

Darfur Agreement: A Step Toward Peace

Last Friday, The Government Of Sudan And The Largest Darfur Rebel Group Signed An Agreement And Took A Step Toward Peace. We are still far from our ultimate goal of returning millions of displaced people to their homes so they can have a life without fear, but we can now see a way forward. The President is particularly grateful for the leadership of President Obasanjo of Nigeria and President Sassou-Nguesso of the Republic of the Congo.

The President Has Called The Massive Violence An Act Of Genocide - No Other Word Captures The Extent Of This Tragedy. A 22-year civil war between north and south took more than 2 million lives before a peace agreement that the United States helped to broker was signed early last year. At about the same time, another conflict was raging to the west - in Sudan's vast Darfur region. Darfur rebel groups had attacked government outposts. To fight that rebellion, Sudan's regime armed and unleashed a horse-mounted militia called the Janjaweed, which targeted not only the rebels but the tribes thought to be supporting them. The Janjaweed murdered men and raped women and beat children to death and burned homes and farms and poisoned wells, stole land to graze their own herds, and destroyed hundreds of villages. About 200,000 people have died from conflict, famine, and disease, and more than 2 million were forced into camps. A ceasefire was declared in this conflict in April 2004, but it has been routinely violated by all sides.

With This Peace Agreement, Darfur Has A Chance To Begin Anew. Sudan's government has promised to disarm the Janjaweed by mid-October, and to punish all those who violate the ceasefire. The main rebel group has agreed to withdraw into specified areas. Its forces will eventually be disarmed as well, and some of its units will be integrated into the national army and police. The African Union will meet a week from today, and the President urges its members to help implement this agreement.

The President's Plan To Assist Darfur Has Two Critical Components:

First, America And Other Nations Must Act To Prevent A Humanitarian Emergency. America is the leading provider of humanitarian aid, and this year alone we account for more than 85 percent of the food distributed by the World Food Program in Sudan. The situation, however, remains dire.

- The United States Has Met Its Commitment - But Other Major Donors Have Not Come Through. The World Food Program has issued an appeal for funds necessary to feed 6 million people over the next several months. The United States has met our commitment - but other major donors have not come through. As a result, this month the World Food Program was forced to cut rations by half. The President has proposed, in the emergency supplemental before Congress, to increase food aid to Sudan by another \$225 million. The President hopes Congress will act swiftly on this true emergency.
- The President Is Directing The Federal Government To Take Numerous Actions To Provide Relief To The People Of Darfur. The President has directed USAID to ship emergency food stockpiles, and he has ordered five ships to be loaded with food and to proceed immediately to Port Sudan. The President has ordered the emergency purchase of another 40,000 metric tons of food for rapid shipment to Sudan. These actions will allow the World Food Program to restore full food rations to the people of Darfur this summer. Americans who wish to contribute money to help deliver relief to the people of Darfur can find information about how to do so by going to the USAID website at www.USAID.gov and clicking on the section marked "Helping the Sudanese People."
- The European Union - And Nations Like Canada, The United Kingdom, The Netherlands, And Japan - Have Taken Leadership On Other Humanitarian Issues, And The People Of Darfur Urgently Need More Of Their Help Now. In addition, the government of Sudan must allow all UN agencies to do their work without hindrance by

removing the visa and travel restrictions that complicate relief efforts. And all sides must cease attacks on relief workers.

Second, America And Other Nations Must Work Quickly To Increase Security On The Ground In Darfur.

- America Is Working With NATO Members To Increase Security In Darfur. America is working with our NATO allies to support the African Union forces in Darfur with immediate assistance in the form of planning, logistics, intelligence support, and other help, and the President urges members of the alliance to contribute to this effort.
- America Is Working With The UN To Increase Security In Darfur. The African Union troops must be the core of a larger military force that is more mobile and more capable, generates better intelligence - and is given a clear mandate to protect civilians from harm. So the President is dispatching Secretary Rice to address the United Nations Security Council tomorrow and to request a resolution that will accelerate the deployment of United Nations peacekeepers into Darfur.
 - We Are Working With The UN To Identify Countries That Can Contribute Troops To This Peacekeeping Effort. The President has called President Bashir of Sudan, both to commend him on his work for this agreement, and to urge his government to express clear support for the UN force. The vulnerable people of Darfur deserve the active protection that UN peacekeepers are called to provide.

While America Is Providing Aid To The Suffering People In Darfur, Al Qaeda Wants To Add To The Misery By Killing Those Who Want Only To Help. In a recent audiotape, Osama Bin Laden attacked American efforts in Sudan and urged his followers to kill international peacekeepers in Darfur. While the terrorists are attempting to exploit the misery of fellow Muslims and encourage more death, America and other responsible nations are fighting misery and helping a desperate region come back to life. The contrast could not be clearer.

#