

PRESS RELEASE:
19 May 2011



VICTIMS OF OIL CONTRACTS IN SUDAN ENTITLED TO COMPENSATION

SUDAN'S SUCCESSOR STATES SHOULD AGREE TO INTERNATIONAL ARBITRATION

The negotiations to settle Sudan's divorce are underway. Being focused on finances and the economy, these negotiations are unlikely to produce a truly comprehensive agreement. Instead, some of the thorny issues may not be settled before 9 July, while others are likely to be ignored all together. The right to compensation for victims of oil contracts is one of these. This right was established by the CPA and included in the Interim National Constitution. To implement it would require cooperation from the NCP, the party dominating the Government of Sudan that would also have to foot part of the bill, which is unlikely to happen without strong pressure from outside.

The SPLM, meanwhile, does not prioritize issues of justice and reconciliation. The right to compensation for victims of the oil wars has not been included in South Sudan's post-independence interim constitution, because it reportedly chose against any clauses that referred to the North. While this doesn't abolish an established right, it could complicate efforts by affected communities to realize it.

A once established right cannot be negotiated away, and an issue that is so close to the hearts of the affected communities will not disappear by simply ignoring it. The relevance of justice and reconciliation in the oil producing areas has yet again become apparent now that the oil producing areas in Unity State are disintegrating along the fault lines that were shaped during the oil wars. The European Coalition on Oil in Sudan has explored options for dealing with the right to compensation, in line with international legal principles and Sudan's international legal obligations. The shortest and surest path towards that is international independent arbitration.

Justice must be done and the issue of the right to compensation will have to be dealt with, if not now, then after 9 July 2011.

Read the full proposal *International Arbitration for Victims of Sudanese Oil Contracts* at www.ecosonline.org.

NOTE FOR THE PRESS:

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The European Coalition on Oil in Sudan (ECOS) represents a large group of European organizations working for peace and justice in Sudan. ECOS calls for action by Governments and the business sector to ensure that Sudan's oil wealth contributes to peace and equitable development.

