

4/25/2007 - Congressman Sires Supports Peace For Darfur

The Darfur Partners for Peace Act comes as the world unites during "Global days For Darfur"

For Immediate Release

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(Washington, D.C.) - The plight of the people of Darfur in Sudan has united the international community in the observance of "Global Days for Darfur," a week long campaign to raise awareness regarding the genocide taking place in the region. To support these efforts, Congressman Albio Sires became a cosponsor of the Darfur Partners for Peace Act of 2007, which passed the House of Representatives on Wednesday. This bill urges the Arab League to cooperate with the United Nation's peace keeping mission in the region.

"The people of Darfur need the help of the international community," said Congressman Albio Sires. "People are being killed, women and girls are being raped and villages are being burned. We cannot stand idly by and continue to allow these atrocities to take place."

A humanitarian crisis is growing in Darfur, where Arabic Janjaweed militias are leading a campaign of ethnic cleansing against Sudanese of African descent. The Sudanese government in Khartoum has allowed these crimes to take place. It is accused of blocking humanitarian aid to affected people by restricting access to, delaying, or even denying visas to fleeing citizens. It is estimated that over the last 24 months, 300,000 have been killed; 1.9 million displaced and more than 213,000 people have been forced into neighboring Chad and the Central African Republic. One million Sudanese lives might be in danger of disease and famine, if they are not immediately assisted with food, shelter and medicine.

The Arab League allegedly supports and is actively involved in the obstruction of the arrival of United Nations peacekeeping forces. The Darfur Partners for Peace Act strongly urges the Arab League to declare the torture, rape and displacement of Darfurians a genocide, requests its support of the U.N. peacekeepers, and asks that the League work with the U.N., the African Union and the United States Presidential Envoy for Sudan Andrew Natsios, so that peace and stability can come to the region.

"The Darfur Partners for Peace Act is an important step towards mending the lives of hundreds of thousands of Darfurians," said Congressman Sires. "Although it is hard for many to imagine the hardships that the people of Darfur have endured, they must never be forgotten and we must act now to end this tragedy."