

Open Letter to the United Nations to End a Major Humanitarian Disaster in Darfur, Sudan

June 17, 2004

To: UN Secretary-General, H.E. Kofi Annan
Security Council Member States
President of the General Assembly, H.E. Julian Robert Hunte

Your Excellencies,

On behalf of the *Responsibility to Protect – Engaging Civil Society* (R2P-CS) project of the World Federalist Movement-Institute for Global Policy we are writing to urge the United Nations to take immediate and strong action to stop the ethnic cleansing and flagrant human rights violations taking place in Darfur, Sudan. Already, one million Darfurians are internally displaced, and refugees number over 100,000. At least 30,000 black Muslims have been massacred, and the killings are ongoing. With the rainy season a few short weeks away, the humanitarian crisis promises to worsen on an appalling scale: international aid groups predict that up to one million people may die if decisive action is not taken immediately.

The government of Sudan, as a sovereign state, has a responsibility to protect its citizens. It has flagrantly disregarded its responsibility to the people of Darfur. In this situation, the responsibility to protect must be borne by the international community. To date, the international community has failed its responsibilities. This is particularly true for the Security Council, which is invested with primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Although the Council has issued statements condemning the atrocities, it has not demanded that the Sudanese government stop the campaign of ethnic cleansing.

The Council's failure to prevent genocide in Rwanda ten years ago was shameful; the Secretary-General, members of the Security Council and others have expressed their commitment and duty to prevent such a tragedy from recurring. That need exists today in Sudan. As Under-Secretary-General Jan Egelund said: "It's not genocide yet and we can prevent it." It would be unconscionable for the Security Council to ignore these warnings and disregard the lessons it has learned from Rwanda.

We therefore join other major NGOs* in the call to the international community to protect the people of Darfur, and apply appropriate international pressure to bring an end to the atrocities.

* We refer you to the statements and recommendations of Amnesty International, Citizens for Global Solutions, Human Rights Watch, and the International Crisis Group, available at: <http://www.amnestyusa.org/countries/sudan/index.do> (AI), http://www.globalsolutions.org/programs/peace_security/peace_ops/conflicts/conflicts_sudan.html (CGS), <http://www.hrw.org/campaigns/darfur/index.htm> (HRW), www.crisisweb.org/home/index.cfm?id=2700&l=1 (ICG).

We call for the **Security Council**, acting under its Chapter VII authority to do the following:

- **Condemn** in the strongest terms the atrocities of the government and the Janjaweed.
- **Call upon** all parties to the conflict to immediately end the campaign of ethnic cleansing and fully respect the N'Djamena ceasefire agreement of April 8, 2004.
- **Demand** that the Sudanese government immediately cease all forms of support to the Janjaweed, and disarm and disband all existing Janjaweed militias.
- **Insist** on unhindered access of humanitarian aid groups and their supplies to the victims, and ensure that aid reaches the intended recipients.
- **Demand** that the government guarantee safe return for refugees and internally displaced persons wishing to return to their homes.
- **Establish** a timeframe for compliance with these demands.
- **Decide** that states shall, in the event that the above demands are not met, impose targeted diplomatic, economic and political measures. This could include, *inter alia*, the following measures: freezing of assets, suspension of organization membership, diplomatic isolation, trade and financial sanctions, withdrawal of investments and arms embargos. Such measures must be targeted to decrease the impact on civilians and increase the impact on decision-makers.
- **Express** in the strongest terms readiness to impose further measures, in accordance with the responsibility of the Security Council under the Charter of the United Nations, including military intervention as a last resort if the atrocities do not stop.

If the situation continues to deteriorate despite the adoption and full implementation of these measures, the Security Council must consider military intervention as a last resort. If aerial bombing of the civilian population continues, the Security Council must establish and enforce no-fly zones, with proper exception made for flights in support of humanitarian operations.

We call upon the **Secretary-General** to:

- **Authorize** a team to investigate all violations of international law, for possible future prosecution by national or international courts, including the International Criminal Court.
- **Appoint** immediately a Special Advisor on the Prevention of Genocide, in accordance with the Plan of Action to Prevent Genocide announced on April 7, 2004. The Special Advisor must have full power to investigate, report and make further recommendations to the Security Council.

If the Security Council fails to act, we further call upon the **General Assembly** to:

- **Call** an Emergency Special Session under the “Uniting for Peace” procedure to decide on appropriate action.

We are also mindful that violence against civilians continues in other regions of Sudan as well, including in the Shilluk region. These attacks against civilians must not be tolerated.

Crimes against humanity, war crimes and genocide are an abomination on the human race. Prevention and early reaction not only save the lives of innocent civilians, but also save vast resources otherwise spent in the aftermath of conflict. Sovereign states bear the primary responsibility to prevent and halt these despicable acts. But when the state in question refuses to do so, the Security Council must accept its responsibility to maintain peace and security and prevent such atrocities. These are the norms necessary to bring about peace and stability in the 21st century.

Sincerely,

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The Open Letter to the United Nations to End a Major Humanitarian Disaster in Darfur, Sudan, dated June 17, 2004 has been endorsed by:

Citizens for Global Solutions

Danish United Nations Association (FN Forbundet)

Fund for Peace

National Council of Churches USA

Tshwaranang Legal Advocacy Centre

Global Action to Prevent War

Nuclear Age Peace Foundation

One World Trust

World Federalist Movement – Canada