

# GENOCIDE EMERGENCY: DARFUR, SUDAN



Since early 2003, Sudanese government soldiers and their proxy militia, known as the Janjaweed, have fought rebel groups in the western region of Darfur. Initially, the government strategy largely involved systematic assaults against civilians from the same ethnic groups as the rebel forces. The targeted victims have been mostly from the Fur, Zaghawa, and Masaalit ethnic groups.

Hundreds of thousands of civilians have died from violence, disease, and starvation, and thousands of women have been raped. More than 2.5 million civilians have been driven from their homes, their villages torched and property stolen. Thousands of villages have been systematically destroyed and more than 230,000 people have fled to neighboring Chad. But most of those displaced are trapped inside Darfur. Although large-scale government attacks against civilians have declined since 2005, millions remain at risk. Most of the displaced are not returning home for fear that their villages will be attacked again. The Sudanese government still bears primary responsibility for the danger to civilians, but the increasing fragmentation of the rebel groups and their use of violence have contributed to the high level of insecurity.

Darfur is home to more than 30 ethnic groups, all of which are Muslim. The Janjaweed militias—recruited, armed, trained, and supported by the Sudanese government—are drawn from several of the groups in Darfur who identify themselves as Arab. They have used racial and ethnic slurs while attacking and raping the targeted groups.

The Khartoum-based government's use of ethnically and racially targeted violence in Darfur resembles similar actions in southern Sudan before a tenuous 2005 peace agreement ended conflict there. Government-sponsored actions in both regions have included:

- **INFLAMING** ethnic conflict
- **IMPEDING** international humanitarian access, resulting in deadly conditions of life for displaced civilians
- **BOMBING** civilians from aircraft
- **MURDERING** and **RAPING** civilians

Because of substantial evidence that "acts of genocide or related crimes against humanity were occurring or immediately threatened," in 2004 the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum declared a Genocide Emergency for Darfur. That same year, the U.S. government determined that genocide had been committed in Darfur. In January 2005, the UN Commission of Inquiry concluded that "crimes against humanity and war crimes have been committed in Darfur and may be no less serious and heinous than genocide." In March 2005, the UN Security Council asked the International Criminal Court to investigate the Darfur situation. The court has issued arrest warrants for a high-ranking Sudanese government official and a militia leader on charges of crimes against humanity.

## WHAT IS GENOCIDE?

Raphael Lemkin, a Jewish refugee who fled Poland to the United States, introduced the term genocide in 1944 to describe what was happening in Nazi-occupied Europe. In 1948, the United Nations adopted the UN Genocide Convention, which defined *genocide* as certain acts undertaken with the intent to destroy, in whole or in substantial part, a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group, as such. In agreeing to the Genocide Convention, nations promised to "undertake to prevent" genocide.

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum honors the memory of those who suffered in the Holocaust by confronting genocide and threats of genocide today through the work of its Committee on Conscience. Join our efforts at [www.ushmm.org/conscience](http://www.ushmm.org/conscience).

# WHAT CAN I DO?

## HELP THE UNITED STATES HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM CONFRONT GENOCIDE TODAY

### 1. JOIN OUR COMMUNITY OF CONSCIENCE

Visit our Web site, [www.ushmm.org/conscience](http://www.ushmm.org/conscience). Sign up for our Genocide Prevention e-newsletter, download our Darfur layer on Google Earth, and subscribe to the *Voices on Genocide Prevention* podcast and blog. Learn more about genocide, the current situation in Darfur, and other places at risk.

### 2. CONTACT THE MEDIA

Tell them you want better coverage of Darfur. Visit their Web sites, call them, and send e-mails providing feedback on their coverage of the region.

### 3. COMMUNICATE WITH DECISION MAKERS

Stress the need to provide humanitarian assistance, protect civilians, stop the violence, and promote a solution to end the genocide in Darfur. Contact government officials and members of the United Nations, the European Union, and the African Union.

### 4. GET ENGAGED IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Talk about Darfur with friends, family, members of organizations you belong to, and coworkers—help spread the word. Schools, churches, synagogues, mosques, and groups across the country are making a difference.

### 5. SUPPORT EDUCATION AND RELIEF EFFORTS

Support the ongoing efforts of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum to draw attention to what is happening in Darfur. Find out more about who is on the ground in Darfur, what they are doing, and how you can help.

**YOUR VOICE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE.  
DO NOT BE SILENT.**

Learn how at [www.ushmm.org/conscience](http://www.ushmm.org/conscience).

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