



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  
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**"Change the world. It just takes cents"  
TM**

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