

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 242

To require that activities carried out by the United States in South Sudan relating to governance, reconstruction and development, and refugee relief and assistance support the basic human rights of women and women’s participation and leadership in these areas.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 10, 2023

Ms. JACKSON LEE introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

A BILL

To require that activities carried out by the United States in South Sudan relating to governance, reconstruction and development, and refugee relief and assistance support the basic human rights of women and women’s participation and leadership in these areas.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Equal Rights and Ac-
5 cess for the Women of South Sudan Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress makes the following findings:

1 (1) Despite the 2011 referendum for secession
2 that established the independent state of South
3 Sudan, South Sudanese women continue to experi-
4 ence brutal violation of their human rights.

5 (2) Strong and continued United States support
6 can ensure that the advances made by South Suda-
7 nese women since July 2011 when the Republic of
8 South Sudan gained its independence will continue
9 and grow, rather than recede.

10 (3) The United States has made a substantial
11 contribution to the emergency relief and humani-
12 tarian efforts for South Sudan. Completing the
13 United States mission in South Sudan will also re-
14 quire significant and long-term investments in devel-
15 opment and reconstruction assistance.

16 (4) An inadequate healthcare system has re-
17 sulted in high maternal and infant mortality rates.
18 The maternal mortality rate is 1,054 deaths per
19 100,000 live births, making it one of the highest in
20 the world.

21 (5) South Sudan faces many difficulties with its
22 lack of infrastructure and lacks significant human
23 development factors, which can further marginalize
24 women.

1 (6) Over 80 percent of women and girls in
2 South Sudan are illiterate, and thus it is imperative
3 to both secure and inform women’s rights within the
4 national development.

5 (7) With the assistance of internal aid and the
6 proliferation of local women’s organizations, wom-
7 en’s equality can be integrated into South Sudan’s
8 nation-building efforts.

9 (8) South Sudan has made gains in incor-
10 porating women into the new regime with efforts
11 such as inclusion in the legislative assembly, thus
12 additional support from the United States serves to
13 reinforce these ideals and implementations.

14 (9) The women of South Sudan are taking the
15 initiative to reach across the conflict divide and fos-
16 ter peace. Women’s perspectives and experiences in
17 seeking solutions to conflicts are necessary to ensure
18 lasting peace.

19 (10) Adequate security in both urban and rural
20 areas, particularly on military borders, is essential if
21 women and girls are to exercise their human rights,
22 work, attend school, and otherwise participate in and
23 benefit from humanitarian and development pro-
24 grams sponsored by the United States.

1 **SEC. 3. REQUIREMENTS RELATING TO UNITED STATES AC-**
2 **TIVITIES RELATING TO SOUTH SUDAN.**

3 (a) **IN GENERAL.**—Activities described in subsections
4 (b) through (e) that are carried out by the United States
5 in South Sudan shall comply with the applicable require-
6 ments contained in such subsections.

7 (b) **GOVERNANCE OF SOUTH SUDAN.**—With respect
8 to the governance of South Sudan, the applicable require-
9 ments are the following:

10 (1) Include the perspectives and advice from
11 South Sudanese women’s organizations, networks,
12 and leaders in United States policymaking related to
13 the governance of South Sudan.

14 (2) Promote the inclusion of a significant num-
15 ber of women in the National Legislature and future
16 legislative bodies to ensure that women’s full range
17 of human rights are included and upheld in any con-
18 stitution or legal structures of South Sudan.

19 (3) Promote the continuation and strengthening
20 of the rights of women as the South Sudan Govern-
21 ment transitions to a long-term government struc-
22 ture, and encourage the appointment of women to
23 high-level positions within South Sudanese Govern-
24 ment.

25 (c) **POST-CONFLICT RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVEL-**
26 **OPMENT.**—With respect to activities relating to post-con-

1 flict stability in South Sudan, the applicable requirements
2 are the following:

3 (1) Ensure that a significant portion of United
4 States development, humanitarian, and relief assist-
5 ance is channeled to local and United States-based
6 South Sudanese organizations, particularly South
7 Sudanese women’s organizations. Provide technical
8 assistance, training, and capacity-building for local
9 organizations to ensure that United States-funded
10 efforts will be both effective and sustainable.

11 (2) Encourage United States organizations that
12 receive funds authorized by this Act to partner with
13 or create South Sudanese-led counterpart organiza-
14 tions and provide these organizations with signifi-
15 cant financial resources, technical assistance, and
16 capacity building.

17 (3) Provide direct financial and programmatic
18 assistance to the Ministry of Women’s Affairs ade-
19 quate to ensure that the Ministry is able to fulfill its
20 mandate.

21 (4) Promote multiyear women-centered eco-
22 nomic development programs, including programs to
23 assist widows, female heads of household, women in
24 rural areas, and disabled women.

1 (5) Increase women’s access to or ownership of
2 productive assets such as land, water, agricultural
3 inputs, credit, and property.

4 (6) Provide long-term financial assistance for
5 primary, secondary, higher, nontraditional, and voca-
6 tional education for South Sudanese girls, women,
7 boys, and men.

8 (7) Provide financial assistance to build the
9 health infrastructure and to deliver high-quality
10 comprehensive health care programs, including pri-
11 mary, maternal, child, reproductive, and mental
12 health care.

13 (8) Integrate education and training programs
14 for former combatants with economic development
15 programs to encourage their reintegration into soci-
16 ety and to promote post-conflict stability.

17 (9) Provide assistance to rehabilitate children
18 affected by the conflict, particularly child soldiers.

19 (10) Support educational efforts to increase
20 awareness with respect to landmines, facilitate the
21 removal of landmines, and provide services to indi-
22 viduals with disabilities caused by landmines.

23 (11) Include programs to prevent trafficking in
24 persons, assist victims, and apprehend and prosecute
25 traffickers in persons.

1 (d) SOUTH SUDANESE MILITARY AND POLICE.—

2 With respect to training for military and police forces in
3 South Sudan, the applicable requirements are the fol-
4 lowing:

5 (1) Include training on the protection, rights,
6 and the particular needs of women and emphasize
7 that violations of women’s rights are intolerable and
8 should be prosecuted.

9 (2) Encourage such trainers who will carry out
10 the activities in paragraph (1) to consult with wom-
11 en’s organizations in South Sudan to ensure that
12 training content and materials are adequate, appro-
13 priate, and comprehensive.

14 (e) RELIEF, RESETTLEMENT, AND REPATRIATION OF
15 REFUGEES AND THE INTERNALLY DISPLACED.—With re-
16 spect to the relief, resettlement, and repatriation of refu-
17 gees and internally displaced in South Sudan, the applica-
18 ble requirements are the following:

19 (1) Take all necessary steps to ensure that
20 women refugees and internally displaced in camps,
21 urban areas, and villages are directly receiving food
22 aid, shelter, relief supplies, and other services from
23 United States-sponsored programs.

24 (2) Take all necessary steps to ensure that
25 women refugees in camps, urban areas, and villages

1 are accessing high-quality health and medical serv-
2 ices, including primary, maternal, child, and mental
3 health services.

4 (3) Take all necessary steps to ensure that
5 women and children in refugee camps are protected
6 from sexual exploitation.

7 (4) Take all necessary steps to ensure refugees
8 and internally displaced persons that seek to return
9 to their place of origin can do so voluntarily, safely,
10 and with the full protection of their rights. United
11 States-sponsored efforts shall not coerce refugees or
12 internally displaced persons to return to their places
13 of origin.

14 **SEC. 4. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.**

15 Not later than 60 days after the date of enactment
16 of this Act, and annually thereafter, the President shall
17 prepare and transmit to Congress a report that contains
18 documentation of the progress in implementing the re-
19 quirements of section 3. All data shall be disaggregated
20 by sex.

○