

## **Statement of Congressman Wally Herger**

On House Passage of H.R. 3127, the Darfur Peace and Accountability Act

**"Like all Americans, I am deeply distressed by the tragedy that is taking place in Darfur. It is one of the worst ongoing humanitarian and human rights crises in the world, and has rightly been characterized as genocide. Hundreds of thousands of people have been killed and millions more have been displaced. I believe that a compassionate nation like ours has a moral obligation to support policies that will foster peace and security in this war-torn country.**

**"The Darfur Peace and Accountability Act takes important steps toward punishing the Sudanese government and pressuring it to stop this tragedy. It is my deepest hope that this legislation helps push the Sudanese government to stop the genocide in Darfur and allow an already authorized United Nations peacekeeping force into the country.**

**"I applaud the Bush Administration for its leadership in addressing this crisis, including taking a leading role in brokering the May 2006 accord and appointing a special envoy to the Sudan last week. Yet, stopping the Darfur genocide requires the international community to take meaningful and effective actions against the Sudanese government. The United Nations is again presented an opportunity to help stop a monumental tragedy. I hope U.N. countries that seemingly support the Sudanese government will not deter or outright prevent the international body from taking forceful action to help stop the violence in Darfur."**

By way of background, H.R. 3127 takes real steps toward pressuring the Sudanese government to stop the violence. It encourages President Bush to impose sanctions against the government and its Janjaweed militia, and also states that President Bush should take steps to deny the Sudanese government access to oil revenues. Also, it would deny a visa to any individual associated with the genocide in Darfur. Further, it would provide for additional assistance to the current African Union peacekeeping mission. Congress has previously provided over \$1 billion in humanitarian aid to the Sudan and Darfur region, including \$618 million passed earlier this year.

In May 2006, the Sudanese government and the Sudanese Liberation Movement, the largest rebel group, signed a peace deal that aimed to bring an end to the deadly conflict. Among other actions, the agreement requires that the Sudanese government disband the Janjaweed militia. Subsequently, rebel forces would also disarm and many would become members of the Sudanese Armed Forces or police forces. Further, the agreement provides for new democratic reforms that ultimately would allow the people of Darfur to choose their leaders and determine their status as a region.

Regrettably, however, it is widely reported that the violence has not subsided--but perhaps worsened--since the agreement was signed. The United Nations recently passed a resolution that would provide for a 20,000-person U.N. peacekeeping force to be deployed to Darfur. However, to date the Sudanese government has not accepted the offer of a U.N. peacekeeping force. The African Union's (AU) peacekeeping mission is scheduled to conclude on September 30, 2006. Some reports suggest that, even if the AU mission were to continue, the AU lacks the resources and personnel needed to serve as an adequate peacekeeping force.

President Bush is expected to sign H.R. 3127 into law.