

RESOLUTION

Council of Graduate Students – University of Minnesota

Date: November 29, 2007

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Topic: Asking U.S. to help South Sudan end child abduction

Resolution calling for an end to child abduction in Southern Sudan

Whereas an August 29, 2007, report by the Secretary-General of the United Nations found that a lack of security in Southern Sudan has allowed the abduction of children in the hundreds to continue unabated despite declarations of ethnic leaders to cease the practice,

Whereas the governor of South Sudan's Jonglei state acknowledged to the U.S. Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance in October 2007 that in the last two years, raiders from the Murle community of Sudan have abducted nearly 170 children from Jonglei and more than 270 children from neighboring Eastern Equatoria state,

Whereas the United Nations Mission in Sudan has documented the October 3, 2007, abduction of 18-month-old Ajak Achiek Mading and her 3-year-old sister Yar in Jonglei state,

Whereas local police officials in Jonglei, lacking in staff and equipment, failed to locate or pursue the Murle raiders who abducted the girls,

Whereas the lack of resources or political will that the Government of Southern Sudan possesses to address the economic and health problems that motivate the Murle community to abduct children or to resolve the security problems that allow this practice to continue with impunity,

Whereas the University of Minnesota has a connection to these events in that Ajak and Yar Mading are the nieces of U.S. citizen Gabriel Kou Solomon, a resident of St. Paul, Minnesota, and a graduate student at the University of Minnesota,

And whereas Mr. Solomon's efforts to free his nieces has grown into a broad movement against child abduction involving students from several organizations and degree programs at the University of Minnesota, as reflected in news coverage by the Minnesota Daily, Pioneer Press, Star Tribune, and Minnesota Public Radio,

Therefore, be it resolved that the University of Minnesota Council of Graduate Students (COGS) declares accordingly that COGS is a member of the Save Yar Campaign housed in the University of Minnesota Human Rights Program and supports the campaign as it:

1. *Calls upon* the United States Congress and the United States State Department to urge the Government of Southern Sudan to negotiate for the peaceful release of Ajak and Yar Mading and any abducted children being held by the Murle;
2. *Further requests* that the U.S. Congress and the U.S. State Department provide assistance to the Government of Southern Sudan in improving the economic, health and security problems that underlie this pattern of child abduction;
3. *Encourages* the U.S. Congress to fully fund the U.S. Agency for International Development's proposed Local Economic Recovery Program (LERP), which was designed to stimulate economic development in Southern Sudan including Jonglei state but which currently lacks sufficient funding;
4. *Further invites* other members of the Minnesota community to support the campaign via its web site www.Save-Yar.org.