



October 19, 2016

The Honorable Kenneth D. Ward
Department of State
Washington, DC 20521

Dear Ambassador Ward,

I am writing to you in your capacity as U.S. Permanent Representative to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). *Act for Sudan* is an alliance of over 70 U.S.-based organizations that advocate for an end to genocide and mass atrocities in Sudan. I write asking for your help in following up on the recent report by Amnesty International on the use of chemical weapons in Darfur.¹

The OPCW's initial assessment has been to say it is unable to draw conclusions based solely on the content of this report. OPCW's action on this cannot end here, we urge you to request that the U.S. use its influence in the OPCW to push for a full, thorough investigation.

The alternative is that the United Nations-African Union peacekeeping mission in Darfur, UNAMID, will be responsible for investigating. However, the government in Sudan routinely restricts UNAMID's fulfillment of its mandate, and even when it does report on violations, its credibility is undermined by government control. For instance, security officials presided over UNAMID investigations into a well-publicized mass rape perpetrated by the Sudanese Armed Forces, intimidating victims, and leading the mission to erroneously conclude that these crimes had not occurred.²

I understand that at the recent meeting of the Executive Committee the allegations pertaining to Sudan's use of illicit ordnance were discussed, but that the focus was abuses documented in Syria. Following the meeting your British colleague, Geoffrey Adams, said of Syria, "If there is not a strong reaction, then the credibility and trustworthiness of the convention would be undermined."

This warning is also true of the alleged abuses in Sudan. We recently co-signed a letter to the UN Secretary General and High Commissioner for Human Rights with more than 130 signatories globally that concludes, "Failure to treat these attacks with the same seriousness as those in Syria would be an inappropriate and inconsistent application of UN standards."³

The genocide in Darfur is now in its 14th year, with government sponsored mass atrocities taking place, not only in Darfur, but also in additional regions of Sudan, with shockingly little done or said by the international community, less international attention than 10 years ago, and continued impunity for grave crimes. Please join us in helping to focus on the allegation of chemical weapons use and push your OPCW colleagues to consider and approve a formal investigation into Amnesty International's claims.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric Cohen".

Eric Cohen
Co-Founder, *Act for Sudan*

¹ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2016/09/sudan-credible-evidence-chemical-weapons-darfur-revealed/>

² <https://www.hrw.org/report/2015/02/11/mass-rape-north-darfur/sudanese-army-attacks-against-civilians-tabit>

³ <http://wagingpeace.info/images/Letter - Chemical weapons in Darfur.pdf>