

## **American Jewish World Service Praises Enactment of Sudan Divestment Law, Calls for Full Enforcement, Funding of Humanitarian and Peacekeeping Accounts and Continued Leadership on Ending the Genocide in Darfur**

*AJWS President Messinger to Bush: There is more work to be done.*

New York, NY ([PRWeb](#)) January 1, 2008 -- [The American Jewish World Service](#) (AJWS) has applauded the signing by President Bush today of the Sudan Accountability and Divestment Act (SADA), and is now calling on the Administration to enforce the full spirit and letter of the law. [SADA](#), which was passed overwhelmingly earlier this month in both chambers of Congress, prohibits federal government contracts with companies invested in Sudan's booming oil, mineral and weapons sectors and provides safe haven for states that have enacted their own Sudan divestment policies.

Since 2003, the Government of Sudan has been arming and organizing militias, with backing by the Sudanese army, to engage in a genocidal campaign against the people of Darfur. This genocide has claimed more than 400,000 civilian lives and created more than 2 million refugees and internally displaced persons.

AJWS has also asked the Administration to support without exception full funding by Congress of essential humanitarian and peace-keeping accounts, and to take the lead in answering the UN's desperate plea for world powers to donate equipment necessary for a safe deployment of an international peacekeeping force. A fully operational peacekeeping force is essential to ending the ongoing genocide in Sudan's Darfur region and protecting the lives of people on the ground.

Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir has flouted numerous agreements to disarm the militias and allow the United Nations (UN) to safely deploy a peacekeeping force. As a result, world powers have been apprehensive in committing necessary troops and supplies. China and other foreign countries import hundreds of millions of dollars in oil from Sudan each year. Sudan's military has doubled in size since the country started exporting oil in the 1990s. According to many experts al-Bashir has responded favorably to economic pressure in the past, and a significantly softer export market could compel him to disarm militias perpetrating widespread murder and rape and to allow the UN force unfettered access and freedom of movement.

Until this happens and the UN gathers sufficient levels of mission-critical equipment, such as a fleet of at least two dozen helicopters needed to patrol an area the size of Texas, the full deployment of 26,000 peacekeeping troops will be delayed.

"The enactment of SADA is a clear step in the right direction and we are pleased that President Bush signed the bill," said Ruth Messinger, President of AJWS. "This level of economic pressure could be the leverage we need to get al-Bashir to allow the peacekeeping force into Darfur. The next steps are funding the accounts and gathering the equipment needed for the troops to do their jobs, and, again, we are calling strongly on the administration to step up its leadership and bring about real progress on the ground ending what it has accurately referred to as genocide."

In his signing statement, President Bush indicated that he would "construe and enforce this legislation in a manner that does not conflict with that authority." Messinger added that she hopes Bush will enforce SADA according to the full spirit of the law.

"This law is only as strong as the President's willingness to enforce it," Messinger said. "We regret his comments suggesting that he intends to pick and choose when he will do so."

American Jewish World Service, along with the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, Union of Reform Judaism and other members of the [Save Darfur Coalition](#), have led efforts to end the genocide in Darfur by mobilizing the American Jewish community, and working with others in the international development, human rights and faith communities to pass state and federal divestment legislation and to increase U.S. international funding for humanitarian assistance and peace-keeping.

#### About American Jewish World Service

American Jewish World Service (AJWS) is an international development organization motivated by Judaism's imperative to pursue justice. AJWS is dedicated to alleviating poverty, hunger and disease among the people of the developing world regardless of race, religion or nationality. Through grants to grassroots organizations, volunteer service, advocacy and education, AJWS fosters civil society, sustainable development and human rights for all people, while promoting the values and responsibilities of global citizenship within the Jewish community.

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