

**'Call the Atrocities In Darfur By Their Rightful Name'**

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President George Bush and Secretary of State Colin Powell were urged Wednesday by a coalition of members of Congress and civil society to declare the humanitarian crisis in Darfur, Sudan a genocide.

So far, according to Congressman Donald Payne of the Congressional Black Caucus, the violence in Darfur has killed approximately 30,000 people, driving 200,000 refugees into Chad and creating more than one million internally displaced people.

Payne introduced legislation to recognize the situation in Darfur as genocide and urged support for a petition calling for U.S. action to stop the genocide.

"Now there is a severe humanitarian catastrophe on our hands and it is time that the government of the United States, the United Nations, and the international community call the atrocities in Darfur by their rightful name," Payne said.

Sudanese government troops and their allied militia have raped, tortured, maimed, and burned entire villages in a deliberate and systematic manner to cleanse the area of African Muslims, he said.

"We call on our government to declare that genocide was and is still being committed against the Massaleit, Zaghawa, and the Fur people in Darfur on the basis that the atrocities in Darfur meet the requirements of the 1948 UN Convention on the prevention and the punishment of the crime of genocide and therefore we have a legal obligation under international law to act," Payne said.

Supporting the efforts to call the crisis genocide, Minority Leader of the House of the Representatives, Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi said the Bush Administration and the international community "must act before even more innocent people are slaughtered."

She compared the current situation in Darfur to the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, which claimed millions of lives while the international community stood by.

"Our administration will look back with regret and shame if we don't act," she said. "When [violence] is predictable we have an increased responsibility to make sure the slaughter is stopped."

Referring to her Jewish heritage, **Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky** compared the ethnic cleansing in Darfur to the Holocaust which claimed 6 million lives. "This is a moral issue crying for the most powerful nation to take action," she said.

"Pressure is building on U.S. officials, as they consider whether what's happening in Darfur meets the legal definition of 'genocide,'" said Africa Action's Executive Director Salih Booker. "As was the case a decade ago during the genocide in Rwanda, the U.S. refuses to say the word. If we fail to act, a million people could die before the end of this year. We urge Secretary of State Powell to support an immediate intervention to stop the killing."

The President of the Union of the People of Darfur in the United States, Moussah Issag, appealed to the Bush administration, to the United Nations Security Council and to the International Community to "exercise much more pressure on the Khartoum government."

The conflict in Darfur began during March 2003, but has gotten progressively worse, according to a report by the Congressional Research Service.