

**Open Letter to the UN Secretary-General and Members of the Security Council:
Urgent Need For An Effective Resolution on Darfur**

March 18, 2005

With deliberations on the situation in Darfur, Sudan coming to a head in the United Nations Security Council, we urge the Council to live up to its duty to act to restore peace and security, by adopting a resolution that imposes real penalties on any party continuing to attack unarmed civilians. Despite Security Council condemnation, in the past year innocent civilians in Darfur have been repeatedly subject to atrocities, broken promises, and massive violations of international law. The Council must now adopt a firm resolution with meaningful consequences.

Past resolutions considered by the Council have proven grossly inadequate to secure fundamental protection and accountability.¹ Concerned that the most recent draft resolution, dated 10 March, remains too weak to have a positive impact on the course of the conflict, we respectfully offer for your consideration alternative language.

Our proposed text (attached hereto) is substantially similar to the 10 March draft resolution (which, indeed, remains 95% intact). However, it adds indispensable provisions specifically aimed at ending the current violence and laying a basis for long term peace through accountability. The proposed resolution offers an affirmative alternative to the current draft by:

- ensuring that a no-fly zone is implemented and enforced, in order to provide protection to civilians and much-needed assistance to the African Union mission;
- adopting targeted sanctions, including the freezing of assets and bans on travel, directed toward perpetrators and those violating SC Resolution 1556 paragraphs 7 and 8, and eliminating broad loopholes in any such sanctions;
- ensuring that African Union troops are reinforced immediately and in sufficient numbers to provide protection to civilians and others on the ground in Darfur; and
- referring the crimes to the International Criminal Court for prosecution and restitution.

One of the world's most horrific ongoing conflicts is raging in Darfur, where civilians suffer daily from murder and rape, burning and looting of villages, and forced displacement, among other crimes. The rising death toll has been estimated at as high as 300,000 people. The forcibly displaced number more than 2 million, with starvation, disease, and calamitous conditions of life a constant threat to their survival and well being. But the situation is not hopeless. With sufficient resolve and decisive action, the Security Council can provide remedies.

Without the specific, yet relatively modest, measures outlined above in any resolution on Darfur, the violence and impunity will continue. We urge the Secretary-General to support the measures proposed in the attached draft, and call upon the Members of the Security Council to adopt it immediately.

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¹ On 9 March 2005, nine leading international organizations sent an Open Letter to the UN Secretary-General and Members of the Security Council, unanimously urging them to reject the then-proposed Security Council resolution on Darfur. The letter was signed by Africa Action, Center for American Progress, Citizens for Global Solutions, Coalition for International Justice, Human Rights Watch, International Crisis Group, Open Society Institute, Physicians for Human Rights, and Security and Peace Institute. The letter is available online at: http://www.justiceinitiative.org/db/resource2?res_id=102611.