

The Protect Darfur Campaign, launched in the House of Commons yesterday, welcomed last night's historic UN Security Council referral of the situation in Darfur to the International Criminal Court (ICC) which passed with four abstentions.

The vote followed a compromise which will enable the United States, opposed to the ICC in principle, to bar the court from prosecuting US citizens in Sudan.

"This is the most positive action on Darfur taken by the United Nations to date," said Dr James Smith, Chief Executive of the Aegis Trust, which coordinates the Protect Darfur Campaign. "Some members of Protect Darfur have been calling for such a referral for months - even for the past year

"Now we can only hope that Security Council members will be equally robust in helping to protect the people of Darfur. A new resolution, mandating peace enforcement operations in Darfur, to be led by AU forces with logistical and financial support from wealthy nations, must follow as a matter of urgency."

Captain Brian Steidle, former US Marine and former advisor to the AU Observer Mission in Darfur, speaking tonight commented: "That's awesome. Now we know where people are going to be tried, let's move on to stopping it so they can be tried."

The Rt. Hon. Clare Short MP, former International Development Secretary stated: "This is welcome news but it won't stop the killing, raping and displacement. The members of the Security Council must mandate and fund a peace enforcement force, otherwise they are continuing to collude in genocide."