

Darfur: The Ign

Here's The Deal:

Darfur Genocide caused by government, rebels

Since February 2003 approximately 400,000 people have been killed in the genocide in Darfur, located in Sudan, Africa, while over two million civilians have been displaced from their homes and forced to live in refugee camps in Sudan and Chad. The massive number of victims makes the crisis in Darfur the largest genocide since the Rwanda genocide of 1994.

The genocide is a result of two rebel groups in Darfur fighting against the government: the Sudanese Liberation Army/ Movement (SLA/SLM) and the Justice and Quality Movement (JEM). These groups want the government to improve the standard of living and adjust the political marginalization of the Darfur region.

To stop these rebels, the Sudanese army and the Sudanese government-backed militia, known as the Janjaweed, have joined forces. All parties involved seem to believe that the civilian population should be targeted for supporting the rebel groups. Rape, displacement, starvation, and mass murder have resulted from the actions of the Sudanese forces.

The Sudanese government is harming the welfare of its citizens through its campaign of violence and forced starvation. Over 3.5 million people are completely dependent on international relief.

Many efforts have been made to slow the genocide. However, the relief efforts were largely unsuccessful and many workers were being killed by both the Sudanese army and the rebels.

The United Nations (UN) began to pass resolutions such as UN Resolution 1706 which authorizes a peacekeeping force and a right to protect the civilians. This resolution has not been approved and the African Union and Kharoum President Omar el-Bashir are hesitant to allow UN peacekeepers into Darfur. The African Union however, does not have the money or resources to make a significant change in Darfur.

Other efforts include UN Resolution 1556, which demanded the disarming of the Janjaweed, and UN Resolution 1591, which requests a no-fly zone over Darfur and bans all Sudanese military flights in Darfur. Additionally a recent agreement from Bashir includes a "60-day ceasefire agreement to last until March 15, Sudan's cooperation to work with the African Union and UN on the deployment of a hybrid peacekeeping force in Darfur, ensuring zero tolerance policies for gender-based violence in Darfur, and free access for humanitarian aid workers and journalists," according to savedarfur.com

None of these resolutions have been enforced. The situation in Darfur will worsen rapidly if new laws are not enacted. Many UN officials predict the death rate could potentially rise to 100,000 per month if international action is at a standstill and security collapses.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Antonio Guterres, describes the crisis in Darfur as "the largest and most complex humanitarian problem on the globe."

The Bush Administration recognizes the crisis in Darfur as genocide. However, support from the U.S. government and its citizens seems minimal when compared to the amount of suffering. While the US governments focus is clearly on the war in Iraq, President Bush did mention the genocide in his State of the Union address given Tuesday.

"We will continue to speak out for the cause of freedom in places like Cuba, Belarus, and Burma, and continue to awaken the conscience of the world to save the people of Darfur," Bush said.

For more information about Darfur and how to help stop the genocide visit savedarfur.com

-Sara McKee, Feature Editor



Ignored Genocide



How You Can Help: Easy ways to help stop the genocide in Darfur

Many students do not realize they have a large amount of power in shaping the world. The students' generation is the generation of the future and students need to take action to reach their full potential. In the country of Sudan in the Darfur region, a humanitarian disaster is looming. Thousands of Africans are dying and many more are displaced and put into concentration camps. Students today need to use their influence to help those in Darfur. Any aid, no matter how large or small, is a positive thing.

An important first step to help those in Darfur is to become informed and aware. Simply by researching the topic one can become educated about the disaster in the Sudan. By becoming knowledgeable, students can educate others and persuade them that everyone needs to be aware that they can help, too.

An easy way to become involved is simply writing a letter to an Illinois representative. One can even write them an e-mail. Politicians pay attention when voters, or future voters, actually take time to write to them and voice their opinions. If you need help writing a letter, go to lifenets.net/contactreps. These websites give you sample letters and provide other links on information on the tragedy of Darfur and other ways to help.

Another way to help the victims of Darfur is by donating money to a charity. There are numerous charities donating specifically to Darfur. The Internet is a great way to locate those places. To make sure they are a real charity and not a scam, the website should say "org," "gov," or "net" at the end of the address. Some credible charities to donate are savedarfur.org, darfurgenocide.org, and helpdarfurnow.org.

Many organizations have created petitions to attract the attention of politicians and persuade them to take action to help Darfur. By signing a petition you become one extra reason politicians pay attention.

Other ways to part of the action is by participating in groups that have been created on Internet networking sites, Facebook and MySpace, that are specifically to create awareness and help in the effort to stop the genocide. These groups organize events, provide information, and get students connected to fight to save the refugees in the Darfur region.

Students have the potential to change problems in the world. Right now there is no program at H-F helping the humanitarian disaster in Darfur. Students need to get together and find a way to help. Raise awareness throughout the H-F community by talking with local politicians, other town organizations, churches, and synagogues. Students can even raise money to donate to Darfur charities by bake sales, concerts, athletic events, and candy sales, just to name a few.

Many high school students have started to take action. Through the Save Darfur Coalition, Dollars for Darfur was created. It is a national high school fundraising event to raise money to try to stop the genocide in Darfur. Their goal is to raise over \$200,000. Half of the money raised will fund humanitarian efforts for refugees, while the other half will help fund the Save Darfur Coalition. Save Darfur provides easy steps and suggestions to get high schools involved in Dollars for Darfur. To sign H-F up to help the effort to assist Darfur refugees and stop the ongoing genocide, go to savedarfur.org.

Young people have so much power, and many do not even realize it. Politicians love it when students are actively involved in the world around them. It is important to help those in need and the Sudan region of Darfur needs our help. A genocide is occurring and any type of aid can help change the future of those in need.

-Carly Karmel, Managing Editor



Photos courtesy of Roger Turesson