



The Darfur Consortium

*African and International
Civil Society Action for Darfur*

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ARAB LEAGUE MUST TAKE A STAND FOR PEACE IN DARFUR

(KAMPALA, March 22, 2005) The Arab League must make peace in Darfur an urgent priority as it begins its Summit in Algiers the Darfur Consortium, an umbrella group of primarily Africa-based civil society organizations, said today.

The Darfur Consortium is a network of African organizations that are committed to engaging constructively with governments in Africa and around the world to bring about a lasting, peaceful and just resolution to the ongoing violence in Darfur. Members of the Darfur Consortium recently traveled to Darfur and eastern Chad and witnessed firsthand the human toll of the ongoing crisis.

Throughout its investigations the Darfur Consortium encountered two paramount concerns of the victims: ensuring protection for civilians and bringing those responsible for atrocities urgently to justice. Unless these two needs are addressed, achieving sustainable peace will be impossible.

Two mechanisms for addressing these needs are already in place, but need additional support. The African Union has already deployed troops to Darfur, but have failed to halt the violence. With a more robust mandate and necessary technical and financial assistance, however, the African Union mission could make a forceful contribution to ensuring the safety of civilians. The Arab League should support efforts to strengthen that the AU presence in Darfur.

Similarly, the international community has already created a mechanism to ensure that the authors of international crimes such as are not allowed to enjoy impunity, the International Criminal Court. As an already functioning court, the ICC will cost considerably less than an ad hoc institution, freeing up much needed resources for the reconstruction which will need to occur in Sudan. "The Arab League should recognize that the ICC is the most impartial and efficient mechanism for addressing the need for justice in Darfur," said Taher Boumedra, Secretary-General of the African Society of International and Comparative Law.

As an organization which includes some of Sudan's closest neighbors, the Arab League has a particular obligation to stand with the people of Darfur and all of Sudan in calling for peace. With more than 180,000 estimated to have died as a result of the conflict and more than two million forced to flee their homes, the people of Darfur need this international support now. "It is our hope that Algeria, both as host of this consultation and in its position as a member of the Security Council, will take the lead in calling for effective action to protect the people of Darfur," said Dismas Nkunda, a representative of the Consortium.

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