreds of thousands of people were connected to war from the South and from the North. But I would assure you also: those who are from the North, they are living in a different area, and most of them had their access to normal life, though they need support and we are requesting more support from the international community to the DDR. The ways of life are different from those in the North to those in the South.

What I say now is we have a continued request – to consider the situation of those people who had been fighting for their lives. They do not know how to do anything else, they are not trained to do anything else but fight. If you have that input in your political component in your population, you have to consider the political future of that part of the country. Any differences may enter into clashes by guns or by any kind of assaults. So it will be normal if we work together whether in the South or in the North to take these people to their normal, civilian lives, and it was only an advice to them. The advice is not only important to them, but for us, as we have to deal with this population, and if you have a population that does not know how to solve any problems rather than by guns, then you have a problem. It is good for us both.

### **Question Three:**

If you want soft borders, why have you stopped traded goods from coming over into South Sudan? And if you want the Ngok Dinka, who have been pushed out of Abyei, to go back, why did your forces set fire to the town and destroy it?

### **Question Four:**

Minister you talk about the language of peace, the implementation of the CPA, but yet your tanks are rolling into Abyei and invading Abyei, and as a result, thousands of people in Abyei have been displaced. As we speak, yesterday there were lots of similar actions by your own army launching offensives in Southern Kordofan. How would you explain that? The second thing you talk about is recognition – you will be the first to recognise the independence of Southern Sudan. But yet some quarters within the national congress are talking about how they won't recognise Southern Sudan if the border demarcation is not completed. How would you explain that? You're talking two things – you're saying one thing, but at the same time you're doing something completely different in Sudan. This is completely unacceptable.

### **Question Five:**

I am really pleased to hear the Foreign Minister's position on soft borders and nationality. My question is if this is going to be the position of the NCP now, accepting dual nationality and soft borders, and also allowing Southern Sudanese in the north permission to stay and work freely, is that the new position? I hope so.

**HE Ali Karti:**

Yes you are right, we are working for soft borders. But if you have day to day mechanisms here and there, like you have everywhere, if you have problems crossing the borders, would you open borders just because you are working for soft borders? We are not naïve. We know sometimes that there are some people – I would not say that this is [inaudible], or easy. If some people are trying to send us some troops and problems, we are not naïve. We are trying to keep our country safe and open doors for people. When we are able to deal with this and deal with the problems, we will open the doors. We are not trying to seal anything. So if you feel our borders are closed at one time or another for some reason, it does not mean this is our policy. Our policy will be if the other partner receives it, we will work on soft borders. We know that both parties need soft borders.

On the question of Abyei, we are working for peace. We are working for peace and we have an agreement, and we have somebody who doesn't recognise that agreement and doesn't want it to be implemented as it was written. The spirit of peace and the spirit of co-operation that over six years has prevailed between the two parties is not there in Abyei. There are some people who are trying to spoil things in Abyei, I assure you, and it is not us. If you have soldiers coming in police uniform, if you have soldiers riding tanks, and if you are alarming the international forces there that this is wrong, that this is not the thing we agreed upon, you have to do something. Nobody is trying to do anything – shall we just stay there and leave everything to go as it is?

And I assure you, there was no burning, no one was shot, and it's only fear. I agree with you: some people had their fears and they went away, and now it is open for them. While we are talking here, there are people who are talking in other places about how things can come back, not as a unilateral solution, some people from the south are trying to implement. It is not as a unilateral solution, as some people may consider the existence of the arms there for that, but for a lasting solution. Why shouldn't we abide by what we have signed? If you are now considering the existence of the army and the tanks there as a violation, you would consider what has happened before. People in police uniform, and tanks. And I assure you, if you have your fears from the North, you will not have these fears if both parties abided by the agreement. We have no intention to go into that area or any intention to spoil what we have done throughout 60 years and what we have sacrificed. The big sacrifice is part of the country and part of the population for peace – why should we fight for 10,000km? We should not fight.

Regarding the recognition and border demarcation, if you have some people from here and there sending ideas or talking about their own convictions, this doesn't mean it's the policy of the Government or the NCP. Our policy is to open doors, make soft borders, have a good neighbourhood and implement peace. We recognise the existence of this new state, I assure you. Don't go back to the internet and read something and imagine that the Government will be led by those things; this is not our policy I assure you.

With regard to the soft borders and dual nationality, those things are closely connected. If you don't have them or it's better for you to have open doors and open borders to the people who have nationality from the South and the North, why are you trying to get to dual nationality if you have these borders open, like is happening in Europe? Each country has its own nationality, but the borders are open for all. Why should we try to implement something that could not be respected by other parties? I don't feel like there is a problem, but if we don't get into that, it will be easy for us to have two populations with two different nationalities but having both the borders open between both countries open for them to live, to work, and to do anything apart from political rights. What's wrong with that?

#### **Question Six:**

You touched on Libya and you used the phrase 'the collapse of the Libyan regime.' My question is: is Sudan's door open to Colonel Gaddafi and his sons if they decide to leave Tripoli and come to you on a short or long-term basis?

#### **Question Seven:**

Sudan at the moment is still one country. People in the South are citizens of Sudan – Bashir is responsible for them, although we have Kiir in the South. By sending Sudanese troops to clear 80,000 citizens of its own in Abyei, do you think that is a responsible act of a government that is really looking for peace in Sudan? Secondly, do you think the actions that your army has carried out in Abyei, is it proportional to the incident that happened for you to completely destroy towns, the aerial photographs of the villages and the people that have been sent away, and the small children. Do you think this would qualify for another referral to the ICC by any citizen from the South in order to ask your president, the commander of the army?

### **Question Eight:**

Firstly, in a recent development in Libya, you accused the Darfurian rebel movement of helping Gaddafi forces. That has put the lives of hundreds of Sudanese working in Libya in danger. Did you consider that? Secondly, in the Sudanese media there are big allegations about corruption – you buying a friend's palace hotel in Khartoum for \$70 million.

### **HE Ali Karti:**

I begin with the last one. First, those allegations were rebutted by not only me but by the owners of that hotel, but I would assure you that if I could buy that hotel it would be a very good thing, and you would not see me as a foreign minister here. As regards Libya and the accusation of some people who have supported Gaddafi and his forces, it did not come from us. It came from the Libyans themselves, and now it is coming from the international media. What is happening now is that the Sudanese had never been harmed, not a single one of them, because the Libyan people know that the Sudanese have not been supporting Gaddafi, because we are a responsible government. We have been engaged in moving those people by their tens of thousands to their country safely. If we are accusing them of that we cannot remove them from a dangerous place like Libya... We are responsible; we cannot say things like that. This is only media, and I want you to pull out of that.

With regard also to Gaddafi fleeing to Sudan, I would hope that they will come, so as to end the suffering of the Libyan people. But I assure you Sudan would not accept anything like that. We are part of the international community that asked for a no-fly zone, and Sudan in the Arab League was clear and open to deliberate on that issue, and our position is clear. We had our problems from Gaddafi throughout history – from 1982 and being bombarded by his aircraft, and history after that tells you how things are going. Until now, he is hosting one of the main leaders of the rebel groups, and you know what happened throughout this revolution – his troops by the thousands were removed from the camps when the opposition were able to take over those areas. Gaddafi will not have any asylum in Sudan.

With regard to Abyei driving 80,000 people away, this is only media. Abyei had never been populated by 80,000 people. Even if you add the Messeriya who were living in that area, they were not at all 80,000. The army did not move anyone outside – I told you, they were escaped only. Nobody was shot, nobody was chased, and the doors are now open like the doors are open for

others. I will say again: this is not lasting, this is not permanent, and this is not the solution. This is only a transitional phase, trying to establish the area.

If you compare what happened with the army to what happened before, I would say if you have ten violations, and if you have a whole population of the area denied the right to resources like water or grazing, if you are a responsible government and you have international forces there, doing nothing like just opening doors for both parties to fight – like what happened in the Congo and others – we have the right to stop any atrocity in the making. We have never fought or driven anybody outside the area. The army will be there until we agree on the permanent arrangements, and I assure you there are no atrocities. This is fiction.

### **Baroness Kinnock of Holyhead:**

Thank you very much Minister for your time and for your efforts during this meeting. A few weeks ago Minister I mentioned to you that the All-Party Parliamentary Group in Westminster visited Khartoum and Juba. We were certainly struck by the very high level of expectation in the South that people have at this time, and we understand very clearly – because we visited both the North and the South – the importance that you highlighted of maintaining that level of interest. Also we were made aware by the people we met in the North and the South, but particularly in the South, of the fragility of the peace they were experiencing. We read now about what's been called an 'arc of insecurity' which is emerging from South Kordofan to Abyei and the Upper Nile states. I think we need to be well aware of that and ready to react to any efforts by anyone to destabilise that region and those parts of Sudan. I also hope very much that Minister, you will make continue to make every effort to work for peace and security for the millions of people of Sudan who have suffered decades of misery and suffering, and we trust very much that all those who can influence and have the power to do it will ensure that those people can have a peaceful and secure future.