

CURRENT UPRISING IN SUDAN
Hon. David Kilgour, JD.
PUBLIC PROTEST BY CONCERNED CANADIANS
PEARSON BUILDING
Ottawa
3 October 2013

Thanks you all for coming from Toronto, Montreal, Hamilton, Kitchener, Windsor and Ottawa to this demonstration today.

Let me begin with some of Smith College Professor Eric Reeves' observations (which I share fully) on the uprising in Khartoum as of two days ago:

Reeves quotes the historian Douglas Johnson in an interview with Voice of America in Nairobi. Johnson says Sudan hasn't seen such protests since two previous governments were toppled in the 1960s and 1980s, and emphasizes that the protests have spread beyond the capital of north Sudan. Johnson goes on:

I don't know if [the demonstrations are] being coordinated, but that is an indication of a rising sea of discontent. What you've got to have in Sudan for this to be successful is, one, you have to have a public that has nothing left to fear—and I think we're beginning to see that—and, two, you've got to see a loss of morale in security services. I don't know if you've seen that yet, but those two combined are what brought down the two previous military governments in 1964 and 1985. (Voice of America Nairobi, October 1, 2013)

Reeves then cites Nesrine Malik writing in *The Guardian* on-line on October 1:

While the numbers remain small, two things stand out: the anger has crossed the class divide and, most distressingly, the number of protesters shot and killed by government security forces has been unprecedented. There have been too many deaths too close to home.

Reeves then quite reasonably stresses:

There has been to date a conspicuous failure of the international community to respond with remotely adequate condemnation of the regime for its bloody tactics, or to offer even moral support for those attempting to liberalize political conditions in Sudan. Karim Lahidji, President of the International Federation for Human Rights, put the reality bluntly...:

“The international community has too often provided inadequate responses to serious violations of human rights in Sudan. The African Union must take the lead and respond to the current crisis with the gravity it requires, by urgently sending a commission of inquiry.” (Public statement, with the African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies, October 1)

Reeves, who is no doubt the closest American observer of Sudan, continues,

... Time after time, U.S. action or inaction has contributed to crises, particularly in the Arab world and Africa... Russia is reported to have ‘discouraged debate’ at the UN Security Council on the uprising in Sudan. This would appear to forestall Security Council involvement for the foreseeable future, despite the urgency of the situation on the ground in Sudan. Russia has sold huge quantities of expensive armaments to Khartoum, including MiG-29 advanced fighter aircraft, deadly helicopter gunships, and maintenance and piloting contracts.

The signal now being sent to the regime in Khartoum is that it can expect forceful condemnation by human rights groups (fully expected), tepid criticism from the U.S. and EU (a point of concern in the regime's calculations), ambiguous commentary from the Arab League countries—but nothing of significance from international actors with the power to bring pressure to bear on Khartoum to halt

its bloody repression, and to address the underlying causes of the uprising.

...we simply can't know how many have died, but the most compelling reports suggest a figure of almost 1,000 killed or wounded, with more than 1,000 arrested—the latter a number that continues to grow rapidly (see excellent dispatch from Asharq Al-Awsat [Khartoum and London], [September 30](#)).

On cracks and dissention within Bashir's regime, Reeves sees growing signs of large-scale flight of families of senior officials and some officials themselves.

I agree with my friend Reeves that there are good reasons for believing that “the Sudanese have had enough of the al-Bashir regime, and that the regime simply doesn't have the funds to resuscitate a moribund economy, wage war against internal enemies on several fronts—and address the grievances of those most affected by the decision on subsidies”. Here are some other Reeves' points:

- *There have been several reports of desertions by army units; to date, no larger units are reported to have gone over to the side of the uprising, but what we have seen so far may be only the "thin edge of the wedge."*
- *Grumbling within the military has raised the possibility that the country could see yet another coup, as it did in 1964 and 1985.*
- *The uprising already has a character much different from that of summer 2012. There are already "martyrs," highly regarded young people with widely extending families. The most prominent to date, and already for some a symbol of the uprising, is Salah Sanhouri (photograph [here](#)):*

Conclusion

There should be no mistake: the uprising in Sudan is in the hands of the Sudanese. They deserve, however, the legitimate help the international community can provide—and certainly more than we

have seen from the Harper government, Obama administration, or the African Union, Commonwealth, E.U. or U.N. Where is R2P?

On Friday [Sept. 27], the United States described the crackdown as "brutal" and said excessive force had been used. The European Union also expressed concern about the deaths, and a spokeswoman for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights urged security forces to exercise "utmost restraint." (Middle East On-Line [Khartoum], September 30).

These are easy words, inadequate and with no entailments, probably just what the regime wishes. The Arab League must speak with a stronger voice; the African Union and Commonwealth must confront the Khartoum regime.

The Bashir regime is capital 'R' racist against Sudanese nationals it considers to be Africans. We have seen this over many years in what is now South Sudan, Darfur, the Nuba Mountains and elsewhere in the country. The ICC has rightfully indicted Bashir.

The Sudanese people must define their future...but too little assistance is being offered to these victims of 24 years of oppression, military actions, and complete economic mismanagement.

Thank you.