



Pursuing Global Justice
Through Grassroots Change

December 17, 2008

The Honorable Condoleezza Rice
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20520

CC: President George W. Bush
U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Zalmay Khalilzad

Dear Secretary Rice,

We, the undersigned American rabbis, are writing to urge the United States government to stand firm on justice for Darfur. We represent a variety of denominations and thousands of congregants from all corners of the country. The Jewish community, in solidarity with the people of Darfur, believes in the importance of justice for the perpetrators of genocide and the need for a lasting peace in the region.

As you know, the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) is seeking an arrest warrant for Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir on charges of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. President Bashir is trying to defer the court's investigation through actions in the UN Security Council.

The situation on the ground demonstrates that there is no current justification for suspending the court's investigation. Over the past five-and-a-half years, the government of Sudan has failed to live up to countless international commitments. Khartoum refuses to hand over two war criminals already sought by the ICC. Attacks on civilians, aid workers and peacekeepers continue. The government continues to transfer weapons to Darfur in violation of a UN arms embargo and has thrown up numerous roadblocks to delay the deployment of the United Nations-African Union peacekeeping force. Bashir's recent declaration of a ceasefire is belied by reports of bombing in northern Darfur.

Pirkei Avot, which describes moral and ethical sayings of the Jewish sages, teaches us: "On three things does the world endure: justice, truth, and peace...". It is in this spirit that we hope for a lasting peace in Darfur, justice for the perpetrators of this genocide, and a truthful accounting of life in Darfur.

The United States must stand by its stated commitment to block any attempt in the Security Council to suspend the ICC proceedings. Without concrete and measurable progress on security, accountability and peace, there can be no justification for any deferral.

Don't trade justice for more of Bashir's empty promises.

Sincerely,

The undersigned American rabbis

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