AMID REPORTS OF ETHNIC CLEANSING, SUDAN ACTIVISTS RE...


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AMID REPORTS OF ETHNIC CLEANSING, SUDAN ACTIVISTS REQUEST ESCALATED ACTION

Citing responsibility to protect, rights groups issue open letter to President Obama

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CITIES NATIONWIDE – July 19, 2011 – Amid reports of government-sponsored aerial bombardment of civilians, summary door-to-door executions and evidence of mass graves in Southern Kordofan, 54 human rights and anti-genocide organizations in 27 states have issued an open letter to President Obama asking for limited military action to destroy carefully selected military assets of the government of Sudan. The organizations represent U.S. citizens and members of the diaspora from all parts of Sudan, including Darfur and the Nuba Mountains, and from the Republic of South Sudan. This letter is the first broad-based call by activists for a military response. The letter was also signed by leading genocide scholars, Eric Reeves, Samuel
Totten and Daniel Jonah Goldhagen.

The letter states, “It is time for significantly escalated action by the United States consistent with the Responsibility to Protect doctrine, for both The Republic of South Sudan and the marginalized people of Sudan. Condemnations of new war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide are necessary, but not sufficient. We strongly believe that only concrete, escalated action will change the calculations of the government of Sudan and reverse the pattern of grave crimes, human rights abuses and humanitarian crises.”

According to the letter, “recent events in Darfur, Abyei and Southern Kordofan prove that the government of Sudan is continuing to use the same deadly methods that it has employed for years against its own people: attacking civilians on a broad scale with its army, militia, and air force; limiting and blocking humanitarian assistance to millions displaced by attacks; and focusing the attention of the west on negotiations that are not honored and the struggles of providing humanitarian assistance.”

If warnings by the United States to end ethnic cleansing and to allow humanitarian access continue to go unheeded, the letter calls for the use of selective and limited force, such as the use of drones or cruise missiles, to destroy a significant Sudanese military asset deployed against civilians, with the potential of more strikes to come if civilians continue to be harmed. The letter also calls for the United States to deliver anti-aircraft capability to help South Sudan defend itself against the government of Sudan.

“So we believe that even the first one or two limited and selective military actions may be sufficient to demonstrate that the U.S. is committed to delivering consequences for grave human rights violations by the government of Sudan,” states Martina Knee, Executive Director of the San Francisco Bay Area Darfur Coalition, and a spokeswoman for the signatories to the letter.

The activists’ call echoes the words of U.S. Ambassador to the UN, Susan Rice, in a 2006 PBS interview. She stated, “A credible threat of the use of force would change the calculus in Khartoum… Right now, they’re assuming that we’re prepared to negotiate our position away, which apparently we are, and that the international community and the United States, despite our rhetoric, is not serious about protecting civilians.”

Sudan experts including Reeves, in recent articles, and Roger Winter, former Special Representative on Sudan, U.S. Department of State, in his recent testimony to Congress, have called for military action to stop the brutal onslaught by the Khartoum regime. Richard Williamson, former special envoy to Sudan under President George W. Bush, wrote in a November 2010 opinion piece in Foreign Policy magazine, “The United States must make a credible threat that it will employ retaliatory actions against those who ignite renewed war, perhaps even using missiles to take out strategic targets.”

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Full text of letter

July 19, 2011

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Obama,

Recent events in Darfur, Abyei and Southern Kordofan prove that the government of Sudan is continuing to use the same deadly methods that it has employed for years against its own people: attacking civilians on a broad scale with its army, militia, and air force; limiting and blocking humanitarian assistance to millions
displaced by attacks; and focusing the attention of the west on negotiations that are not honored and the struggles of providing humanitarian assistance.

It is time for significantly escalated action by the United States consistent with the Responsibility to Protect doctrine, for both The Republic of South Sudan and the marginalized people of Sudan. Condemnations of new war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide are necessary, but not sufficient. We strongly believe that only concrete, escalated action will change the calculations of the government of Sudan and reverse the pattern of grave crimes, human rights abuses and humanitarian crises.

In addition to applying increased diplomatic and economic pressures on Sudan, we call on you to take the following decisive steps:

- Clearly align the U.S. as supporting South Sudan and make a public commitment to help ensure its success, including providing military equipment. Immediately demonstrate the U.S. commitment by planning for and, as soon as possible, delivering anti-aircraft capability to help South Sudan defend itself against the government of Sudan.
- Warn the government of Sudan to stop the brutal ethnic cleansing ongoing in Sudan, to cease offensive military operations against civilians, to halt the deployment and attacks by the army and militia in Darfur and Southern Kordofan, and to allow unfettered humanitarian access to those in need.
- If the warning is not heeded, employ selective and limited force, such as the use of drones or cruise missiles, to destroy a significant Sudanese military asset deployed against civilians, such as a MiG or Sukhoi jet, Antonov bomber, attack helicopter, or multiple rocket launcher. Each time such a carefully selected military target is destroyed, it will serve as a fresh warning of the potential of more to come.

Mr. President, the current mass atrocities against civilians in Sudan are part of a long-standing pattern of behavior by the government of Sudan. In your campaign for President, you promised to not turn a blind eye to slaughter. We ask you now to fulfill that promise.

Sincerely,

Americans Against the Darfur Genocide
Nikki Serapio, Director
Washington, DC

Beja Congress, Greater Washington D.C. Chapter
Ibrahim Ahmed, Representative
Sterling, Virginia

Brooklyn Coalition for Darfur & Marginalized Sudan
Laura Limuli, Coordinator
Brooklyn, New York

CANDLES Holocaust Museum and Education Center
Eva Kor, Founder, Holocaust Survivor
Terre Haute, Indiana

Change the world. It just takes cents
Sara Kornfeld, Project founder/educator
Denver, Colorado

Colorado Coalition for Genocide Awareness and Action
Roz Duman, Founder/Director
Denver, Colorado
AMID REPORTS OF ETHNIC CLEANSING, SUDAN ACTIVISTS RE...
Marv Steinberg, Coordinator
Redding, California

Hope With Sudan
Jerry Drino, Executive Director
San Jose, California

Human Rights & Advocacy Network for Democracy
Abdalmageed Salih Abker Haroun, Chairperson
Brooklyn, New York

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

Investors Against Genocide
Bill Rosenfeld, Co-founder
Boston, Massachusetts

Jews Against Genocide
Eileen Weiss, Co-chair
New York, New York

Joining Our Voices Ministries, Inc.
Jack Slater Armstrong – Director
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Keokuk for Darfur
Julia Hays, Founder/Director
Keokuk, Iowa

Kentuckiana Taskforce Against Genocide
Phil Nippert, Chair
Louisville, Kentucky

Long Island Darfur Action Group
Nancy Walsh, Coordinator
Farmingdale, New York

Massachusetts Coalition to Save Darfur
Eric Cohen, Chairperson
Boston, Massachusetts

Never Again Coalition
Diane Koosed, Co-director
Portland, Oregon

New York Coalition for Darfur and all Sudan
Sharon Silber, Co-chair
New York, New York

New York Darfur Vigil Group
Helga Moor, Coordinator
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New York, New York

**Nuba Mountains American Advocacy Group, Inc**
Mario Angelo, Secretary-Executive Committee
Washington, DC

**Nuba Mountains Advocacy Group, USA**
Amin Z. Ismail, Co-Chairperson
Batavia, Ohio

**Nuba Mountains Community of Maine**
Boulis Kuku, Organizer
Portland, Maine

**Nuba Mountains Democratic Forum, USA**
Osman Naway Habila, Coordinator
Kansas City, Missouri

**Nuba Mountains Women Community in Ohio**
Amira Abdalla, Vice-president
Batavia, Ohio

**Nuba Mountains International Association, USA**
Nagi Ardeb, Secretary General
Roanoke, Virginia

**One Million Bones**
Naomi Natale, Director and Founder
Albuquerque, New Mexico

**Operation Broken Silence**
Mark Hackett, President
Memphis, Tennessee

**Samuel Totten**
Author and Genocide Scholar
Fayetteville, Arkansas

**San Antonio Interfaith Darfur Coalition**
Susan Smylie, Coordinator of Advocacy
San Antonio, Texas

**San Francisco Bay Area Darfur Coalition**
Mohamed Suleiman, President
San Francisco, California

**Stop Genocide Now**
Gabriel Stauring, Founder and Director
Los Angeles, California

**Sudan Advocacy Action Forum**
Bill Andress, Moderator
Lexington, South Carolina
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Aphra Claverie Says:

2 Comments »
July 23rd, 2011 at 9:59 am

Please save, by military force if necessary, the people in Southern Sudan and their country which has just been given to them legally!

Reply to this comment

Julie Ashton Says:
July 23rd, 2011 at 12:36 pm

This brutality against innocent people is surely stoppable. If we have the power to do so, we as a nation need to step up to the plate on this.

Reply to this comment