

Understanding Sudan

A Teaching and Learning Resource



Fact Sheet Fifteen: Concerned With Oil (CWO) Position Paper

Concerned with Oil (CWO) is an American non-governmental organization (NGO) which does research and advocacy on issues surrounding oil in developing countries. Someone in the Government of National Unity (GNU) has given you a secret copy of the contract letter sent by MOEP to the GNU and wants your opinion on its contents. What, for example, would be your views on the implications for human rights of oil trade in the Sudan? What revisions would you propose in the contract so as to address any real or perceived concerns related to human rights and pressing advocacy issues such as environmental pollution?

Your argument and response to the above questions should be informed by what you have learned about the history of Sudan and the nature of the oil industry. Things to consider:

- Located within close proximity to a fresh water source, Block 5B lies in an environmentally fragile area. However, the Government of Sudan seems to offer insufficient evidence that it has the commitment, much less the capacity, to carry out environmental impact assessment essential for proceeding with drilling in such an environment. Worse yet, it remains unclear whether the Government feels obliged to consult, let alone compensate, the local communities likely to bear the brunt of the water pollution and land degradation associated with oil drilling.
- At this stage, it is critically important to think and argue through the revisions and solutions that you find likely to address these human rights and environmental concerns. As crucial is exploring what monitoring and enforcement mechanisms ought to be reflected in the contract with a viewing to enhancing compliance

with whatever revisions and recommendations you propose as a human rights and environmental advocate?

- While provision of private security for oil companies may be necessary, it is imperative to regulate and monitor the mandate and activities of such a private security force. This should be done to avoid the risks of human rights abuses likely to result from excessive and/or indiscriminate use of force by a private security firm. For insights on these issues, consult the fact sheets provided in addition to , internet sources on the uses of security in the Sudan and other oil producing African countries such as Angola and Nigeria.

- Reflecting on how local infrastructure (e.g. all-weather roads) affects the local environment and economy, what type of safe guards or precautions would you recommend? (See Fact sheet on the environment and economy).

- Taking advantage of information on the fact sheets and supplementing this with the sources for further reading as needed, your argument and presentation may be strengthened by making an expert judgment regarding the degree of violence that is likely to be associated with both the elections in 2010, and a referendum in 2011.

Good luck!!