

18 January 2007

Dear Foreign Minister,

As you are aware, the situation in Darfur, already dire, deteriorated further in the closing weeks of 2006, with increased numbers of humanitarian workers forced to withdraw, continued spread of the conflict across borders into Chad and the Central African Republic, and intensified attacks on Darfuri civilians.

In view of the persistent and spreading violence in the region, the undersigned, a group of fourteen civil society organizations from across the European Union urge you, in your capacity as a member of the Council of Ministers of the EU, to bolster the strong statement issued by the European Council of 15 December with strong diplomatic action. In particular we urge you to introduce a clear timeline for compliance by the government of Sudan with the demands of the international community and a clear set of targeted sanctions that will be implemented in the event that they fail to do so.

The European Council of 15 December 2006 urged the government of Sudan to give its consent to the implementation of the UN support package for the AU mission in Sudan. Recently President Bashir has in fact nominally agreed to a limited deployment of a hybrid force. We welcome this commitment and hope that rapid progress will be made toward fulfilling it. However, we note that Khartoum has made numerous similar commitments in the past and has subsequently backtracked. Meanwhile, the violence in Darfur has continued unchecked, and the Sudanese government has not been held accountable for its repeated failures to comply with international demands and protect its citizens from violence.

The European Union must apply sustained diplomatic pressure to demonstrate to the government of Sudan that its verbal commitments must be followed by comprehensive and sustained efforts toward halting the violence in Darfur, and that the international community will not accept further neglect by Sudan of its commitments and its responsibility to protect its citizens. At the General Affairs and External Relations Committee meeting of 22-23 January, we ask that you and your colleagues **agree a plan of specific, targeted sanctions to be imposed on the Khartoum regime on a clear timeline in the event of non-compliance with the demands of the international community.**

It is crucial at this stage for the international community to ensure that agreements leading toward resolution of the conflict in Darfur are not just made but also implemented. Bringing an immediate halt to the spread of violence and protecting the people of Darfur must remain the priority; yet it is also clear that long-term security cannot be guaranteed without a political settlement to disputes in the region. This will require the establishment of a comprehensive peace process involving all parties and supported by the international community.

Yours sincerely,



James Smith  
CEO  
Aegis Trust (UK)



Dick Oosting  
Director  
Amnesty International EU  
Office



Dr Jacky Mamou  
President  
Collectif Urgence Darfour  
(France)



Olga Israel  
Chairperson  
European Union of Jewish  
Students



Adil Abdel Aati  
Foundation for Democracy  
and Development (Poland)



Hans Bogenreiter  
Director  
Gesellschaft für bedrohte  
Völker (Austria)



Tilman Zülch  
Secretary General  
Gesellschaft für bedrohte  
Völker (Germany)



André Rollinger  
Chair of the Board  
Gesellschaft für bedrohte  
Völker (Luxembourg)



Hugo Senoner  
President  
Gesellschaft für bedrohte  
Völker (Sudtirol)



Lotte Leicht  
EU Advocacy Director  
Human Rights Watch



Gareth Evans  
President  
International Crisis Group



Américo Lemos  
Secretary General  
International Friendship  
League of Portugal



Thomas von der Osten-Sacken  
Wadi (Germany)



Christa Bennett  
Director  
Waging Peace (UK)