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Sudanese MPs: Protect Darfur

In response to attacks in 2003 by rebel groups, the government of Sudan armed and supported Janjawid militias to attack targeted groups in Darfur.

Since then, tens of thousands have been killed, mostly by Janjawid and government forces, thousands of women and girls raped, and millions forcibly displaced from their homes.

In May 2006, the Sudanese Government and one rebel faction signed a Peace Agreement.

But violence has actually increased; in the past four months alone over 80,000 more people in Darfur have been displaced, sometimes for the second or third time.

There are now more than 2 million people displaced in camps and towns who have been unable to return to their villages for over three years.

Fear is spreading; in many areas of Darfur displaced people dare not leave camps because Janjawid militias occupy the surrounding area, which is now depopulated.

Where people do venture outside the camps the Janjawid often attack them and women are frequently raped.

This can be changed! The people of Darfur are asking for safety in the camps, security to allow them to return home and the disarmament of the Janjawid. An effective peacekeeping force which protects civilians can start to provide this safety.

As the next session of the National Assembly begins we are singling out the Parliamentary Committees for Peace and Reconciliation and for Human Rights and asking them, with an international voice, to use their positions as decision makers to make a change.

Imagine. You are an MP in Sudan. You receive thousands of letters from people all around the world, asking you to do your job and speak out in Parliament about the atrocities happening in your country. You can be part of making this happen! Write to:

- 1) Mr Ali Ahmed al-Sayed (Head of the Peace and Reconciliation Committee)
- 2) Ms Barsila Joseph (Head of the Human Rights Committee)

Have you already written to Mr Ali Ahmed al-Sayed? Then write to Ms Barsila Joseph!

[Target check 2]

Have you already written to Ms Barsila Joseph? Then write to Mr Ali Ahmed al-Sayed!

[Sample letter 1. Ali Ahemd al-Sayed]

Dear Mr Ali Ahmed al-Sayed,

As the next session of the National Assembly begins I am writing to you to urge the Peace and Reconciliation Committee of the National Assembly to take urgent and effective action to ensure the protection of civilians in Darfur.

In the past four months over 80,000 more people in Darfur have been displaced, some of them for the second or third time. There are now more than 2 million people displaced in camps and towns who have been unable to return to their villages for over three years. In many areas of Darfur displaced people dare not leave camps because Janjawid militias occupy the surrounding area, which is now depopulated. Where people do venture outside the camps the Janjawid often attack them. Women who have to leave the camps to look for firewood are frequently raped by Janjawid. Such risks make the return of displaced people to their homes impossible.

The government has failed to disarm the Janjawid as it agreed to do in the Ndjama Humanitarian Ceasefire Agreement of 2004, the Darfur Peace Agreement of 2006 and many other agreements. Antonov planes of the Sudan Armed Forces are bombing villages in raids which almost invariably fail to distinguish between civilians and military targets.

There is an urgent need for an effective peacekeeping force to provide security for the civilian population, to ensure the safe and voluntary assisted return home of those who have been displaced, and to actively monitor and verify the disarmament of the Janjawid. The African Union Peace and Security Council resolved in March 2006 to hand over to a UN force with a strong mandate and better resources than the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS), which has been carrying out peacekeeping duties in Darfur since 2005. The UN Security Council in August 2006 mandated an expanded UN peacekeeping force to be deployed in Darfur but, although there are already 10,000 UN peacekeepers in Sudan under the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, this deployment has so far been refused by the ruling National Congress Party. However other parties in the Government of National Unity accept the transition to a strong UN force with a mandate to protect civilians.

We urge you to use the weight of parliament and the National Assembly Peace and Reconciliation Committee to urge the government to accept UN peacekeepers. Until they come, the African Union and the international community must ensure that AMIS is strengthened and actively protects civilians.

We hope you will share our concerns with the other members of the Peace and Reconciliation Committee and the National Assembly so that active steps can be taken urgently to ensure the protection of the civilian population.

Yours sincerely,

[Sample letter 2. Barsila Joseph]

Dear Dr Barsila Joseph,

As the next session of the National Assembly begins I am writing to you to urge the Human rights Committee of the National Assembly to take urgent and effective action to ensure the protection of civilians in Darfur.

In the past four months over 80,000 more people in Darfur have been displaced, some of them for the second or third time. There are now more than 2 million people displaced in camps and towns who have been unable to return to their villages for over three years. In many areas of Darfur displaced people dare not leave camps because Janjawid militias occupy the surrounding area, which is now depopulated. Where people do venture outside the camps the Janjawid often attack them. Women who have to leave the camps to look for firewood are frequently raped by Janjawid. Such risks make the return of displaced people to their homes impossible.

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We urge you to use the weight of parliament and the National Assembly Human Rights Committee to urge the government to accept UN peacekeepers. Until they come, the African Union and the international community must ensure that AMIS is strengthened and actively protects civilians.

We hope you will share our concerns with the other members of the Human Rights Committee and the National Assembly so that active steps can be taken urgently to ensure the protection of the civilian population.

Yours sincerely,

[Target contact details 1]

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