

Slovenian President Janez Drnovsek came to the United Nations Wednesday to promote his peace initiative for Sudan's troubled Darfur region, proposing an international peace conference and urging citizens to pressure their governments to take action.

He called on the U.N. Security Council to step up its involvement in the region, where an estimated 180,000 people have died and about 2 million have been displaced since conflict erupted between ethnic African tribes and government-supported Arab militias in 2003.

Drnovsek singled out China and the United States as countries he thinks could be key players in ending what many countries have labeled genocide in Darfur.

China, which has a large economic presence in Sudan, "should use their leverage there and join in this effort in the right way," he said.

Drnovsek spoke to reporters after meeting U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan who has made frequent calls for a "durable political peace" and a permanent cease-fire in Sudan.

Drnovsek recently suggested that his country establish a camp in Sudan for 10,000 refugees, and said Slovenia had also offered to set up a field hospital and send land-mine clearing experts to the region

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