

PRESS RELEASE

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CONYERS LEADS SUCCESSFUL HISTORIC BIPARTISAN EFFORT TO DECLARE GENOCIDE IN SUDAN IN THE HOUSE AND SENATE

Congressman John Conyers, Jr., Dean of the Congressional Black Caucus and Ranking Member of the House Committee on the Judiciary, released the following statement, after successfully leading the passage of resolutions in the House of Representatives and the Senate declaring genocide in Darfur, Sudan:

“Yesterday, for the first time in our nation’s history, the U.S. Congress stood up with one voice to declare genocide in Sudan. The House and Senate unanimously pledged their resolve to take action before over 1 million people die in this ethnic and racial genocide.

Despite the millions of lives lost in the Nazi Holocaust, the killing fields of Cambodia and the massacre in Rwanda, Congress has never before declared a crisis of mass death to be genocide. July 22, 2004, was an historic day that I hope will encourage the world to move with resolve throughout this century, whenever and wherever the vile evil of genocide rears its head.

Today, 1000 black Sudanese people will die. Many are children dying of disease, starvation or dehydration after their fathers were systematically murdered, their mothers were systematically raped, and they were systematically forced to flee villages, forced to await a certain death. One thousand more will die tomorrow and the next day. And soon those numbers will grow to several thousand dying each day.

Sadly, this resolution alone will not save lives. It is too late to save hundreds of thousands who now desperately cling to life. But 1 million Sudanese people are hoping that the world will act to spare them from the same fate. Over 1.2 million people are displaced in Darfur; 200,000 refugees have fled to Chad; over 300 villages have been completely destroyed by the Janjarweed militia, given free license and assistance to clear the land of black people by the Arab controlled Sudanese government.

In passing these resolutions, the U.S. Congress is issuing a call to action. Hundreds of thousands, maybe a million lives can be saved, if the nations and people of the world commit themselves to ending this genocide.

Now is the time, through the leadership of the United Nations and the United States, for the international community to commit to providing humanitarian aid, logistical support, security monitors and military force, if necessary. As we have seen in this body, this is not a liberal or conservative issue. It is not a black or white issue, a Christian or Muslim issue. It is not an American, European or African issue. This is a human issue. We must share the resolve, as humans, to never let genocide happen again and to stop this genocide in Sudan.

My colleagues and I are eager to meet with President Bush to discuss how we can further assist the Administration’s efforts to address this crisis. I appreciate Secretary of State Colin Powell’s work on this issue and his willingness to meet with the Congressional Black Caucus today to discuss Darfur. On Monday, a delegation from Congress will be meeting with the Secretary General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan. We aim to seek his counsel on how we may assist the international efforts to prevent genocide, create stability, and provide humanitarian relief in Darfur. On a bipartisan basis, we hope to share with him the message of the American people that we will not passively watch another genocide.”

