

December 8, 2005

Dear Senator/Representative,

On July 22, 2004-17 months ago-Congress declared the situation in Darfur, Sudan, genocide. On September 9, 2004, the Bush Administration followed with its own declaration of genocide. Yet, the killing continues. As organizations working to reduce suffering in Darfur, raise public awareness of the crisis, and promote a peaceful resolution to the conflicts in Sudan, we urge Congress to take two critical steps to help protect civilians in Darfur: 1) pass the Darfur Peace and Accountability Act with strong and binding language, and 2) include \$50 million in the final FY06 military appropriations bill to support the African Union mission in Sudan (AMIS).

Congressional leadership to protect civilians in Darfur is needed urgently. More than two years after the conflict in Darfur erupted, hundreds of thousands are dead, two million people remain displaced, and the small AU mission still does not have adequate support. In recent weeks, we have witnessed a new surge in violence against civilians, humanitarian workers, and AMIS personnel. Civilians suffer harassment, beatings, rape and murder on a daily basis, while humanitarian organizations are hampered in their ability to provide basic services to hundreds of thousands of displaced people. Attacks against women and girls continue at an alarming rate. Recent fighting around Gereida, a camp in South Darfur, forced nearly 18,000 people to flee from their villages.

We commend Congress and the administration for their leadership in seeking to restore peace in Sudan. The Bush administration played a critical role in helping negotiate a peaceful end to the 21-year civil war between North and South Sudan, and since Congress first declared genocide, it has appropriated significant funding to alleviate suffering. The U.S. has taken the lead in pressing for an international response to the crisis in Darfur at the UN, supporting the deployment and expansion of an African Union mission, and providing critical humanitarian aid. However, the efforts of the U.S. and the international community thus far have failed to provide adequate protection for the people of Darfur or advance a peaceful resolution to the conflict.

Before the end of the 2005 session, Congress must act to help better protect civilians. The Darfur Peace and Accountability Act (S. 1462/H.R. 3127) is an important step toward strengthening civilian protection, ensuring accountability and promoting peace, and demonstrating U.S. leadership for more effective international action to end the crisis. We commend the Senate for passing its version of the bill on November 18 and urge the House to follow quickly with passage of already agreed upon binding language in its version. We urge House and Senate to negotiate final differences in the bill swiftly and to send this legislation to the President for his signature.

We also urge Congress to restore the \$50 million to support AMIS that was stripped during the FY06 foreign operations appropriations conference, after being unanimously approved by the Senate earlier this year. We were dismayed that the U.S. backtracked on its public commitments to provide financial support, especially as the AU has stated clearly that its mission in Darfur remains underfunded, with a shortfall of more than \$150 million. We are also deeply concerned by impending cuts of as much as 60% in U.S. humanitarian assistance to Sudan expected in the coming year, which will leave more lives at risk. The FY06 military appropriations conference is the last opportunity this year for Congress to appropriate much needed funds to strengthen civilian protection in Darfur. We urge all members to support inclusion of at least \$50 million to support AMIS in the final FY06 military appropriations bill.

Your leadership is urgently needed to help protect the people of Darfur.

Sincerely,

Africa Faith and Justice Network
American Jewish World Service
Anti-Defamation League
B'nai B'rith International
Church World Service
Citizens for Global Solutions
Common Global Ministries Board, United
Church of Christ and Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)
Darfur Peace and Development Organization
Dear Sudan
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Washington Office
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Genocide Intervention Network
Global Grassroots
Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society
International Crisis Group
International Peace Operations Association
International Rescue Committee
Jewish Council for Public Affairs
Mercy Corps
National STAND Coalition
Physicians for Human Rights

Presbyterian Church, (USA), Washington
Office
Refugees International
Save Darfur Coalition
Sojourners
Union for Reform Judaism
Unitarian Universalist Association of
Congregations
Unitarian Universalist Service Committee
United Methodist Church, General Board of
Church and Society
Women's Commission for Refugee Women and
Children

State and Local Organizations

All Saints Episcopal Church, Pasadena, CA
Dear Sudan: Love Contra Costa County
Dear Sudan, Love Marin
Massachusetts Coalition to Save Darfur
New Vision Partners, Los Angeles, CA
Pittsburgh Darfur Emergency Coalition
Students United for Darfur Awareness Now, University of North Carolina Chapel Hill
Temple Isaiah, Lafayette, CA
Western Massachusetts Darfur Coalition