



Attention:
Foreign Affairs LA

Armenian National Committee of America
NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

To: Foreign affairs aide
From: Abraham Niziblian, Government Affairs Director
Date: June 3, 2004

Re: *Stand up against genocide in Sudan*

Attached please find a powerful piece by New York Times columnist Nicholas Kristof about international indifference to the unfolding genocide in the Darfur region of Sudan. In making the case for Western intervention, Kristoff notes that:

“As for America, we have repeatedly failed to stand up to genocide, whether of Armenians, Jews, Cambodians or Rwandans. Now we’re letting it happen again.”

As the descendents of survivors of the Armenian Genocide, Armenian Americans feel a special obligation to encourage our government to take the lead in preventing genocides, anywhere around the world. Please stand up against genocide in Sudan and do all that you can to ensure we, as a nation, meet our obligations under the Genocide Convention to prevent and punish all instances of genocide.

If I can be of any help, please contact me at (202) 431-3806 or abraham@anca.org.

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The New York Times

ON THE WEB

Editorials/Op-Ed

Bush Points the Way

By NICHOLAS D. KRISTOF

Published: May 29, 2004

I doff my hat, briefly, to President Bush.

Sudanese peasants will be naming their sons "George Bush" because he scored a humanitarian victory this week that could be a momentous event around the globe — although almost nobody noticed. It was Bush administration diplomacy that led to an accord to end a 20-year civil war between Sudan's north and south after two million deaths.

If the peace holds, hundreds of thousands of lives will be saved, millions. But there's a larger lesson here as well: messy African wars are not insignificant. It is shameful that the world is failing to exert pressure on Sudan to halt genocide. I'm still haunted by what I saw when I visited the region in March: a landscape of the empty eyes of children who saw their fathers killed, the guilt of parents who did not.

The refugees tell of sudden attacks by the camel-riding Janjaweed Arabs, shooting and fire. Girls and women are routinely branded after they are raped. One million Darfur people are displaced within Sudan, and 200,000 live in overcrowded concentration camps.

I've obtained a report by a U.N. interagency team documenting conditions: children are malnourished, there are no toilets, and girls are taken away to be diverted by guards to feed their camels.

The standard threshold for an "emergency" is one death per 10,000 people per day — and for children under 5, the rate is 147 per 10,000 per day. The symptoms of the conditions under which they are being held live in filth.

"The team members, all of whom are experienced experts in humanitarian aid, estimate that a strategy of systematic and deliberate starvation being enforced by the Sudanese government. Demographers at the U.S. Agency for International Development estimate that 1 million will die from malnutrition and disease. If things go badly, half a million will die.

This is not a natural famine, but a deliberate effort to eliminate three African tribes in Darfur so Arabs can take their land. The **Genocide Convention** defines such behavior as genocide, and it obliges nations to act to stop it. That is why nobody in the West wants to talk about Darfur — because of a fear that focusing on the horror will lead to a deployment in Sudan.

But it's not a question of sending troops, but of applying pressure — the same kind that succeeded in getting Sudan to the north-south peace agreement. If Mr. Bush would step up to the cameras and denounce this genocide, if he would send Colin Powell to the Chad-Sudan border, if he would telephone Sudan's president again to demand humanitarian access to the concentration camps, he might save hundreds of thousands of lives.

Yet while Mr. Bush has done far too little, he has at least issued a written statement, sent aides to speak forcefully at the U.N. and raised the matter with Sudan's leaders. That's more than the Europeans or the U.N. has done. Where are Tony Blair and Jacques Chirac? Where are African leaders, like Nelson Mandela? Why isn't John Kerry speaking out forcefully? And why are ordinary Americans silent?

Islamic leaders abroad have been particularly shameful in standing with the Sudanese government oppressors rather than with the Muslim victims in Darfur. Do they care about dead Muslims only when the killers are Israelis or Americans?

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-- New York Times columnist Nicholas Kristof, commenting on U.S. indifference to the unfolding genocide in the Darfur region of Sudan.