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December 18, 2023

The Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President and Members
of the Senate
Thirty Second State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 409
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

The Honorable Scott K. Saiki
Speaker and Members of the
House of Representatives
Thirty Second State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 431
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear President Kouchi, Speaker Saiki and Members of the Legislature:

For your information and consideration, I am transmitting a copy of the Direct Holdings in Sudan Scrutinized Companies 2023 report, as required by Act 192, Session Laws of Hawaii 2007. In accordance with Section 93-16, HRS, a copy of this report has been transmitted to the Legislative Reference Bureau and the report may be viewed electronically at <http://ers.ehawaii.gov/resources/reports-to-legislature>.

Sincerely,

/S/

LUIS P. SALAVERIA
Director of Finance

Enclosure

c: Legislative Reference Bureau

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EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM
OF THE STATE OF HAWAII
DIRECT HOLDINGS IN SUDAN SCRUTINIZED COMPANIES
2023

Act 192, Session Laws of Hawaii 2007, expresses the State's desire to not participate in ownership of companies that provide significant practical support for genocide activities being conducted by the Sudanese government in the Darfur region.

The Board of Trustees of the Employees' Retirement System recognizes the intent of Act 192 and will abide by its requirements. The Board, however, must also apply a decision framework to act for the exclusive benefit of ERS Plan participants. In this respect, the Board recognized that divestment activities could potentially increase the portfolio's idiosyncratic investment risk. Divestment guidelines and procedures, codified in the ERS's *Sudan Investment Policy* ("Policy"), were therefore developed to minimize the impact of the Sudan divestment policy upon the investment results of the ERS portfolio. The Sudan divestment policy is intended to also avoid:

- Discriminating against companies whose Sudan-related business activities are supported by the U.S. government;
- Discriminating against companies whose Sudan-related business activities do not support genocide activities;
- Unnecessarily harming U.S. companies and jobs; and
- Compromising the Board of Trustees' duties to the beneficiaries of the ERS.

The ERS was required to make its best efforts to identify all of its direct holdings in scrutinized companies within 180 days after July 1, 2007. Those efforts were to include:

- Reviewing publicly available information regarding companies with business operations in Sudan provided by nonprofit organizations and other appropriate parties;
- Contacting ERS's asset managers with investments in scrutinized companies; and
- Contacting other institutional investors that have divested from or engaged with companies that have business operations in Sudan.

Each year thereafter, Act 192 requires the ERS to provide to the legislature a publicly available report that includes activity under section 4, to include: 1) A summary or correspondence with companies engaged by the public fund; 2) All investments sold, redeemed, divested, or withdrawn; 3) All prohibited investments; and 4) Any progress made. The ERS respectfully reports all pertinent activity in 2023 related to Sudan Scrutinized Companies as outlined in Act 192.

The ERS relied on the *Sudan Company Report* prepared by the EIRIS Conflict Risk Network (CRN) to determine “scrutinized companies,” that certain business activities in Sudan may determine their status as a “highest offender.” Highest offenders are subject to possible divestment in accordance with the Policy.

Before taking any action against the company, the ERS Board considers any additional information they may provide. The ERS will send a letter to the scrutinized company to inform them of their Sudan-related activities and encourage them to cease their scrutinized active business operations within 90 days. If the company continues to have scrutinized active business operations after ninety days following the first engagement by ERS, the Board will consider divestment or other corrective actions to the extent possible with due consideration from among other things, return on investment, diversification, and the ERS’s other legal obligations. Failure to respond to the ERS letter may lead to divestment action.

In 2023, there were no identified “scrutinized companies” held in the ERS portfolio.