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ON HUMAN RIGHTS DAY, ACCOUNTABILITY DEMANDED FOR MASS RAPE IN DARFUR
103 Sudanese and Human Rights Groups Petition United Nations

NEW YORK, NY (December 10, 2014) - Today, on International Human Rights Day, 63 signatories sent a letter to UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon in support of the Darfuri groups' letter of November 25, 2014, demanding accountability for the mass rapes by soldiers of the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) on October 31-November 1, 2014, in Tabit, Darfur, Sudan. [Full text of both letters below]

Today is also the last day of "16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence," an international organizing strategy calling for the elimination of violence against women and girls. UN Secretary General Ban, in connection with the campaign, urged, "Break the silence. When you witness violence against women and girls, do not sit back. Act."

On October 31-November 1, 2014, SAF soldiers committed mass rapes of women and girls in the village of Tabit, Darfur. The African Union - United Nations Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) failed to protect the village, secure medical and psychosocial care for the victims, investigate competently the crimes of the SAF, or report accurately its communications with the Government of Sudan. Overwhelming evidence reveals the GoS cover-up of this atrocity and its active prevention of a proper investigation.

Hawa Abdallah Mohammed Salih, a native Darfuri and human rights activist, states, "We demand accountability of those who are responsible for the failures that led to the brutal crimes in Tabit, and so many others over so many years. Accountability must extend to the leadership of UNAMID and all others responsible. There must be a full and competent independent investigation of how this atrocity crime was essentially white washed by all parties, most notably UNAMID. Mr. Ban, please act now."

Since the Government of Sudan began committing war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide in Darfur in 2003, for which the International Criminal Court (ICC) has issued arrest warrants, millions of people around the world have petitioned their governments, the AU and the UN to help end these mass atrocities. Yet, the Government of Sudan continues its crimes with impunity, unimpeded in the face of 11 years of ineffective international response.

Today's letter underscores the dangerous implications to international peace and security of these failed approaches. It urges international leaders to change course: to cooperate with the ICC in securing the arrest of Sudan President Omar al-Bashir, uphold international law by imposing multi-lateral sanctions on the perpetrators, and sever diplomatic relations per Chapter VII of the UN Charter.

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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.

FULL TEXT OF LETTERS:

December 10, 2014

H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-Moon
Secretary General of the United Nations
New York, NY

H.E. Mr. Mahamat Zene Cherif
Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Republic of Chad
President of the United Nations Security Council, December 2014
United Nations, New York, NY

Baroness Valerie Amos
Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator
United Nations, New York, NY

Mr. Hervé Ladsous,
Under-Secretary-General of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations
United Nations, New York, NY

Dear Mr. Secretary General, Ambassador Cherif, Baroness Amos, and Mr. Ladsous,

We, the undersigned, representing 63 international organizations and leaders, respectfully write in support of the enclosed letter dated November 25, 2014 to your offices from 40 Darfuri organizations regarding the ongoing failure of the United Nations and its peacekeeping mission, the United Nations African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID), to uphold and enforce in Darfur the purposes and principles of the UN Charter; the mandate of UNAMID as authorized by Resolution 1769 (2007) under Chapter VII of the UN Charter; and the 2008 Status of Forces Agreement between the Government of Sudan and UNAMID, allowing UNAMID “full and unrestricted freedom of movement without delay.”

This failure has undermined the authority, respect and credibility of the United Nations, the UN Security Council and its member states, and your offices in particular. This failure has sent a clear message to powerful criminals worldwide that they will enjoy impunity for blatant violations of international law that lead to the suffering of millions. This failure in Darfur means that for over a decade, the government of Sudan has successfully manipulated and out maneuvered the international community, allowing it to dictate terms of engagement that have resulted in the deaths of hundreds of thousands, the displacement of millions, and

the reckless freedom to terrorize the men, women and children of Sudan and to facilitate the spread of terrorism worldwide. And most recently, this failure - your failure - has allowed the rape of over 200 young girls and women living in the village of Tabit, Darfur. This is your legacy unless you change course.

To that end and in agreement with the enclosed letter from the Darfuri organizations, we urge you to encourage the members of the UN Security Council and the UN General Assembly to uphold and enforce international law as follows:

- Cooperate with the International Criminal Court and coordinate among member states to arrest President Omar al-Bashir, who is wanted on three counts of genocide, five counts of crimes against humanity and two counts of war crimes.
- Impose consequences on the Government of Sudan as outlined in Article 41 of Chapter VII of the UN Charter, which is “complete...interruption of economic relations and of rail, sea, air, postal, telegraphic, radio, and other means of communication, and the severance of diplomatic relations.”

The Government of Sudan’s stated intention to evict UNAMID is the latest example of its flagrant mockery of the United Nations and international justice. Your response, as outlined above, must be decisive and swift for the women of Tabit, Darfur, for the people of Sudan, and for international peace and security.

Sincerely,

Act for Sudan

African Freedom Coalition

African Refugees and Victims Relief Fund

African Soul, American Heart

Ahmed H. Adam, Visiting Fellow at Cornell University's Institute for African Development (IAD)

American Friends of the Episcopal Church of South Sudan and Sudan (AFRECS)

Brooklyn Coalition for Darfur & Marginalized Sudan

CANDLES Holocaust Museum and Education Center

Christian Solidarity International-USA

Collectif Urgence Darfour

Colorado Coalition for Genocide Awareness and Action

Community Empowerment for Progress Organization - CEPO, South Sudan

Darfur Action Group of South Carolina

Darfur and Beyond

Darfur Interfaith Network

Darfur Leaders Network - DLN

Darfur People's Association of New York

Darfur Relief and Documentation Centre

David L. Phillips, Director of the Program on Peace-building and Rights, Institute for the Study of Human Rights, Columbia University

Dear Sudan Love Marin

Doctors to the World

Eric Reeves
Genocide No More - Save Darfur
Genocide Watch
Help Nuba
Herbert Hirsch, Professor of Political Science, Virginia Commonwealth University, Co-Editor,
Genocide Studies International
Human Rights & Advocacy Network for Democracy (HAND)
Humanity Is Us
Idaho Darfur Coalition
Investors Against Genocide
Jewish World Watch
Jews Against Genocide
John H. Weiss, Associate Professor, Cornell University
Joining Our Voices
Living Ubuntu
Massachusetts Coalition to Save Darfur
My Sister's Keeper
Never Again Coalition
New York Coalition for Sudan
Nuba Mountain Peace Coalition
Nuba Peace Initiative
Nubia Project
Operation Broken Silence
People4Sudan
Persecution Project Foundation
Pittsburgh Darfur Emergency Coalition
San Francisco Bay Area Darfur Coalition
Society for Threatened Peoples
South Sudan Companion Parish Committee, Christ Episcopal Church Poughkeepsie
Stop Genocide Now
Sudan Advocacy Action Forum
Sudan Solidarity Network
Sudan Unlimited
The Baroness Cox, House of Lords and CEO, Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust
The Carl Wilkens a Fellowship
The Elsa-Gopa Trust
The Institute on Religion and Democracy
The Sudanese Community Church, an ecumenical congregation, Denver, Colorado
Ubuntu Women Institute USA/SSIWEL
Unite for Darfur
United to End Genocide
Voices for Sudan
Waging Peace

November 25, 2014

Gary Quinlan, Australia's Permanent Representative to the United Nations and President of the United Nations Security Council, November 2014

United Nations, New York, NY

Dear Ambassador Quinlan,

c. Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary-General

Valerie Amos, Under-Secretary-General for the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

Hervé Ladsous, Under-Secretary-General of the UN, Department of Peacekeeping Operations
United Nations

As Darfuris in the diaspora, we have watched with great sorrow and growing anger the plight of our people in this ravaged region of Sudan. Darfur at one time commanded considerable attention in the United Nations, but no longer. The international community in general has drifted into an acceptance that somehow the UN/African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) is an adequate means of protecting millions of vulnerable civilians. It is clearly not, and the recent mass sexual assault on women and girls in Tabit, North Darfur, makes this all too clear.

But the disgraceful "investigation" by UNAMID of events in Tabit should be the occasion for our remembering that this is, in fact, a UN-authorized mission; it has UN Chapter 7 authority; it is deployed with a Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) negotiated by the UN and African Union (February 2008), even as the agreement is now simply a travesty, violated at will by the Khartoum regime. It is not, however, simply the failing of UNAMID and the African Union that must be reckoned with. It is the Security Council, the Secretariat, and UN Department of Peacekeeping Affairs (UN DPKO) that must accept responsibility for a failing mission; and it is UN DPKO that must do most to explain what it will do in light of this failure.

It is in this context that we demand that the following questions be addressed forthrightly and expeditiously:

[1] UNAMID, even if augmented and re-directed along the lines recently suggested by Secretary Ban Ki-moon, cannot provide adequate security for the people of Darfur. We demand that plans be made immediately for an UN force that can adequately take on the "responsibility to protect" civilians at risk, per the September 2005 UN World Summit Outcome Document (§38, §39).

[2] We demand that the Security Council and UN DPKO confront the Khartoum regime over its countless flagrant violations of the SOFA.

[3] We demand that UN DPKO undertake a full review of UNAMID's performance to date. The context here should be the fact that more than 2 million Darfuris have been newly displaced since UNAMID took up its mandate in January 2008; we would remind you of how closely violence and displacement have correlated over the past decade of conflict. Moreover, insecurity has increased steadily for more than two years—this on top of the insecurity that prevailed so widely in earlier years.

[4] We demand that UN DPKO, in consultation with the Security Council and the Secretariat, formulate plans to provide adequate protection to the civilian population of

Darfur. This must include contingency plans for a very rapid acceleration of what is already unacceptable insecurity for civilians and humanitarians.

[5] We demand in particular that UN DPKO ensure that UNAMID is prepared to provide adequate protection to the people of Tabit, especially girls and women, from retaliation by Khartoum for having had the misfortune of making clear to the world just how brutal this regime is.

[6] We further demand that UN DPKO instruct UNAMID to provide all necessary protection to humanitarian efforts to reach Tabit. Many residents have been badly traumatized and injured.

[7] We also demand accountability from those who are responsible for the failures that led to the brutal crimes at Tabit, and so many others over so many years. Accountability must extend to the leadership of UNAMID and the African Union Peace and Security Council, as well as to the UN DPKO. As part of this assigning of responsibility, there must be a full and competent investigation, authorized by the Security Council of how this atrocity crime was essentially white-washed by all parties, most notably UNAMID. But we must emphasize as well that we are deeply troubled by the silence of UN DPKO.

[8] We demand that UNAMID be guided by the "rules of engagement" for UNAMID in Darfur that have been previously negotiated. UN DPKO must ensure that these "rules of engagement" are widely understood and dictate the actions taken by UNAMID personnel.

[9] We demand that UN DPKO assess the possibility that insecurity is now so great that there will be an exodus of international NGOs providing critical relief aid to Darfuris. Many INGOs have expressed their deep concern for the safety of their workers in Darfur, more than 95 percent of whom are Sudanese nationals. The safety of these workers must not be discounted because they are African and Khartoum permits no news coverage of Darfur and no human rights reporting presence. Would relief workers similarly threatened in other parts of the world be regarded in the same light as Sudanese relief workers?

[10] We demand that UN DPKO communicate with the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in order to ascertain when a continued humanitarian presence by the UN might become impossible for security reasons.

[11] We demand that UN DPKO assess the implications for future UN peacekeeping missions if UNAMID is allowed to continue to fail so conspicuously. The events at Tabit and the performance of UNAMID investigators bring this question into high relief.

[12] Most generally, we demand that UN DPKO speak forthrightly about its understanding of the limitations and weaknesses of present peacekeeping in Darfur and the provision of civilian security. We remain troubled by the comments of the Under-Secretary General for DPKO when in spring 2012 he declared that security "conditions on the ground" had improved sufficiently that UNAMID could begin to draw down its forces (a figure of 4,000 personnel was promulgated at the time). This ghastly error in judgment was never acknowledged, even as by July of 2012 we saw a tremendous upsurge in violence, especially in North Darfur. How can we trust statements from UN DPKO when egregious errors are not acknowledged?

[13] We demand that the United Nations collectively develop an effective response to the gross deficiencies of UNAMID in protecting civilians and humanitarians. UN DPKO in particular must develop benchmarks for assessing UNAMID's performance and formulate emergency contingency plans in the event of a massive and precipitous withdrawal of humanitarian personnel. These are matters of the deepest concern to us; to date, there are far too few answers from UN about why the Darfur genocide continues more than a decade after it began. We demand clear evidence that the people of Darfur will not be further abandoned.

Sincerely,

Darfur People's Association of New York
Darfur People's Association of Maryland
Fur Cultural Revival
Darfur People's Association of Houston
Darfur People's Association of Dallas
Darfur People's Association of Illinois
Darfur Human Rights - USA
Massalit Sons' Association - USA
Darfur Rehabilitation Project
Sudanese Revolutionary Front
Sudanese Opposition Forces- USA
Broad National Front
Justice & Equality Movement - Sudan
Sudan Liberation Movement - MM
Sudan Liberation Movement - Wahid
Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North
Umma Party
Girifna
Sudanese Marginalized Forum - USA
Sudanese National Democratic Forum - California
National Sudanese Alliance - Philadelphia
Peace & Democracy Center - New Jersey
Democratic Alliance, USA
Federal Democratic Alliance
Sudanese Front for Change
Kush Liberation Movement
Democratic Unionist Party
Activists without Borders
Sudanese Congress Party
Darfur People's Association of Boston
Darfur People's Association of Indiana
Darfur People's Association of Utah
Darfur People's Association of Nebraska
Darfur People's Association of Seattle
Darfur Sons' Union of Greater Washington DC
Darfur People's Association of Iowa
Darfur People's Association of Arizona
Darfur Women Action Group

Darfur Association of the United States
Darfur Self-reliance Organization - San Francisco, California