

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

April 14, 2005

His Excellency President Olusegun Obasanjo
Chairperson
African Union

Dear President Obasanjo:

We are writing to request that you use your influence as Chairperson of the African Union to expand the mandate of the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) to protect civilians in danger. We believe strongly that the mandate, which does not allow AMIS to protect civilians in imminent danger of violence, is inhibiting the mission's ability to carry out the purpose of bringing an end to the violence that has plagued this region for over two years. The inability of AMIS to protect civilians and end the atrocities in Darfur may leave AMIS as little more than a witness to genocide and tarnish the image of the organization. In late March 2005, the Sudanese Ambassador to the United States stated that his government now supports expanding the mandate of AMIS, including the protection of civilians. We strongly urge you to discuss this matter with Government of Sudan.

Your Excellency, tens of thousands of people have died since the deployment of AMIS forces to Darfur. The principal mandate of the mission, which is to monitor and report ceasefire violations, has been repeatedly violated by both sides. We strongly believe that the principal mandate of AMIS should be to protect civilians and to end the violence. The Government of Sudan cannot be trusted to protect civilians since it is complicit in the atrocities against civilians.

The world can no longer ignore the horrific violence being committed against the civilian population of Darfur. Women are being raped and men are being executed on a massive scale. Children who survive the violence are traumatized and starving to death. With the rainy season approaching, we will witness steeply escalating mortality rates as humanitarian access decreases and disease and starvation run rampant. This will only worsen until the international community takes real action.

Only 11 years ago, the world stood by and watched as more than 800,000 men, women and children were slaughtered in Rwanda. We all failed the people of Rwanda. We cannot repeat this failure. This time we must seize the opportunity to act before the completion of this campaign of terror. Every day that the international community hesitates more people die. We cannot abandon the people of Darfur.

Thank you for your time and attention to this critical issue. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Respectfully,



Tom Tancredo
Member of Congress



Donald Payne
Member of Congress

cc: His Excellency Prime Minister Meles Zenawi
His Excellency President Thabo Mbeki
His Excellency President Abdelaziz Bouteflika
His Excellency President Abdoulaye Wade
His Excellency Alpha Oumar Konare
His Excellency President Paul Kagame

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