



DARFUR

SUDAN NEEDS YOUR HELP

What is happening in Darfur? Let us not say we did not know. We know and we must do something. Let us speak up and speak out against the atrocities in Darfur. Those dying are God's children. They are our sisters and brothers. Let us act now before it is too late.

-ARCHBISHOP DESMOND TUTU, JUNE 7, 2004

VIOLENCE AND SUFFERING IN SUDAN'S DARFUR

A humanitarian crime is under way in the Darfur region of western Sudan. Sudan is the largest and one of the most diverse nations in Africa, rich in natural resources such as oil. Independent since 1956 but ruled by a military dictatorship, the country has been torn by civil war for decades.

Under the pretext of countering an insurgency in the region, a government-backed militia, the Janjaweed, is deliberately killing, raping and terrorizing civilians in Darfur on a horrifically widespread scale.

To date, as many as 50,000 to 100,000 civilians have been killed and 1.2 million people have been driven from their homes. Many of these refugees, now in camps in Chad and Sudan, report the raping of women and girls, the torching of villages, the destruction of food supplies, and the deliberate poisoning of water sources by the Janjaweed.

In addition to attacks from the militia, the refugees and those who remain in their villages in Darfur must deal with hunger and disease, and lack of clean water and sanitation facilities. The seasonal rains have hampered access by humanitarian aid organizations whose assistance is already drastically reduced by severe limitations imposed by the Sudanese government.

GENOCIDE DECLARED

On July 22, 2004 the U.S. Congress unanimously declared that the killings in Darfur amount to "genocide."

For the first time in its history, the Committee on Conscience of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum has declared a "genocide emergency" in the Sudan, indicating that genocide is imminent or is actually happening in the Darfur region.

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A humanitarian aid worker recently wrote in the Washington Post: "What's happening in Darfur is the wholesale slaughter and rape of unimaginable numbers of human beings... Now is the time for action. The situation in Darfur is not an American issue. It is not a European issue or an African issue. It is the most fundamental statement of what we stand for as members of the human race. The slaughter and rape of

hundreds of thousands of people is not acceptable by any standard of humanity. If there is ever a time the international community has to come together, and do so in a decisive fashion, it is now."

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

PARTNER UP: Identify neighbors, local groups, and religious communities with whom you can work to raise public awareness and take action together.

REACH OUT: Call or write your elected officials, including those in local office who may have access to national officials and campaigns. Tell them that our nation must do more, and that this is a priority for you. The eyes of history are watching how we respond to genocide in our time. To find your representatives, enter your zip code at www.vote-smart.org

Write letters to the editor and Op Ed pieces. Call television and radio news departments to ask for more coverage about Darfur.

GIVE MONEY: Make a contribution to an organization that is providing aid to the people of Darfur. For a list of humanitarian aid organizations working in Sudan and Chad, see www.interaction.org/sudan/index.html

GET LINKED: For daily news and action go to Sudan: The Passion of the Present at www.passionofthepresent.org. This blog is the center of a worldwide online network of people engaged with Darfur and Sudan.

Join The Save Darfur Coalition, a coalition of more than 70 faith-based, humanitarian, and human rights organizations at www.savedarfur.org to learn more and participate in local events and actions.