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**CONTACT:**

Susan Morgan, 617 797 0451, [susan@paxcommunications.org](mailto:susan@paxcommunications.org)

Elizabeth Blackney, 541 390 1913, [eliz@medializzy.com](mailto:eliz@medializzy.com)

**RIGHTS GROUPS EXPRESS SERIOUS CONCERNS WITH OBAMA’S CURRENT POLICY ON  
SUDAN**

***87 signatories send specific recommendations to President on first day of  
Genocide Prevention and Awareness Month***

WASHINGTON, DC - April 1, 2014 - On the first day of Genocide Prevention and Awareness Month, 87 signatories representing human rights organizations, genocide scholars and Sudan advocates sent an open letter to President Obama urging him to “adopt and immediately implement a new pro-democracy and civilian protection-oriented policy on Sudan that holistically addresses the root cause of Sudan’s multiple conflicts: the repressive and genocidal Sudan regime.” Recently, the United Nations and the African Union [sounded an alarm](#) over worsening violence in Sudan’s western Darfur region, which is forcing hundreds of thousands of people to flee their homes and hampering the distribution of aid.

The detailed letter to the President cites numerous examples of his expressed support for acting in the face of genocide, documents the extent of the current genocide in Sudan, and provides specific recommendations for a comprehensive and robust U.S. Sudan policy. (FULL TEXT AND SIGNATORIES BELOW)

“As president, in [2009](#) and [2012](#) you promised to do ‘everything we can to prevent and end atrocities.’ In [2011](#), you formally established as U.S. policy that ‘preventing mass atrocities and genocide is a core national security interest and a core moral responsibility of the United States of America’ and ordered the creation of the Atrocities Prevention Board,” the letter states. “However,” the letter continues, “under your leadership, the current U.S. policy on Sudan has failed to prevent the tragic loss of countless civilian lives and the mass displacement and starvation of countless more innocent people. The U.S. policy on Sudan must change in order to change the political calculations of the government of Sudan. Without a shift in U.S. policy, the suffering of the people of Sudan will surely continue, and, we fear, your presidency will ultimately be remembered as one stained by genocide, much as President Clinton’s legacy is stained by the genocide in Rwanda.”

“We implore you to do more to provide strong leadership to end the government-sponsored violence and protect civilians in Sudan, ensure unhindered humanitarian access for those in need, and bring the perpetrators of genocide and mass atrocities to justice at the International Criminal Court (ICC),” states the letter.

The letter's 87 signatories include international rights organizations, Sudanese diaspora organizations, genocide scholars and other notable human rights advocates. Among those signing are Dr. Mukesh Kapila, former UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for the Sudan and now a Special Representative for Aegis Trust; Hawa Abdallah Mohammed Salih, U.S. Department of State 2012 International Women of Courage Award Winner; Baroness Caroline Cox, Independent Peer in the House of Lords of the UK Parliament and CEO of Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust; The Honorable David Kilgour, Former Canadian Secretary of State for Africa and Latin America, Ottawa; and Mia Farrow, Actor.

This letter is the sixth in a [series of letters](#) to President Obama, coordinated by [Act for Sudan](#). Sudanese genocide survivors authored the five previous letters, reminding President Obama that the people of Sudan continue to be attacked and killed by their own government and its proxies and that his legacy on human rights depends upon his actions.

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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](http://www.actforsudan.org).

FULL TEXT OF LETTER:

April 1, 2014

The Honorable Barack H. Obama  
President, United States of America  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We urge you to adopt and immediately implement a new pro-democracy and civilian protection-oriented policy on Sudan that holistically addresses the root cause of Sudan's multiple conflicts: the repressive and genocidal Sudan regime.

In 2007, you said that genocide is "a stain on our souls" and promised, "As president of the United States, I don't intend to abandon people or turn a blind eye to slaughter."

However, under your leadership, the current U.S. policy on Sudan has failed to prevent the tragic loss of countless civilian lives and the mass displacement and starvation of countless more innocent people. The U.S. policy on Sudan must change

in order to change the political calculations of the government of Sudan. Without a shift in U.S. policy, the suffering of the people of Sudan will surely continue, and, we fear, your presidency will ultimately be remembered as one stained by genocide, much as President Clinton's legacy is stained by the genocide in Rwanda.

We implore you to do more to provide strong leadership to end the government-sponsored violence and protect civilians in Sudan, ensure unhindered humanitarian access for those in need, and bring the perpetrators of genocide and mass atrocities to justice at the International Criminal Court (ICC).

Over the years, you have made many statements -- as senator, presidential candidate and president -- emphasizing the importance to the United States of acting to stop mass atrocities. You have repeatedly stated that the U.S. must take an active role in helping to end the genocide in Darfur. As early as 2004, you recognized that a great deal of pressure needed to be placed on the Sudanese government to change its behavior. In [2006](#), you emphasized that not enough was being done to protect people and stop genocide in Sudan. In [2006](#), you declared that Darfur was “an important test case” for the United States and noted not only the humanitarian imperative, but also national security interests of the U.S., in acting to stop the genocide. Every year as president, you have made statements in January for International Holocaust Remembrance Day and in April for Yom HaShoah committing to prevent and end atrocities, often [resolving](#) to ensure “that *never again* is more than an empty slogan.” As president, in [2009](#) and [2012](#) you promised to do “everything we can to prevent and end atrocities.” In [2011](#), you formally established as U.S. policy that “preventing mass atrocities and genocide is a core national security interest and a core moral responsibility of the United States of America” and ordered the creation of the Atrocities Prevention Board.

Unfortunately, your actions and those of your Administration do not live up to your words.

In October [2009](#), the State Department announced your new Sudan policy. Its three principal objectives were to (1) end the Darfur genocide, (2) implement the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), and (3) ensure that Sudan does not become a safe haven for terrorists. None of these objectives has been met; in fact, the underlying conditions have worsened.

Upon adoption of the ill-fated policy, you [stated](#):

**“Going forward, all of our efforts must be measured by the lives that are led by the people of Sudan. [Emphasis added.] After so much suffering, they deserve a future that allows them to live with greater dignity, security, and opportunity. It will not be easy... . But now is the time for all of us to come together, and to make a strong and sustained effort on behalf of a better future for the people.”**

Your aims and hopes for U.S. policy on Sudan policy were stellar, but the results have been a failure, including by your own measure, and the U.S. has not done “everything we can to prevent and end atrocities” in Sudan.

A few facts illustrate how completely U.S. policy has failed the people of Sudan.

- In [2009](#), Sudan's President Bashir expelled 13 international humanitarian aid agencies (approximately 60 percent of the capacity) from Darfur without criticism by the U.S. or the international community. To this day, that humanitarian aid capacity has not been restored.
- In 2011, the NCP renewed its ethnic cleansing campaigns in the Nuba Mountains of South Kordofan and Blue Nile areas, with ground attacks, frequent bombings, and killings, resulting in near starvation conditions for hundreds of thousands, and one million people displaced internally or across the border.
- Security in Darfur has deteriorated significantly, in villages and in IDP camps, and aid workers have been attacked and killed.
- In [2013](#) alone, 460,000 Darfuris were displaced, and in the first three months of [2014](#), over 215,000 were newly displaced (each, according to U.N. estimates).
- In [2014](#), the government of Sudan expelled the ICRC and ACTED from Darfur.
- Now, in [2014](#), Sudanese government-supported Rapid Support Forces are on the rampage in Darfur, a reprise of the notorious and deadly Janjaweed militias. [Dozens](#) of Darfuri villages were destroyed, and tens of thousands of newly displaced civilians have been prevented from entering Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps.
- “Genocide by attrition” (starvation, thirst, disease and lack of humanitarian aid) continues in the IDP camps in Darfur, in the Nuba Mountains, and in Blue Nile. Delivery of humanitarian aid is restricted or altogether blocked by the government of Sudan.
- Civil liberties—freedom of the press, freedom of religion, freedom of assembly, freedom of speech, and the rights of women - continue to be denied by the Sudan government and its security forces across Sudan.
- Sudan provides safe haven for [Mali](#) jihadists and facilitates shipment of weapons from Iran to Hamas and Hezbollah.

Your administration has frequently expressed grave concerns regarding actions by the government of Sudan, but has pursued a policy of engagement, employing conciliatory diplomacy rather than confronting the regime in Sudan with consequences for genocide and crimes against humanity. Despite the attention of multiple Special Envoys, the U.S. policy has failed. Over the years, Sudan’s President Bashir and the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) have learned that there are few or no real consequences for their actions, there are no consequences for breaking commitments, and there is no action beyond condemnation in response to continuing and expanding mass atrocities and genocide.

We respectfully request that you adopt a new Sudan policy that would begin to achieve the objectives set in 2009 and would support with actions the words you have spoken so eloquently over the years.

Specifically, the U.S. should:

1. Deliver sufficient humanitarian aid to starving and ill Sudanese civilians in the Nuba Mountains/South Kordofan, Blue Nile, Darfur and Abyei with or without agreement from the government of Sudan or the U.N. Security Council, with multilateral partners or unilaterally, and with the means necessary to deliver it to the people in need and with the urgency required to save starving and ill people.
2. Build the capacity of Sudanese groups on the ground to become partners in humanitarian relief, including working with groups aligned with the Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF).
3. Not only enforce all current U.S. sanctions, but also oppose debt relief and cash transfers to the government of Sudan, discourage investments in Sudan and trade missions to Khartoum, and work to increase economic pressure on Sudan both unilaterally and multi-laterally, thereby strengthening the effects of U.S. sanctions.
4. Support an end to the NCP's control of the government of Sudan and support the movement within Sudan for democratic transformation. This support need not require the deployment of U.S. forces, and involves less risk than that taken when the U.S. supported regime change in Libya and less risk than the current U.S. support for regime change in Syria.
5. Support the SRF who are under attack by their government, are fighting for regime change, and are united with a vision for a democratic, secular, inclusive Sudan and a program for democratic transformation.
6. Work with governments that are members of the ICC to arrest the perpetrators subject to warrants and bring them to justice.

In conjunction with negotiating an end to the violence in South Sudan, lead a multilateral effort to complete implementation of the CPA to eliminate the open issues as flash points for Sudan/South Sudan conflict.

Mr. President, when your legacy on human rights, genocide and mass atrocities is written, let it not be said that you failed to prevent "never again" from happening again and again in Sudan. Please do not leave a legacy stained by genocide. Please do not abandon the people of Sudan. Instead, please uphold your commitment to end genocide and mass atrocities and help pave the way for a future Sudan that is democratic, inclusive, secular, and at peace with itself and its neighbors.

Sincerely,

**Act for Sudan**

Martina Knee, Co-Founder  
San Francisco, CA USA

**Abyei Solidarity Group (UK & Ireland)**

Paul Muortat, Chairman  
London, UNITED KINGDOM

**Aegis Trust**

Professor Mukesh Kapila,  
Special Representative  
London, UNITED KINGDOM

**African Freedom Coalition**

Al Sutton M.D., Founder  
New York, NY USA

**African Soul, American Heart**  
Debra Dawson, President  
Fargo, ND USA

**AFSC Wage Peace**  
Stephen McNeil, Director  
San Francisco Wage Peace  
San Francisco, CA USA

**Ahmed H. Adam**  
Visiting Scholar  
Program on Peace-Building and Rights  
Co-chair of the Two Sudans Project  
Institute for the Study of Human Rights  
(ISHR)  
Columbia University  
New York, NY USA

**Armenian Assembly of America**  
Bryan Ardouny, Executive Director  
Washington, DC USA

**Arry Organization for Human Rights**  
Osman Naway, General Director  
Kansas City, MO USA

**Blue Nile Association For Peace And  
Development**  
Omer Abdelsawi Omer  
Mulberry, FL USA

**Brooklyn Coalition for Darfur &  
Marginalized Sudan**  
Laura Limuli, Coordinator  
Brooklyn, NY USA

**CANDLES Holocaust Museum and  
Education Center**  
Kiel Majewski,  
Terre Haute, IN USA

**"Change the world. It just takes cents"**  
TM  
Sara Kaine Kornfeld, Founder/Educator  
Denver, CO USA

**Christian Solidarity International - USA**  
Pastor Heidi McGinness, Director of  
Outreach  
Denver, CO USA

**Richard D. Clark, Ph.D.**  
Director, Peace, Justice and Human  
Rights Program  
John Carroll University  
University Heights, OH USA

**Collectif Urgence Darfour**  
Dr. Jacky Mamou, Chairman  
Paris, FRANCE

**Colorado Coalition for Genocide  
Awareness and Action**  
Roz Duman, Founder/Director  
Denver CO USA

**Community Empowerment for Progress  
Organization**  
Edmund Yakani, Executive Director  
Juba, SOUTH SUDAN

**Myra Dahgaypaw**  
Hunter College  
New York, NY USA

**Darfur Action Group of South Carolina**  
Richard Sribnick, MD, Chairman  
Columbia, SC USA

**Darfur and Beyond**  
Cory Williams, Co-Founder  
Phoenix, AZ USA

**Darfur Human Rights Organization of  
the USA**  
Abdelgabar Adam, Founder/President  
Philadelphia, PA USA

**Darfur People's Association of New  
York**  
Motasim Adam, Vice President  
Brooklyn, NY USA

**Darfur Interfaith Network**  
Martha Boshnick, Co-Chair  
Washington, DC USA

**Darfur Relief and Documentation Centre**  
Abdelbagi Jibril, Executive Director  
Geneva, SWITZERLAND

**Darfur Women Action Group**  
Niemat Ahmadi, President and Founder  
Washington, DC USA

**Darfurian Association of Greater Houston**  
Suliman Awadalla, Officer  
Houston, TX USA

**Khalil "Haji" Dokhanchi**  
Professor, Political Science  
University of Wisconsin - Superior  
Superior, WI USA

**Mia Farrow**  
Actor  
USA

**Dear Sudan, Love Marin**  
Gerri Miller, Founder and Coordinator  
Tiburon, CA USA

**Genocide No More--Save Darfur**  
Marv Steinberg, Coordinator  
Redding, CA USA

**Genocide Relief Project**  
Lee Ann De Reus, Co-Founder  
Hollidaysburg, PA USA

**Genocide Watch**  
**The International Alliance to End Genocide**  
Gregory H. Stanton, President  
Arlington, VA USA

**Georgia Coalition to Prevent Genocide**  
Melanie Nelkin, Chair  
Atlanta, GA USA

**The Harry Potter Alliance**  
Andrew Slack, Executive Director/Co-Founder  
Somerville, MA USA

**Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust**  
The Baroness Caroline Cox, Chief Executive  
and Member, House of Lords,  
Parliament of the United Kingdom  
London, UNITED KINGDOM

**Humanity Is Us**  
Kimberly Hollingsworth, Founder  
New York, NY USA

**Human Rights and Advocacy Network for Democracy (HAND)**  
Abdalmageed S. Haroun  
Brooklyn, NY USA

**Idaho Darfur Coalition**  
A.J. Fay, Co-Founder  
Boise, ID USA

**The Institute on Religion and Democracy**  
Faith J. H. McDonnell  
Director, Religious Liberty Program  
and Church Alliance for a New Sudan  
Washington, DC USA

**International Justice Project**  
Katie Flannery, Program Director  
Newark, NJ USA

**Investors Against Genocide**  
Eric Cohen, Chairperson  
Boston, MA USA

**Italians for Darfur**  
Antonella Napoli, President  
Rome, ITALY

**Jerusalem Center for Genocide Prevention**  
Elihu D Richter MD MPH, Associate Professor  
Jerusalem, ISRAEL

**Jewish World Watch**  
Michael Jeser, Executive Director  
Los Angeles, CA USA

**Jews Against Genocide**  
Eileen Weiss, Co-Director  
New York, NY USA

**Joining Our Voices**  
Slater Armstrong, Founder/Director  
Baton Rouge, LA USA

**The Honorable David Kilgour**  
Former Canadian Secretary of State for Africa and Latin America  
Ottawa, Ontario, CANADA

**Living Ubuntu**  
Barbara English, Executive Director  
Newport Beach, CA USA

**Long Island Darfur Action Group**  
Nancy Walsh, Coordinator  
Farmingdale, NY USA

**Beth Woskow McDaniel**  
JD, South Texas College of Law  
Houston, TX USA

**The MagkaSama Project**  
Max Dana, Founder  
Paris, FRANCE

**Massachusetts Coalition to Save Darfur**  
William Rosenfeld, Director  
Boston, MA, USA

**Moro Association of United States**  
Daldoum D. Angelo, Chairman  
Kansas City, MO USA

**Never Again Coalition**  
Diane Koosed and Lauren Fortgang, Co-Chairs  
Portland, OR USA

**New York City Genocide Prevention Coalition**  
Staci M. Alziebler-Perkins, Convener  
New York, NY USA

**New York Coalition for Sudan**  
Neiki Ullah, Communications Director  
New York, NY USA

**New York Darfur Vigil Group**  
Helga Moor, Coordinator  
New York, NY USA

**Nuba Mountains Advocacy Group**  
Gogadi Amoga, Co-Chair  
Batavia, OH USA

**Nubia Project**  
Nuraddin Abdulmannan, President  
Silver Spring, MD USA

**Pittsburgh Darfur Emergency Coalition**  
David Rosenberg, Coordinator  
Pittsburgh, PA USA

**Hawa Abdallah Mohammed Salih**  
Recipient, 2012 U.S. Secretary of State's International Women of Courage Award  
Philadelphia, PA USA

**San Antonio Coalition Against Genocide**  
Susan Smylie, Coordinator of Advocacy  
San Antonio, TX USA

**San Francisco Bay Area Darfur Coalition**  
Mohamed Suleiman, President  
San Francisco, CA USA

**Shine a Ray of Hope**  
Carmen Paolercio  
New Rochelle, N.Y. USA



**Robert Skloot, Ph. D.**  
Professor, University of Wisconsin-  
Madison  
Madison, WI USA

**Society for Threatened Peoples**  
Sharon Silber, US Director  
New York, NY USA

**South Sudan Health Care Organization**  
Timothy P. Page, M.D., Chairman  
Birmingham, MI USA

**Stop Genocide Now**  
Gabriel Stauring, Executive Director  
Redondo Beach, CA USA

**SudanActivism.org**  
Nikki Serapio, Director  
San Francisco, CA USA

**The Sudanese National Rally of  
Philadelphia, PA**  
Dr. Ali Dinar, President  
Philadelphia, PA USA

**Sudan Advocacy Action Forum**  
Eleanor Wright PhD, Moderator  
Birmingham, AL USA

**Sudan JEM USA**  
Shakir Abdelrasool, Chairman  
Louisville, KY

**Sudan National Democratic Forum**  
J. Magoub, Executive Office  
Santa Clara, CA USA

**Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Agency**  
Hashim Orta Adaw, Deputy Executive  
Blue Nile State, SUDAN

**Sudan Unlimited**  
Esther Sprague, Director  
San Francisco, CA USA

**Temple Ahavat Achim**  
Lakshmi Linda Sirois, Chair,  
Darfur Social Action Committee  
Gloucester, MA, USA

**Unite for Darfur Organization**  
Bahar Arabie, CEO  
Gaithersburg, MD USA

**United to End Genocide**  
Thomas H. Andrews, President  
Washington, DC USA

**Use Your Voice to Stop Genocide RI**  
Sandra Hammel, Director  
Portsmouth, RI USA

**Voices for Sudan**  
Jimmy Mulla, President and Co-Founder  
Washington, DC USA

**Waging Peace**  
Rebecca Tinsley, Founder  
London, UNITED KINGDOM

**John H, Weiss, Ph.D.**  
Cornell University  
Ithaca, NY USA

**World Without Genocide at William  
Mitchell College of Law**  
Ellen J. Kennedy, Ph.D., Executive  
Director  
St. Paul, MN USA

**Adeeb Yousif**  
President of Africa Working Group (AWG)  
School for Conflict Analysis & Resolution  
George Mason University  
Arlington, VA USA