



# GENOCIDE IN DARFUR

## Use this sheet to:

- **Learn about the conflict and how the Responsibility to Protect applies**
- **Hold class/group discussions**
- **Take action on Darfur**

## Life and Death in Darfur

On 9 January 2005, the world's longest civil war, which raged in Sudan for over 40 years between the predominantly Muslim-Arabic north and the mostly African-Christian south, came to end with the signing of the North-South peace agreement.

However, four decades of insecurity and ethnic conflict has taken its toll the nation's infrastructure, political systems and economy. Sadly, there was little surprise when rebel groups took up arms against the government in 2003, and the country's Western Region, Darfur, erupted into another violent conflict. However, the scale and ferocity of the government's response to these rebel uprisings, and the consequent devastation, has been utterly shocking.

The government began arming Arab militias, known as the Janjaweed, to 'clear out' the civilian population in Darfur. It accuses the civilian population of assisting the rebels because of their shared ethnic identity. Military air strikes are coordinated to coincide with Janjaweed attacks on horse and camelback. Those who survive report indiscriminate killing by machette, automatic weapons and air strikes, torture, rape, kidnap, and the brutal, targeted murder of children.

The presence of 7,000 African Union (AU) forces since 2004 has done little to quell the violence in an area the size of France, and infighting among the rebel groups has exacerbated the conflict.

Between two and four hundred thousand people have died, and 2.5 million have been displaced. Hundreds of thousands have also fled across the border to neighboring Chad. As the conflict continues to spill across the border into Chad, the threat of a regional war is now very real.



Children waiting in a refugee camp in Nyala, South Darfur. UN Photo 77104

The 2.5 million displaced persons rely entirely on international aid for their survival, but the security situation has deteriorated so severely since 2006 that many areas are now off limits even to humanitarian agencies and 1 million people remain beyond their reach. Relief workers are targeted by both sides of the conflict, including most recently an employee of our partner organisation, the Darfur Emergency Response Organisation (DERO), who was shot and killed in Darfur on 17 June 2007. Even if the violence were to end immediately, hundreds of thousands would still be in danger of death through starvation or disease. The situation is absolutely dire.

Much has been made of various Darfur peace agreements that the Government has signed, but none have stopped the violence. The Government continues to frustrate the deployment of United Nations (UN) forces to replenish the over-stretched and under-resourced AU forces, and has only engaged in diplomacy long enough to stall international efforts to halt the killing. Sudan also has powerful allies on the UN Security Council, particularly China, who is the largest foreign investor in Sudan's oil industry, and recently constructed 3 munitions factories in the capital, Khartoum.

**Watch a series of short online documentaries:**  
[www.cfr.org/publication/13129/](http://www.cfr.org/publication/13129/)



**“Darfur is only the latest killing field in Sudan, where leaders driven by racism, greed, and extremist ideology have exploited the country's diversity as a weapon to divide and conquer its people.” (enoughproject.org)**

### The Responsibility to Protect in Darfur

Of all the conflicts in the world today, the situation in Darfur in South-Western Sudan is the clearest case of genocide invoking the Responsibility to Protect. The Sudanese government has not only ignored its responsibility to protect the people of Darfur; it is actively orchestrating their complete annihilation. The responsibility thus falls on the international community to react to these acts of ethnic cleansing and genocide, and stop the slaughter.

Sadly, though, the situation in Darfur is also an example of how difficult it can be to translate words, into action. Though the international community has adopted the responsibility to protect doctrine, and has even evoked R2P in Security Council resolutions calling for a halt to the violence in Darfur, they have so far lacked the political will to act. While the responsibility to protect doctrine is the most definitive, revolutionary genocide prevention measure ever adopted, it is little good to the people of Darfur if the international community is not compelled to act. As Australian citizens, we can fulfil our responsibility by demanding our national leaders demonstrate the political will to act, and lead by example in the global community.

### What action does R2P call for?

The time to prevent genocide in Darfur has clearly passed. It is time for the international community, via the authority of the Security Council, to react.

**Diplomacy:** Negotiations with Khartoum have so far done nothing more than buy time for the government and its militia groups to continue the slaughter; and previous peace agreements have failed because they have been signed by only one of the many rebel groups.

For diplomatic peacemaking to have any chance of success, the international community must work to unify the rebel groups, and send a clear message to Khartoum that failure to negotiate peace in good faith will not be tolerated.

**International Forces:** The 7000 African Union “peacekeeping” troops that have been in Darfur since 2004 are insufficient, ill-equipped and exhausted. Khartoum has repeatedly delayed the deployment of 20-30,000 hybrid UN/AU forces agreed upon by the African Union, United Nations, and Arab League, which are necessary to restore any stability to the region. The international community must unequivocally insist upon the deployment of these troops, and prepare a contingency plan for military intervention if Khartoum continues to refuse international forces.

**Targeting the Offenders:** Sanctions which target the leaders of Sudan’s government without adversely affecting the population (for example, international travel restrictions), and other economic pressures (for example, the threat of economic withdrawal by China) will demonstrate to Khartoum that the international community is taking its responsibility to protect seriously.

Failure to comply with negotiations, accept international forces, or respond to targeted sanctions must be met with the real threat of military intervention. If the genocide is not halted by the beginning of 2008, the Security Council must be ready to authorise immediate military intervention. The international community must have the political will and means to act and all parties must commit to rebuilding Darfur.



**TAKE ACTION ON Darfur!**

**Raise funds and give to CWS. You can assign your gift especially to the Darfur Emergency Response Operation.**

**Write a letter to the Minister for Foreign Affairs requesting the Australian Government:**

- Support definitive Security Council action on Darfur,
- Use its diplomatic relations with China to encourage their support of Security Council action,
- Adopt the principles of R2P as a normative framework for dealing with atrocities.

**Use the upcoming election to make your feelings on Darfur heard. Find out where the candidates stand, and encourage discussion on Darfur and our responsibility to protect the world's most vulnerable people.**