



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO H.E. Mr AWAD EL KARIM FADULALLA ALI
NEW AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE SUDAN
TO THE HOLY SEE*

Monday, 14 January 1991 Mr Ambassador, I am pleased to welcome you to the Vatican on the occasion of the presentation of the Letters accrediting you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Sudan to the Holy See. I much appreciate the greetings and good wishes which you have expressed on behalf of His Excellency Lieutenant General Omer Hassan Ahmed El Beshir, Chairman of the National Salvation Revolutionary Command Council, and the Members of the Council and the Sudanese people. I would assure you of my own greetings and of my prayers for the peace and well-being of your country. The Holy See's presence in the international community is fully directed to the service of the human family, in the pursuit of peace, justice and truth in human affairs and in relations between nations. This service is animated by an abiding concern for the wellbeing of people everywhere, reflecting a profound conviction regarding the unity of the human family and the common responsibility of all for our destiny. There are two areas in which the Holy See's efforts are particularly notable: the promotion of religious freedom as an essential requirement of the dignity of every person and the cornerstone of the whole structure of human rights, and humanitarian concern for those in need. My Message for this year's World Day of Peace deals with the important question of respect for the freedom of conscience of every person. It appeals to Governments and legislators to defend this fundamental human right. This is a development of what I stated in the [1988 World Day of Peace Message](#): that the civil and social right of religious freedom is a point of reference of the other fundamental rights and in some way becomes a measure of them, so that even in cases where the State grants a special juridical position to a particular religion there is a duty to ensure that the right to freedom of conscience is legally recognized and effectively respected for all citizens (Cfr. Ioannis Pauli PP. II [Nuntius ob diem ad pacem fovendam dicatum pro a. D. 1988](#), 1, die 8 dec. 1987: *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, X, 3 [1987] 1332 ss). My Message the following year also directed attention to the problems of discrimination and injustice affecting civil and religious minorities. When such minority groups put forward claims that have particular political implications, dialogue offers the only sure way of preserving harmony. The willingness of the parties involved to negotiate is the indispensable condition for reaching an equitable solution to the complex problems that can seriously obstruct peace (Cfr. Eiusdem [Nuntius ob diem ad pacem fovendam dicatum pro a. D. 1989](#), 10, die 8 dec. 1988: *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, XI, 4 [1988] 1794 s). In this respect the Holy See continues to follow with close attention all initiatives for a peaceful resolution of the civil war taking place in Southern Sudan. The Holy See encourages attempts to establish open and frank negotiations aimed at reaching a just settlement that will take into account the social, cultural and religious differences existing among the people of the Sudan. I am fully aware of the

difficulties confronting your Government, stemming from the situation of conflict as well as from last year's catastrophic flooding and drought in certain regions of the North. The movements of your country's population have resulted in a vast increase in the number of refugees and displaced persons. As a result, more than a million refugees on the outskirts of Khartoum are living in the poorest of conditions. In the face of this grave problem, I renew the Holy See's support for the United Nations Programme "Operation Sudan", and I appeal to Governments and International Organizations for further humanitarian aid and assistance. It is my ardent hope that they will intensify their efforts to assist the many victims of the unstable situation prevailing in the whole region. The Catholic faithful of the Sudan, like their fellow citizens, are deeply affected by the present sufferings and trials of their country. The Church therefore shares their concern and anguish, and in fidelity to the teachings of Christ, she seeks to serve those in need. The Catholic community in your country offers the limited resources at its disposal for the relief of the homeless and famine-stricken, regardless of religious differences. By safeguarding and fostering social justice and moral values through her educational and charitable activities, the Church effectively cooperates in building up the national community on the foundations of the equal dignity of every human being and a strong sense of solidarity at every level of national life. For itself the Catholic community asks only the freedom to fulfil its religious and humanitarian mission. Mr Ambassador, as you assume your new responsibilities, I assure you that the Holy See greatly values its good relations with your Government. I am certain that you will do all you can to further consolidate them. In the fulfilment of your lofty mission you can count on the cooperation of the various departments of the Holy See. Upon Your Excellency and the Government and people of the Sudan I invoke the abundant blessings of the Most High

God.

*AAS 83 (1991), p. 888-889. *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, vol. XIV, 1 pp. 106-108. *L'Attività della Santa Sede* 1991 pp. 49-50. *L'Osservatore Romano* 15.1.1991 p.5. *L'Osservatore Romano. Weekly Edition in English* n.3 p.6. © Copyright 1991 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana

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