

Press Release

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SCHAKOWSKY DEMANDS ACTION ON DARFUR crisis

WASHINGTON, DC -- U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL), a Chief Deputy Democratic Whip, today expressed strong support for three bills to address the grave humanitarian crisis in Darfur.

Rep. Schakowsky's full statement is below:

"Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3127, the Darfur Peace and Accountability Act, H. Res. 723, which calls on President Bush to take immediate steps to help improve the security situation in Darfur, and H. Res. 992, which urges the President to appoint a Presidential Special Envoy for Sudan. I am proud to be a cosponsor of all three bills."

Congress must act now to address what I believe to be the most disastrous humanitarian situation on the planet. We must make it an immediate priority - not just a legislative priority but a priority of conscience - to protect the lives of the men, women, and children who are suffering every day in Darfur, and in refugee camps just over the Sudanese border in Chad.

The situation in Darfur has become exceedingly dire. In direct violation of the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) and numerous UN Security Council resolutions, the Sudanese government has begun to deploy some 26,000 troops to the Darfur region. This has coincided with a sharp increase in attacks on civilians and humanitarian aid workers, renewed aerial bombardment, and the all but complete deterioration of the fragile DPA. The Congress must use every tool at our disposal to end the horror that continues in Darfur.

The American people want us to act. From coast to coast, we have seen massive demonstrations on behalf of peace in Darfur. American Jewish groups, faith groups of all denominations, the Save Darfur Coalition and others are far beyond this Congress in their awareness and attention to this critical situation. We must honor their hard work by passing H.R. 3127, H. Res. 723, and H. Res. 992 today.

I was one of several members of Congress who worked to have the situation in Darfur officially classified a 'genocide' by the United States Congress. I visited Darfur and I have seen the situation with my own eyes. I carry my experience in Darfur with me every day.

The people of Darfur have suffered for far too long. After each genocide of the last century, Rwanda being the most recent, we vowed "never again." Yet, we have become witness to another genocide. The time to act is now.

I encourage all of my colleagues to support H.R. 3127, H. Res. 723, and H. Res. 992. Thank you Mr. Speaker."