

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 3, 2005

The Honorable Condoleezza Rice
Secretary of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Rice:

We are writing to you about an issue of grave concern: the ongoing violence in Darfur, Sudan.

You are taking up your position as Secretary of State just as matters in Sudan reach a critical juncture. The recent internationally supported north-south agreement between the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement marks an important opportunity for peace between the warring parties and a prospective end to a decades-long conflict, although the challenges of implementation are formidable. However, while the world justly celebrates the milestone Naivasha Protocols, violence continues to rage in Darfur.

Both Congress and the President have recognized the terrible violence in Darfur as genocide. While that acknowledgement may represent a small step forward from our country's tragic blindness towards Rwanda in 1994, simply saying the word "genocide" is not enough. It has neither stopped the killings nor triggered a meaningful international response.

We applaud the Administration's work on the Naivasha agreement and recognize the commitment to helping forge a broader Sudanese peace. But as you consider the challenges we still face in Sudan, what will our strategy be, both in the short and the long term?

Specifically, could you tell us what benchmarks will be used to measure progress in Darfur? Will international assistance stemming from the north-south accord be conditioned on progress in Darfur? How can we strengthen our partnership with the African Union to help it deploy more troops and to do so to greater effect? What more can we do through the United Nations to give teeth to Security Council resolutions and to fundamentally change the situation on the ground?

In terms of foreign assistance, what do you see as the strategy that will guide the work of USAID in the country? How can we ensure that the economic and health needs of women and children are met? The government of Sudan currently invests very little in social services for its own people; what can be done to encourage it to do more as it reaps a peace dividend from the north-south conflict? And, how can we make certain our foreign assistance will reach the areas of greatest need?

Additionally, what is our strategy to achieve justice and accountability for the massive human rights violations and acts of genocide that have taken place in Sudan?

Sudan is a large country with a significant impact on the region around it. It is clearly not in our strategic interest to allow it to founder, and it is our absolute obligation to act on what we have mutually declared to be genocide. Given its importance and given the achievements of Ambassador Danforth in elevating the issue and in responding to it, we would urge the President to name a new envoy for peace in Sudan and to name an individual of similar stature and commitment.

Like others in government, many of us in Congress are personally troubled by the memories of American failures in Rwanda and determined to see us do better this time in Sudan. We look forward to your response and to working together on this issue.

Sincerely,

Dick Durbin

Bill Nelson

E. Benjamin Johnson

Susan Collins

Blanche L. Lincoln

Norm Wayne

Lucretia Chambers

Nicko Ackline

Carl Levin

Charles Schumer

James M. Jeffords

Hillary Rodham Clinton

Patty Murray

C. V. Blunt

Tom Auk

Aelen Gede

~~Joe M. Clarke~~

Patrick Leahy

Tom F. Barry

Mark Dayton

Bob Ryan
D. Ryan

J. Wilson

Tom Coughlin

Max Buccico

Maria Carbone

Sam Rombach

Frank R. Lautenberg

James Kristin

J. Ehrig

Debbie Stabenow

James H. Beahm

Karen Bertone

Elizabeth Dole

Chris Dodd

Jon Kyl

Ed Markey

John McCain

Tom Coburn