

Obviously, our hearts go out to the family members of those who have been slain. We are going to get to the bottom of this, and we're going to get through this. But in the meantime, I think all of us need to make sure that we're offering our thoughts and prayers to those concerned.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:46 p.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Christina-Taylor Green, who was killed in the shootings.

## Statement on the Shootings in Tucson *January 8, 2011*

This morning, in an unspeakable tragedy, a number of Americans were shot in Tucson, Arizona, at a constituent meeting with Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords. And while we are continuing to receive information, we know that some have passed away and that Representative Giffords is gravely wounded.

We do not yet have all the answers. What we do know is that such a senseless and terrible act of violence has no place in a free society. I ask all Americans to join me and Michelle in keeping Representative Giffords, the victims of this tragedy, and their families in our prayers.

## Statement on the Southern Sudan Independence Referendum *January 9, 2011*

I am extremely pleased that polling has started for the Southern Sudan referendum and congratulate the people of Southern Sudan who are determining their own destiny. This is an historic step in the years-long process to fully implement the comprehensive peace agreement that ended the civil war between north and south. The international community is united and determined to ensure that all parties in Sudan live up to their obligations. We know that there are those who may try to disrupt the voting. Voters must be allowed access to polling stations and must be able to cast their ballots free from intimidation and coer-

cion. All sides should refrain from inflammatory rhetoric or provocative actions that could raise tensions or prevent voters from expressing their will. Violence in the Abyei region should cease. And while a successful vote will be cause for celebration, an enormous amount of work remains to ensure the people of Sudan can live with security and dignity. The world will be watching in the coming days, and the United States will remain fully committed to helping the parties solve critical postreferendum issues regardless of the outcome of the vote.

## Remarks Following a Meeting With President Nicolas Sarkozy of France and an Exchange With Reporters *January 10, 2011*

*President Obama.* We'll, I'm very grateful to have my dear friend Nicolas Sarkozy here. And I think Nicolas has agreed that at the top, I want to just make a few comments about the situation in Tucson, Arizona.

Obviously, all of us are still grieving and in shock from the tragedy that took place. Gabby Giffords and others are still fighting to recover. Families are still absorbing the enormity of their losses. We have a criminal investigation