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STATE DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSE TO SUDAN QUESTION "UNCONVINCING"
After first ever Twitter briefing, citizen activists press for standards on genocide

WASHINGTON, DC – JANUARY 9, 2012 – Members of [Act for Sudan](#), a bipartisan, interfaith alliance of 59 American and Sudanese grassroots advocacy organizations across the country, are expressing widespread dissatisfaction with the State Department's answer to its question regarding the U.S. government's approach to the ongoing government-sponsored genocide in Sudan. "Unconvincing," "unacceptable," "a broken record," and "condescending" were among the reactions of *Act for Sudan* members who, while pleased that their question had been addressed at the briefing, objected to the substance of the response.

On Friday, State Department spokesperson Victoria Nuland answered questions submitted by citizens around the world at its first [Twitter briefing](#). *Act for Sudan*'s members and supporters had tweeted an identical [question](#) on Sudan in advance of the briefing and it was one of three answered. The question was, "Why doesn't @StateDept support regime change in #Sudan where government-led genocide continues? Why Syria+Libya but not #Sudan?"

In responding, Ms. Nuland made the obvious observation that "each country and each situation is different," and therefore "each country, each situation, need to be dealt with differently." She continued, "for many years, we have continued to press for concrete, meaningful, democratic reforms and accountability and an end to the violence," yet she acknowledged that, despite these many years of effort, "the deplorable human rights conditions and unacceptable practices of bombing innocent civilians and denying humanitarian access continue."

According to Eric Cohen, an *Act for Sudan* member and spokesman, the State Department's answer sidesteps the central issue in the question. "Of course, we realize that all countries and situations are different, but does the United States of America have no standards regarding its responsibilities in the face of genocide and crimes against humanity," he asked.

"In Libya, with thousand of civilians in danger, President Obama [rightly authorized](#) limited military action to help protect them, and [publicly called](#) for Libya's brutal dictator to step aside," said Cohen. "Why then, with millions of civilians endangered in Sudan by their own government, is the U.S. not leading the international community in its responsibility to protect the people of Sudan, by all means necessary, including military options? Why are we not leading the call for the ouster of Sudan's president and his cronies, who are indicted for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes?"

Act for Sudan has repeatedly called for all options, including military, to be considered in keeping with the Responsibility to Protect Doctrine, especially after over two decades of failed efforts to stop the government of Sudan's ongoing pattern of attacking, starving

and displacing its own citizens. Most recently, Act for Sudan coordinated an open [letter](#) to President Obama signed by 66 organizations across the country asking the United States to urgently address civilian protection and humanitarian assistance for millions of Sudanese under attack by their own government. Among other recommendations, the letter asked Obama to instruct the National Security Council to accelerate decisions and related actions regarding protection of Nuba, Blue Nile, and Darfuri populations from air attacks and to seriously consider the destruction of offensive aerial assets and/or the imposition of a no-fly zone. It also requests the immediate initiation of a cross border emergency aid program to the Nuba Mountains, Darfur, Blue Nile and Abyei regions.

Hundreds of thousands of civilians in South Kordofan and Blue Nile face relentless bombardment, ground attacks, violent displacement, and starvation due to the Sudanese government's ongoing military assaults. Further, the government is denying humanitarian aid access to these vulnerable men, women and children. In Darfur, civilians continue living in insecurity and under government oppression and attack for years.

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Act for Sudan is an alliance of American citizen activists and Sudanese U.S. residents who advocate for an end to genocide and mass atrocities in Sudan. *Act for Sudan* is dedicated to advocacy that is directly informed by the situation on the ground and by Sudanese people who urgently seek protection, justice, and peace. For more information please visit www.actforsudan.org.