



Before Time Runs Out for the People of Darfur: U.S. Leadership Needed Now

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WHY THIS ISSUE IS IMPORTANT: Four months after the Sudanese government and a faction of the main Darfur rebel group signed a peace agreement, that same government has embarked on a major military offensive to recapture rebel-controlled areas. The offensive has resulted in lost lives, further displacement of people and a threat to what remains of humanitarian relief efforts. The government of the Sudan has continued to refuse a recently authorized United Nations peacekeeping operation. As Bishop Wenski, Chairman of the Committee on International Policy, urged in an editorial published in *America* magazine in May, the sustained engagement of the United States and the entire international community is essential to “hold the Sudanese government to its promise of allowing the African Union peacekeeping force (AMIS) to be transformed into **a more robust and mobile UN mission** with a strong mandate.”

The unraveling of the peace agreement and deterioration of the security situation in Darfur are deeply worrying. Already 2.5 million people had been driven from their homes and 3.5 million were at risk of starvation. Now the United Nations warns that hundreds of thousands more Darfuris could die if relief operations are completely halted. As the U.S. bishops have repeatedly stated, our nation cannot remain silent in the face of killings, rape and wanton destruction. An urgent appeal to President Bush and our elected representatives to bring a definitive end to the **intolerable moral and humanitarian crisis in Darfur** must be made.

USCCB POSITION: Bishop Wenski reiterated in a statement today, “With as many as 400,000 dead, we renew our call to the Administration to redouble its efforts to end the intolerable moral and humanitarian crisis in Darfur through sustained, high-level engagement that will ensure the compliance of the Sudanese government with its obligations under international law. The most effective expression of this engagement would be the appointment of a special envoy who could focus diplomatic energies on attaining a **comprehensive and lasting solution to the conflict.**”

WHAT YOU CAN DO: In answer to the Gospel’s call to protect human life and dignity, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has joined the Save Darfur Coalition, an alliance of over 150 faith-based, humanitarian and human rights organizations that is helping to sponsor a **Global Day for Darfur** in events organized in cities around the world this Sunday, September 17. Join your voices with those calling on their leaders across the globe to bring an end to this tragedy.

Call immediately for a renewal of the **high-level engagement and leadership of the United States** until our commitment to the people of Darfur is fulfilled. Resolutions have recently been passed by the Senate to this effect, but these words must be turned into action in order to stop the violence and assure the delivery of vitally needed humanitarian assistance.

TAKE ACTION NOW! Make sure that your elected officials know that you want to see the resumption of high-level U.S. leadership and diplomatic efforts to end the crisis in Darfur. Please call the White House (202-456-1111) to tell the President today that you support two steps:

- 1) appoint a **presidential special envoy** for the Sudan to negotiate, mediate and reach a peaceful solution to this rapidly degenerating situation; and
- 2) increase diplomatic pressure to convince the Sudanese government to comply with its international obligations and accept the **immediate deployment of the UN peacekeeping mission.**

For more information, contact:

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