

Open Letter to the United Nations to Protect Civilians in Darfur, Sudan

February 18, 2005

Via Facsimile and E-mail

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

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 humanitarian crisis and flagrant human rights violations taking place in Darfur, Sudan. The International Commission of Inquiry on Darfur, the United Nations Advance Mission in Sudan (UNAMIS), and international aid and human rights organizations report that atrocities continue to occur in Darfur. Killings, rape and massive internal displacement are disrupting the lives of nearly two million people. The situation will continue to deteriorate, as it has in recent weeks, if the Security Council does not take immediate action.

Members of the Security Council, collectively and individually, have a responsibility to protect the people of Darfur. As the Security Council is currently considering further measures on Darfur, we urge the permanent Members of the Security Council to commit to not using the veto during their deliberations on Darfur, and as a matter of practice for all cases of genocide and/or large-scale human rights abuses. The call for a commitment to refrain from using the veto in these circumstances has been made by two eminent panels of experts: the Secretary-General’s High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change and the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty.

The Security Council was established to “ensure prompt and effective action by the United Nations” for maintenance of international peace and security. According to the UN Charter, the Security Council, in carrying out its duties, acts on behalf of *all* members of the United Nations. Refraining from the use of the veto for matters involving large scale loss of life or human rights abuses would advance the fundamental purpose of the Council.

The use of veto by the permanent members of the Security Council must not impede the responsibility of the international community to take all necessary steps to halt the ongoing human-rights abuses in Darfur.

Respectfully submitted,

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