

DARFURFAST



Darfur, the western most region of Sudan, became the latest chapter in Sudan's civil wars when rebels from Darfur took arms against the government claiming years of political, economic, and social marginalization of the region. After a string of rebel military victories in the spring of 2003, the government responded by arming Arab "Janjaweed" militia to clear civilian population bases of African tribes thought to be supporting the rebellion. At least 400,000, probably substantially more, have been killed.

The humanitarian situation in Darfur, Sudan remains catastrophic due to the ongoing state-sponsored violence and obstruction of aid. Refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), a disproportionate number of them women, are in terribly weakened states, subject to sexual abuse and without adequate shelter. The number of at-risk civilians continues to increase. Armed clashes continue to drive thousands of civilians from their homes each week—currently some 2.5 million, and every month the numbers continue to grow. Malnutrition rates have risen well above emergency thresholds in several camps. The need far outstrips the ability of agencies to deliver aid. Localized famine is feared.

DARFURFAST

For one day each year, STAND asks people from around the world to give up one item for the day and donate the money that would have been spent to civilian protection. This year DarfurFast will occur on 5 December 2007 and will include events around the globe designed to raise awareness and understanding of the plight of the survivors in Darfur and their supreme need for protection. The impact of a small donation can be enormous. Fifty cents will feed a refugee for a day. Just three dollars is enough to provide protection for one woman for one year. Equally important, since inception, DarfurFast has been a sign of hope for survivors of the conflict.

In the past, notable individuals like Desmond Tutu and Don Cheadle have participated in DarfurFast. Nobel Laureate and UVM alum Jody Williams has generously offered to match the first thousand dollars that UVM STAND raises. All that is required of participants is to fast from an item for the day and to donate the money that would have been spent to Genocide Intervention Network's Civilian Protection program. If you are available and interested, STAND would also love your involvement in the awareness raising and fast breaking events on the day.

UVM STAND

UVM STAND Students Taking Action Now: Darfur is the local chapter of STAND: Student Anti-Genocide Coalition, dedicated to the abolition of human suffering in areas of conflict and human rights violations. STAND was founded in the United States to respond to the tragedy in Darfur, Sudan in the fall of 2004. There are currently over a thousand chapters in the STAND network. The Darfur movement has been labeled by some, including former leaders of the anti-apartheid struggle, as the fastest growing and largest student movement since the anti-apartheid movement. STAND continues to be dedicated to ending the crisis in Darfur, and the network is in the process of expanding its focus to include other areas of conflict and human rights abuses.

In the past 2.5 years, UVM STAND has raised over \$150,000 for its Genocide Education program, bringing prominent speakers to campus such as Nobel Laureate Elie Wiesel, and many others. Under the leadership of UVM STAND, UVM was the second public university to divest funds from companies doing business with the genocidal regime in Sudan. In addition, UVM STAND has raised more than \$7,000 for Doctors Without Borders. Last year for DarfurFast, UVM STAND contributed \$1,000 to the \$400,000 that was collectively raised by STAND chapters across the country.

DONATING

This year, UVM STAND is donating the money raised from DarfurFast to Genocide Intervention Network's (GI-Net) Civilian Protection Program. GI-Net works with community leaders in Darfur, displaced women and girls, and the African Union Mission in Sudan to protect women and girls from rape and attack as they venture to collect firewood outside their camps. Families are forced to make a decision over who will go to collect firewood. If the men go to collect firewood, they risk being killed, while the women risk rape. Rape is being used as a weapon of genocide in Darfur and GI-Net's Civilian Protection Program offers safer cooking options by providing alternative-fuel stoves, guarded firewood patrols, and income-generating projects for women so that they can afford to buy firewood instead of having to gather it. For more information on GI-Net's Civilian Protection Program, visit genocideintervention.net/fundraise or e-mail uvmstand@gmail.com

