

MEMORANDUM

**TO: The Ethiopian Government
C/O Mr. Kassahun Avele
Ethiopian Ambassador to United States America
3506 International Drive NW
Washington DC, 20008**

FROM: Anuak Committee for Peaceful Resolution

DATE: October 13, 2004

We have heard from Malik Chaka, staff member for the United States House of Representatives' Sub-committee on Africa, that the Ethiopian Government is interested in talking with the Anuak. The Anuak Justice Council and its Anuak Committee for Peaceful Resolution (ACPR) welcome this initiative on the part of the Ethiopian government.

The governments of Canada, Norway, Sweden, as well as the European Union are committed to bringing about a conclusion to the events perpetrated against Anuaks by Ethiopian security forces in the Gambella region. Additionally, the United States Department of State, Members of the US Senate African Committee, and US Foreign Appropriations Committee, as well as human rights organizations, such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, have also joined in working towards ensuring the survival and protection of the Anuak.

In light of the recent events in the Gambella region, the Anuak Justice Council, a non-governmental, non-partisan organization, has been established for the protection and well being of the Anuak people. Its primary goal is to work towards the restoration of peace, security, and the rule of law in the Gambella region and to see that the rights of the Anuak are protected as laid out in the Ethiopian constitution.

The Anuak Justice Council has appointed a committee, the Anuak Committee for Peaceful Resolution, in response to the Ethiopian government's request for peace talks with the Anuak.

The ACPR is seeking a sustainable long-term resolution to the events that have occurred in the Gambella region. Despite the atrocities inflicted upon the Anuak people during the past fifty years, the ACPR is committed to a solution through direct, honest discussions, in good faith, with the Ethiopian government that is in the best interest of all Ethiopian citizens.

The ACPR will only engage in discussions with the Ethiopian government under the condition that the Ethiopian government puts an end to the events occurring in the Gambella region. Additionally, the ACPR needs assurance that the Ethiopian government will seek to reconcile the suffering and pain caused by the massacre of over 1,500 Anuaks, the rape of over 400 Anuak women, the thousands of internally displaced Anuak as well as Anuak refugees living outside of the country, and the false imprisonment and torture of Anuak leaders and dissenters. Furthermore, the government needs to provide reparations for the destruction and pillaging of Anuak property and the expropriation of Anuak homes and schools by the Ethiopian defense forces.

The ACPR would like to enter into this dialogue with a sincere and positive attitude and with a willingness to take into account the legitimate needs of Ethiopia. The ACPR hopes that this attitude would be reciprocated and that a solution could eventually be found that would satisfy and safeguard the aspirations and interests of both parties.

In order for these talks to be successful, it is imperative that third-party mediators and observers be part of the structured talks, thereby holding both sides to equitable standards of accountability. The ACPR feels the success of the peace process can be made more certain if the mediators are agreed upon by both parties and the talks are held in a location outside of Ethiopia.

The ACPR regard the following as essential elements of any peaceful solution:

1. Respect for Anuak human rights and fundamental freedoms.
2. Right to autonomy and self-determination.
3. Hold the perpetrators of crimes against humanity accountable and bring them to justice.
4. Allow local jurisdiction over education, health, economic affairs and resources.
5. Provide for fair and equitable distribution of power and resources.
6. Allow local jurisdiction over internal defense and security within the region.
7. Provide reparations to the Anuak for emotional and physical injuries, loss of life and destruction of property.
8. Release Anuak leaders, including the 44 democratically elected leaders who are being held in the federal jail in Addis Ababa, for two years without trial, as well as others who are being held in Gambella.
9. Provide access to mass and other gravesites by international forensic experts to exhume bodies, identify those bodies where possible and to give those bodies back to families and loved ones for a proper Anuak burial.
10. Provide economic assistance to support services to address emotional, physical, and psychological trauma.
11. Promote local elections of Gambella regional government leaders, monitored by international observers.

The ACPR acknowledges that the negotiations will be a difficult process, but it strongly believes that by carefully addressing these issues, peace, security and the rule of law can be restored to the Gambella region. If the Ethiopian Government is interested in being an active participant in addressing the above ten conditions of the ACPR, the ACPR is willing to engage in the peace process.

Negotiations should be started in earnest. The ACPR wishes to approach the future status of Gambella and the relationship between the Anuak and Ethiopian Government in a reasonable and realistic way, in a spirit of frankness and conciliation, and with a view towards finding a solution that is in the long-term interest of the Anuak people and the citizens of Ethiopia.

You may contact Malik Chaka with your decision, and he will in turn inform us.