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SUDAN ACTIVISTS ASK SENATE TO BLOCK GRATION'S CONFIRMATION TO KENYA POST
In letter, rights groups cite ongoing "missteps" and "failures in diplomacy" in Sudan

CITIES NATIONWIDE – April 01, 2011 – In advance of a [hearing](#) of the U.S Senate Committee on Foreign Relations regarding President Obama's nomination of Air Force Major General (ret.) Scott Gration to be the U.S. Ambassador to Kenya, 33 human rights and anti-genocide organizations representing U.S. citizens and members of the Darfuri Diaspora from 18 states sent an [open letter](#) to Committee Members asking them to vote against Gration's confirmation. The letter states, "As Special Envoy to Sudan, General Gration has made ongoing errors of judgment, has spoken inaccurately about a range of issues and has alienated many parties in Sudan." According to the letter, "General Gration's lack of experience and failures in diplomacy make him unqualified to serve as U.S. Ambassador to Kenya."

"Missteps" cited in the letter include: Gration's statement that the 2010 Sudan national elections would be "as free and fair as possible" in spite of conspicuous evidence of fraud; his decision to "de-emphasize" Darfur and "de-couple" the Darfur genocide from negotiations with Khartoum about Sudan's status as a terrorism-sponsoring nation; his decision to support the Government of Sudan's "domestication" strategy on Darfur, with its implied policy of dismantling IDP camps against the wishes of Darfuri IDPs; downplaying the dangerous humanitarian conditions and grossly inadequate levels of aid in Darfur which are not supported by the evidence widely available through multiple expert sources; ignoring the terms of the Abyei Protocol of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and the "final and binding" July 2009 ruling on Abyei by the Permanent Court of Arbitration; and taking public positions favorable to the regime in Khartoum that were sometimes at odds with the established policy of the Obama Administration on Sudan.

If General Gration were confirmed as U.S. Ambassador to Kenya, he would have a key voice in U.S. anti-terrorism efforts due to the Kenyan Ambassador's decision-making authority regarding Somalia. In addition, Kenya is perceived by many experts to be at significant risk of genocide or mass atrocities in connection with its upcoming election. "Given the millions of additional lives at risk in the complex societies in the Horn of Africa, and the implications for U.S. national security, we respectfully request that the Committee work with the Administration to fill this critical position with an experienced, skilled and proven diplomat," the letter concludes.

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Full text of letter:

April 1, 2011

Dear Members of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations,

We, the undersigned, are writing to ask you to vote against the confirmation of Air Force Major General (ret.) Scott Gration as the U.S. Ambassador to Kenya. As Special Envoy to Sudan, General Gration has made ongoing errors of judgment, has spoken inaccurately about a range of issues and has alienated many parties in Sudan.¹ His missteps² include:

- His statement that the 2010 Sudan national elections would be “as free and fair as possible” in spite of conspicuous evidence of fraud;³
- His threat to Darfuris in March 2010, in an attempt to coerce a peace agreement unacceptable to the Darfuris, that if “a full-fledged peace agreement is not reached before Sudanese elections scheduled for mid-April” then “there are going to be a lot of things that are keeping us from focusing on Darfur,”⁴ thereby signaling to the National Congress Party the U.S. would not pay attention to Darfur thereafter;
- His decision to “de-emphasize” Darfur and “de-couple” the Darfur genocide from negotiations with Khartoum about Sudan’s status as a terrorism-sponsoring nation;
- His decision to support the Government of Sudan’s “domestication” strategy on Darfur,⁵ with its implied policy of dismantling IDP camps against the wishes of Darfuri IDPs;
- Downplaying the dangerous humanitarian conditions and grossly inadequate levels of aid in Darfur which are not supported by the evidence widely available through multiple expert sources, including his February 2011 statement, “The Government of Sudan has taken great steps to lift restrictions on UNAMID. We’ve seen great improvement of access for UNAMID and for the international NGOs.”
- Ignoring the terms of the Abyei Protocol of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and the “final and binding” July 2009 ruling on Abyei by the Permanent Court of Arbitration, making resolution of the Abyei crisis less, rather than more, likely;^{6 7} and
- Taking public positions favorable to the regime in Khartoum that were sometimes at odds with the established policy of the Obama Administration on Sudan.^{8 9 10 11 12}

General Gration’s lack of experience and failures in diplomacy¹³ make him unqualified to serve as U.S. Ambassador to Kenya. In that position, he would have a key voice in U.S. anti-terrorism efforts due to the Kenyan Ambassador’s decision-making authority regarding Somalia. In addition, Kenya is perceived by many experts to be at significant risk of genocide or mass atrocities in connection with its upcoming election. Given the millions of additional lives at risk in the complex societies in the Horn of Africa, and the implications for U.S. national security, we respectfully request that the Committee work with the Administration to fill this critical position with an experienced, skilled and proven diplomat.

Respectfully,

Brooklyn Coalition for Darfur

Laura J. Limuli, Coordinator
Brooklyn, New York

Colorado Coalition for Genocide Awareness and Action

Roz Duman, Founder/Director
Denver, Colorado

Damanga Coalition for Freedom and Democracy.

Mohamed Yahya, Executive Director
Falls Church, Virginia

Darfur Action Group--Northwest Bronx/Yonkers

Gene Binder, member steering committee
Bronx/Yonkers, New York

Darfur and Beyond

Cory Williams, Co-Founder
Phoenix, Arizona

Darfur Community Organization

Bakheit A Shata, Founder/Executive Director
Omaha, Nebraska

Darfur People's Association of New York

Ahmat Nour, President
Brooklyn, New York

Darfur Rehabilitation Project

Blanche Foster, Acting Executive Director
Newark, New Jersey

Darfur Solidarity USA

Mohammed Eisa
Richmond, Virginia

Darfur Women Action Group

Amal Allagabo, General Secretary
Washington, DC

Dear Sudan, Love Marin

Gerri Miller, Founder
Tiburon, California

Essex County Coalition for Darfur

Gloria Crist, Founding Member
Montclair, New Jersey

Fur Cultural Revival.

Mansour Ahmed, President
Portland, Maine

Georgia Coalition to Prevent Genocide

Melanie Nelkin, Chair
Atlanta, Georgia

Human Rights & Advocacy Network for Democracy

Abdalmageed Salih, Chairperson
New York, New York

Idaho Darfur Coalition

A.J. Fay, Co-Founder
Boise, Idaho

Investors Against Genocide

Eric Cohen, Chairperson
Boston, Massachusetts

Jewish World Watch

Tzivia Schwartz-Getzug, Executive Director
Los Angeles, California

Keokuk for Darfur

Julia A. Hays, Founder/Director
Keokuk, Iowa

The Last Survivor

Michael Kleiman, co-Director/co-Producer
New York, New York

Long Island Darfur Action Group

Nancy Walsh, Coordinator
Long Island, New York

Massachusetts Coalition to Save Darfur

Bill Rosenfeld, Director
Boston, Massachusetts

Michigan Darfur Coalition

Timothy Page M.D., President
Birmingham, Michigan

New York Darfur Vigil Group

Helga Moor, Coordinator
New York, New York

North Jersey Coalition for Darfur

Tanya Simon, Coordinator
Randolph, New Jersey

OurPledge

Nikki Serapio, Director
Washington, DC

Righteous Pictures

Michael Pertnoy, Founder and Executive Director
Miami, Florida

San Francisco Bay Area Darfur Coalition

Mohamed Suleiman, President
San Francisco, California

Shine A Ray of Hope

Carmen Paolercio, Coordinator
New Rochelle, New York

Stop Genocide Now

Gabriel Stauring, Director
Los Angeles, California

Sudan Advocacy Action Forum

Bill Andress, Moderator
Lexington, South Carolina

THE INSTITUTE on Religion and Public Policy

Joseph K. Grieboski, Founder and Chairman of the Board
Alexandria, Virginia

Use Your Voice to Stop Genocide RI

Sandra Hammel, Director
Portsmouth, Rhode Island

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- ¹ "Darfur IDPs have tough words for US special envoy," Sudan Tribune, September 13, 2009 - <http://www.sudantribune.com/Darfur-IDP-s-have-tough-words-for,32447>
 - ² "The Senate Should Not Confirm Scott Gration as U.S. Ambassador to Kenya," Eric Reeves, February 25, 2011 - <http://dissentmagazine.org/online.php?id=453>
 - ³ "US faults Sudan election but will work with victors," Reuters, April 20, 2010 - <http://af.reuters.com/article/topNews/idAFJ0E63J03F20100420>
 - ⁴ U.S. envoy pushes for Darfur peace deal before Sudanese elections," Washington Post, March 10, 2010 - <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/03/10/AR20100310031003105.html>
 - ⁵ "NCP approves new 'domestication' strategy on Darfur," Sudan Tribune, July 30, 2010 - <http://www.sudantribune.com/NCP-approves-new-domestication,35809>
 - ⁶ "The Road Back from Abyei: Any resolution of the Abyei dispute must address the root causes," Douglas Johnson, January 14, 2011 - <http://www.riftvalley.net/resources/file/The%20Road%20Back%20from%20Abyei%20by%20Douglas%20H.%20Johnson.pdf>
 - ⁷ "Abyei, Citizenship Remain Flashpoints," interview with Deng Alor, December 29, 2010 - <http://allafrica.com/stories/201012290943.html>
 - ⁸ "Sudan's 'coordinate' genocide in Darfur is over, US Envoy says," Washington Post, June 18, 2009 - <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/06/17/AR2009061703491.html>
 - ⁹ "US Envoy's outreach to Sudan is criticized as naive," Washington Post, September 29, 2009 - <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/09/28/AR2009092802336.html>
 - ¹⁰ "Gration gets pummeled by Congress," The New Republic, December 4, 2009 - <http://www.tnr.com/blog/the-plank/gration-gets-pummeled-congress>

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- ¹¹ “A house divided on Sudan?,” John Norris, March 10, 2010 - http://www.huffingtonpost.com/john-norris/a-house-divided-on-sudan_b_487734.html
- ¹² “Gration dissatisfied with ICC ruling against Bashir, publicly contradicts White House line,” Enough Project, July 14, 2010 - <http://www.enoughproject.org/blogs/gration-dissatisfied-icc-ruling-against-bashir-publicly-contradicts-white-house-line>
- ¹³ “What's wrong with US policy toward Sudan and how to fix it,” John Prendergast, July 20, 2010 - <http://www.enoughproject.org/publications/whats-wrong-us-policy-toward-sudan-and-how-fix-it>