

Executive Memorandum

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Pressure Sudan to Halt Oppression in Darfur

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The situation in Sudan's western province of Darfur, currently the world's worst humanitarian disaster, continues to deteriorate. Sudan's radical Arab dictatorship, which has been battling a popular rebellion in Darfur since early 2003, has unleashed Arab militias to murder, terrorize, and forcibly exile the predominantly non-Arab ethnic groups of that region. Khartoum's campaign in Darfur bears many similarities to its ethnic cleansing campaign against black Africans in southern Sudan. To alleviate the current crisis in Darfur, the United States should encourage an international response that reflects the lessons learned in curbing the regime's previous repression of the south. Unless massive international pressure is mobilized to threaten what the regime values most—its ability to maintain itself in power and its vested economic interests, particularly its fledgling oil industry—then the Sudanese regime will continue to hinder humanitarian aid efforts, cover up the atrocities of its militia surrogates, and crush resistance through the deliberate starvation and expulsion of non-Arab groups.

Darfur's "Devils on Horses." The Darfur crisis, like the previous man-made famine in southern Sudan, was engineered by Sudan's dictatorship to suppress popular resistance to its radical Islamic agenda. Ever since seizing power in a 1989 coup, General Omar al-Bashir's regime has exacerbated tensions with non-Muslims in the south and with

Sufi Muslims, predominant in western Sudan, who resent the forced imposition of a harsh brand of Islamic law. When Darfur tribes rebelled in early 2003, the Bashir regime attacked defenseless villages suspected of supporting the predominantly non-Arab rebels. Much of the regime's terror campaign has been conducted by brutal Janjaweed (a

colloquialism roughly translated as "devils on horses") militias that Khartoum implausibly claims are criminal elements beyond its control. The Janjaweed, who reportedly share camps with the Sudanese Army, have burned hundreds of villages and robbed, raped, tortured, and murdered

their non-Arab inhabitants. Although most of their victims are Muslims, the Janjaweed consider them apostates who deserve death or slavery if they resist the jihad invoked by the extremist regime. Victims report that the Janjaweed often shout "abeed" (slaves) before they rape or kill.

The United Nations estimates that 1.2 million people have been driven from their homes and that roughly 2 million people are in dire need of food aid. Approximately 50,000 people have

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- The Darfur crisis will end only after the Sudanese government is convinced that the internationally imposed costs exceed the domestic benefits of its harsh repression.
 - It is past time for individual countries and the Security Council to impose sanctions on Khartoum.
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already died in Darfur, and the U.S. government estimates that another 1,000 die every day from attacks, starvation, and disease. Khartoum's systematic efforts to terrorize and expel non-Arab groups led the U.S. Congress in July to pass resolutions declaring genocide in Darfur, and Secretary of State Colin Powell endorsed this conclusion on September 9.

Foot-Dragging at the U.N. The U.N. Security Council has been hamstrung by the pro-Khartoum policies of China, Russia, Pakistan, and Algeria. China, which has a huge financial stake in Sudan's oil industry and is a leading importer of Sudan's oil, has used the threat of a veto to dilute the resolutions on Darfur. UNSCR 1564, passed on September 18, timidly warned Khartoum that, unless it complies with demands to stop the killing, the Security Council will "consider taking additional measures...such as actions to affect Sudan's petroleum sector and the Government of Sudan."

The Bashir regime is unlikely to comply with UNSCR 1564 any more than it complied with UNSCR 1556, passed on July 30, 2004, which called on it to disband the Janjaweed militias, bring their leaders to justice, and provide unfettered access to humanitarian aid workers. The regime subsequently loosened some restrictions on aid workers, but cynically sought to give the Janjaweed new uniforms and fold them into police forces dispatched to "protect" the refugees. In May, the U.N. stoked Khartoum's arrogant cynicism by re-electing Sudan to the U.N. Human Rights Commission, despite mounting evidence of human rights violations and complicity in genocide.

The weak U.N. response to the Darfur crisis has been premised on the hope that the Sudanese government would rein in its surrogates in Darfur. However, this is unlikely, absent vigorous sanctions and other international pressures on Khartoum. Washington should continue pressuring the Security Council to defend the U.N.'s founding ideals and punish Khartoum for its ongoing crimes. The U.S. should also oppose any economic aid to Sudan through international financial institutions, including the proposed expansion of the

International Monetary Fund's "special drawing rights" that would give Sudan, among other countries, increased access to IMF financing. The United States has already imposed unilateral sanctions on Sudan because of its support for terrorism and should encourage other nations to follow suit. Americans should join a populist divestment campaign to persuade large institutional investors to ban investments in publicly traded companies that do business in Sudan. The Center for Security Policy's DivestTerror.org maintains a list of companies that profit from commerce with Sudan and other sponsors of terrorism. A similar divestment campaign in the 1980s successfully pressured South Africa to abandon its apartheid policy.

Sanctions take time to work, but hundreds of thousands of people in Darfur do not have much time left. The highest immediate priority should therefore be to mount an international effort to feed, shelter, and protect Darfur's victims. The African Union has already dispatched 125 observers and 305 troops to Darfur to monitor the tenuous cease-fire that the United States helped broker in April. This force should be greatly expanded to protect civilians and aid workers. The African Union has appropriately taken the lead in this intervention, and Washington should support the effort with diplomatic, logistical, and financial support. Yet the Bush Administration must rule out the deployment of U.S. ground troops, which are already stretched thin. A new deployment in Sudan would become a lightning rod for terrorist attacks and would give Islamic extremists a propaganda issue to exploit.

Conclusion. While extending aid and protection to Darfur's victims is the highest priority, the Darfur crisis will end only after the Bashir regime is convinced that its repression of its own people will not be tolerated. It is past time for individual countries to impose sanctions on the Bashir regime and for the Security Council to follow suit.

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