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Protecting people against ethnic cleansing, crimes against humanity and genocide is an international responsibility that calls for co-ordinated international action, enforced with sanctions, said Nobel Peace Prize winners Jody Williams and Archbishop Desmond Tutu on Tuesday, at a special meeting of MEPs on the Darfur crisis.

Darfur, Archbishop Tutu said Darfur has become "shorthand for the most ghastly example of our inhumanity towards one another. [...] Though there is much that we, African leaders, should be proud of, we should hang our heads in shame when it comes to Darfur. Praising those who refused to let the crisis in Darfur go unnoticed over the last four years, the Archbishop also thanked MEPs for not giving up on Africa - and for not succumbing to what he referred to as fro-pessimism.

International responsibility to protect

International land-mine ban campaigner Jody Williams, who headed a UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) mission to Darfur in March, had little faith in the Sudanese authorities. The government, she said, is ery sophisticated in the art of promising things that never happen. It is ery difficult", therefore, "to believe Khartoum when they speak.

Her mission had concluded, she said, that a state is responsible for protecting its population against ethnic cleansing, crimes against humanity and genocide. If it fails to do so, "the responsibility to protect" becomes he responsibility of the international community, via the UN. That said, she added, Il [of us] have failed to protect the people of Darfur. I have no "Afro-pessimism but I have Darfurian pessimism".

()Darfur is not only a humanitarian disaster, but political disaster, too, said Graham Watson (ALDE, UK), citing the international community's mpotence and incompetence in protecting the world against genocide. What is needed is full African Union-United Nations force anything short of this will be insufficient, he argued, adding that Europe, meanwhile, "should be leading a Marshall Plan for Africa, starting with Darfur.r

()Jody Williams agreed with those who believe that rhetoric is meaningless without action: f youre not prepared to protect the people of Darfur," she said, "more words on paper are not relevant.

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