

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY WASHINGTON COLLEGE OF LAW
CENTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMANITARIAN LAW

The Rwanda Commemoration Project: Genocide In Our Time

The Definition of Genocide:

The legal definition of genocide as defined by the Genocide Convention is:

“[A]ny of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- Killing members of the group;
- Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part
- Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group”

~ Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, Article 2

*What YOU Can Do To Help Stop the Atrocities and
Reduce the Suffering of the Darfurian People:*

Become An Educated Student Activist. See Amnesty International’s Student Activist Activities at <http://www.amnestyusa.org/join/students/>.

Use the Pulpit! Ask religious leaders to speak from the pulpit to inform and motivate congregants to take action.

Write to Government Leaders! Write letters to President George W. Bush, Secretary of State Colin Powell, and Members of the House of Representatives and Senate, and/or United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan and United Nations Security Council.

Letters to the Editor! Write letters to the editor and Op Ed pieces. Call network and cable news stations to ask for more coverage about Darfur.

Donate! Raise funds through a carwash or bake sale and make a contribution to a humanitarian organization that is providing aid to the people of Darfur. Many of these organizations can be found at www.interaction.org.

Tell Friends! Educate your family and friends about the crisis and ask them to take action.

Background on the Genocide in Darfur:

In February 2003, two groups of African rebels in the western Sudanese region of Darfur mounted a rebellion against the Khartoum government. A government-backed militia force called the Janjaweed (who are of Arab descent) have been used by the Sudanese government to fight against the uprising. This fight, however, has been turned against the civilian population of the region and has led to a campaign of violence, displacement, rape and murder. Over 50,000 people have been killed and nearly two million people have been driven from their homes, their livelihoods destroyed. The Janjaweed have been supplied with weapons, uniforms and provided with air support by the Sudanese government.

After repeated raids into their villages (which have included attacks by militia members on horseback, camels and jeeps, sometimes with air cover from the Sudanese government), hundreds of thousands of people have been forced to flee and seek safety outside of their homes and communities. They have abandoned their homes, their crops have been destroyed and their livestock either killed or stolen. More than half of the villages in Darfur have been completely destroyed.

The conflict in Darfur is not religiously based; nearly everyone involved is Muslim. There is, however, a racial and ethnic component to the violence as the Arab Janjaweed fight to displace and destroy the Black African villagers. The actions of the Janjaweed have been calculated to destroy the conditions of life of the Black Africans and the Sudanese government's continued support of the militia also makes them directly responsible.

On September 9, 2004 the United States government declared the situation in Darfur to be genocide. Under the 1948 Genocide Convention this obligates the U.S. and the international community to take action to prevent further bloodshed and to punish the perpetrators.

To Learn More About Sudan and Preventing Genocide:

Websites:

Human Rights Watch

- www.hrw.org

International Campaign to End Genocide

- www.genocidewatch.org

International Crisis Group

- www.crisisweb.org

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Committee on Conscience:

- www.ushmm.org/conscience

Amnesty International

- www.amnestyusa.org/countries/sudan/

Passion of the Present

- www.passionofthepresent.org

Save Darfur Coalition

- www.savedarfur.org

Books:

We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed With All Our Families: Stories from Rwanda, Phillip Gourevitch, Picador USA, ISBN: 0312243359, 1999.

Shake Hands with the Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda, Romeo Dallaire, ISBN: 0679311178, 2003.

A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide, Samantha Power, Perennial, ISBN 0060541644, 2003.