

December 3, 2007

Dear Member of Congress,

We, the undersigned organizations, write in support of H. Res. 213, the resolution calling for the establishment of a United Nations Emergency Peace Service (UNEPS) capable of intervening in the early stages of crimes against humanity or other humanitarian crises. We urge you to co-sponsor and work for passage of the resolution with its champions, Representatives Albert Wynn (D-MD) and James Walsh (R-NY).

In recent years, the international community has been increasingly called upon to respond rapidly and effectively to emerging crises, yet lacks the tools to consistently answer this call. We believe the time has come for a permanent emergency response service, designed to complement the capacity of the United Nations to provide stability, peace, and relief in deadly emergencies.

As envisioned, UNEPS would individually recruit, train and employ 12,000 - 18,000 personnel with a wide range of skills, including civilian police, military, judicial experts and relief professionals. This ensures that missions would not fail due to a lack of skills, equipment, cohesiveness, experience in resolving conflicts, or gender, national or religious imbalance. The Service could have special expertise in peacekeeping, conflict resolution, environmental crisis response and emergency medical relief. Upon Security Council authorization, UNEPS would be *immediately* available to respond to a crisis, with first in – first out capabilities.

By intervening in the early stages of urgent situations, UNEPS could help prevent their escalation into national or regional disasters. It is a tool that the international community desperately needs in order to fulfill its “responsibility to protect.” Last spring, Chad’s government requested a U.N. deployment of peacekeepers to slow the spillover of violence from Darfur. However, while the U.N. struggled to prepare the mission, Chad’s government backed away from the request.

UNEPS would also help to create a climate of stability so that confidence building measures can take place. For example, on July 31, 2007 the United Nations Security Council unanimously authorized the deployment of an African Union - U.N. hybrid peacekeeping force (UNAMID). Unfortunately, reports indicate the UNAMID will not be fully operational until well after its December 31, 2007 deadline. If UNEPS were currently in existence, peacekeepers could have been on their way in days rather than months after the agreement, bringing greater stability to the region and perhaps forestalling a change of heart in Khartoum.

The job of building support and raising funds for each new U.N. peacekeeping mission has been compared to that of a volunteer fire chief who is forced to raise funds, find volunteers and secure a fire truck for each new fire. The U.N.’s goals for “rapid deployment” are 30 days for a “traditional” peacekeeping mission (where all parties agree to allow in peacekeepers) and 90 days for “complex” missions (where spoilers attempt to derail a peace agreement). Unfortunately the U.N. usually lacks the resources to meet these modest goals and will need to set the bar much higher to make an appreciable difference to the civilians caught in the crossfire of today’s conflicts.

A United Nations Emergency Peace Service could save millions of lives and billions of dollars, prevent small conflicts from growing into full-scale wars, and keep fragile states from becoming failed states. It will also reduce the need to expend U.S. lives and resources while effectively allowing others to share the burden. More than two-thirds of the American public supports the U.N. having this capacity. We urge your serious consideration of this important proposal and hope you will join us in support of H. Res. 213.

Sincerely,

3D Security Initiative

American Public Health Association

Americans for Democratic Action, Inc. (ADA)

Americans for Informed Democracy

Amnesty International USA

Better World Campaign

Center for American Progress

Center for International Policy

Center for War/Peace Studies

Centre for Development of International Law

Church Women United

Citizens for Global Solutions

Civitas International

CivWorld

COLEAD

Community of Christ

Council for a Livable World

Democracy Coalition Project

Earth Action

ENOUGH

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Foreign Policy in Focus

Fund for Peace

Genocide Intervention Network

Global Action to Prevent War

Global Associates for Health Development

Global Exchange

Global Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and United Church of Christ

Global Security Institute
Human Rights First
Human Rights Watch
International Crisis Group
International Rescue Committee
Lawyers' Committee on Nuclear Policy
Maryknoll Global Concerns
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
National Association of Social Workers
National Peace Corps Association
National Priorities Project
NETWORK: A Catholic Social Justice Lobby
Nuclear Age Peace Foundation
Peace Action
Physicians for Human Rights
Presbyterian Church, (USA), Washington Office
Rainbow/PUSH Coalition
Refugees International
Save Darfur
Union of Concerned Scientists
Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations
United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries
United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society
United Nations Association of the USA
Universal Human Rights Network
Women's Action for New Directions

For more information contact Don Kraus, Citizens for Global Solutions at dkraus@globalsolutions.org or 202-330-4103. Info is also available online at www.globalsolutions.org/UNEPS