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Darfur

## Darfur: A Modern Day Genocide: Educate Yourself

### I. Background

The Republic of Sudan has endured a civil war that spans four decades during which two million people have died. The Sudanese government and its allied forces have committed egregious human rights abuses, including forced starvation through the denial of international humanitarian assistance; abduction and enslavement of women and children; forced displacement of civilians; and bombing of civilian targets and humanitarian facilities.

More than 2.7 million African Muslims from traditional farming communities have been forcibly uprooted and subjected to murder, rape, and other horrifying atrocities. Their homes, villages and livelihoods are being destroyed by Sudanese government forces, and by the militias they support, known as *Janjaweed* (Arabic for "evil men on horseback").

The *Janjaweed* militia, with Sudanese government assistance, is committing these atrocities to decimate the black, non-Arabic populations of Darfur, specifically the Fur, Masaalit, and Zaghawa ethnic communities.

### II. The Situation Now : Refugees, Rape and Genocide

Almost 2 million men, women, and children are crowded into camps for internally displaced persons in Sudan and refugee camps in Chad without sufficient food, clean water, health care, or schools.

More than 3 million people face malnutrition; nearly a quarter of young children do not have enough to eat, in large part because the World Food Program faces a 40% shortfall.

Some 400,000 people are dead from genocidal violence, pervasive hunger, and illness. Each month 15,000 people die - another 500 people die every day the world waits.

Incidents of rape are escalating; security in the camps is deteriorating; aid workers are being threatened and arrested.

### III. Recognizing Genocide

The following have all identified actions of the Sudanese government as Genocide under the terms of The United Nations Genocide Convention:

The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom

The US Congress In the Sudan Peace Act of 2002

The Committee on Conscience of the US Holocaust Memorial Museum.

### IV. The Jewish Duty to Respond

The Duty to Rescue life and limb, based on "Lo taamod al dam re'acha" (Lev. 19:16), and on "Vechai imach" (Lev. 25:35), extends to all persons. (Ramban, Hosafot leMitzvot Aseh, 16; Meiri, Sanhedrin 58a.)

The Mitzvah of Tzedakah, to provide food, clothing and shelter to the poor, extends to the impoverished of any nation, and one who shuts his eyes to that duty is called wicked, evil and sinner. (Rambam, Matnot Ani'im 7:7, 10:3).

The Prohibition against aiding or encouraging wrongdoing (Lev. 19:14) applies to all persons and societies and precludes indirect aid even through failure to protest. (Avodah Zara 6a-b; Nedarim 22a; Rambam, Kings 9:14.)

**We cannot stand by in silence!**

# How You Can Make a Difference

## ***PROMOTING AWARENESS OF GENOCIDE IN DARFUR***

### **I. A Call to Kavannah during Shabbat Services**

To be read before Ashrei, prior to Musaf Amidah of Shabbat:

*"As we now prepare to recite Ashrei, our Kavannah should be focused particularly on the sentences beginning with the Hebrew letters Samech and Ayin. In those sentences, we praise God for His attentiveness to the oppressed and His provision of food to the hungry. God's goodness can be achieved through our action. Therefore,*

*Let us call to mind the people of Darfur in Southern Sudan, who are now being subjected to Genocide at the hands of the Janjaweed militia, supported by the Islamic government of Sudan. Over 350,000 have already been slaughtered, 2 million have been driven from their homes, innumerable women of all ages have been raped and millions more are now threatened by starvation.*

*In imitation of God, we need to be attentive to the oppressed and seek to provide food for the hungry.*

*Now, with that Kavannah, let us recite Ashrei."*

### **II. Program Suggestions**

#### Understanding Genocide

\* View the movie Hotel Rwanda and utilize the educational materials at [www.amnestyusa.org/education](http://www.amnestyusa.org/education)

#### Understanding Darfur

\* Utilize Tzedek Hillel's "Never Forget" program guide. ([www.hillel.org](http://www.hillel.org))

\* Utilize the ADL's "The Promise of Never Again" curriculum. ([http://www.adl.org/education/curriculum\\_connections/spring\\_2005/handouts\\_lesson\\_1.pdf](http://www.adl.org/education/curriculum_connections/spring_2005/handouts_lesson_1.pdf))

\* Bring a survivor from the Rwanda or Darfur genocide to discuss his or her experiences

### **III. Action Suggestions:**

#### Political:

\* Write a letter to your senator or congressman to encourage political and economic support for rescue of life in Darfur. ([http://www.ajws.org/index.cfm?section\\_id=2&sub\\_section\\_id=2&page\\_id=296](http://www.ajws.org/index.cfm?section_id=2&sub_section_id=2&page_id=296))

\* Call the White House to encourage greater US support for international peace keeping in the Sudan. (202-456-1111)

\* Join "Million Voices for Darfur" by sending an electronic or hard copy post card to president Bush calling for US support for a larger, stronger multinational force to protect the civilians of Darfur. Go to [www.savedarfur.org](http://www.savedarfur.org)

• **Set aside Sunday April 30, 2006 for a massive rally in Washington DC; a march from The US Holocaust Museum to the White House for the delivery of a million post cards, and then to the Sudanese Embassy.**

#### Social:

\* Wear a green "Save Darfur" wristband and other awareness raising items. They can be ordered at [www.savedarfur.org](http://www.savedarfur.org)

#### Financial:

\* Donate to the relief effort at [www.ajws.org/index.cfm?section\\_id=15](http://www.ajws.org/index.cfm?section_id=15) or mail a check to: AJWS Sudan Relief and Advocacy Fund, 45 West 36th Street, 10th Floor, New York, NY 10018. Or make a credit card donation by phone: 800-889-7146.

\* Conduct a personal, Shul or School wide "Luxury fast" where the money you don't spend on luxury items go to the relief effort. For guidance on organizing and implementing such an event go to [http://www.mtvu.com/on\\_mtvu/activism/stand/pdfs/](http://www.mtvu.com/on_mtvu/activism/stand/pdfs/)

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