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## **U.S. official urges Sudan to promote gender equality**

### [Sudan Tribune](#)

April 27, 2016 (KHARTOUM) - The United States Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues Cathy Russell has expressed hope that the Sudanese government passes strong laws on gender equality and ensures that women and girls are protected and empowered.

In a statement issued at the conclusion of a two-day visit to Khartoum, Russell said she met with government officials, students, entrepreneurs and representatives from civil society and international organizations.

"I heard from the government about plans to address issues like gender-based violence, including female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) and early and forced marriage, as well as other areas where legal reforms are needed," she said.

She expressed hope to see progress in the government's efforts to pass strong laws on gender equality "including laws that raise the minimum age of marriage, ban FGM/C, and address gender-based violence—and to promote women's roles in the peace process".

The American official added that "Sudan's ability to ensure that women and girls are protected and empowered will determine how successful the country will be going forward".

"Having strong laws is an essential step that must be followed by implementation and enforcement, as well efforts to increase access to services for survivors of gender-based violence across the country," she added.

She pointed that government efforts on gender equality will be more successful if civil society groups are engaged, urging the government to expand space for civil society as they are important partners for the country.

"I met many amazing Sudanese women who are working to create a better future for their country. They have started organizations that empower young people, promote education, and engage men and boys as allies for women's empowerment," said Russell.

The American official also stressed the need to engage women in the national issues and particularly with regard to political , economic and peace issues.

“The women I met this week are proof that women’s full and meaningful participation in the peace process, the National Dialogue, and political decision-making is critical to lasting peace and prosperity in Sudan,” she stressed