



A LIVING
MEMORIAL
TO THE
HOLOCAUST

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A Call to Action on Darfur

Symposium and Action Fair – Sunday, March 12

at the Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust

New York, NY – Now is the time to raise awareness and increase pressure on the international community to take action in Darfur. The Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust will confront the crisis in Sudan with a daylong Symposium and Action Fair that will bring together representatives from many of the major organizations working to stop the genocide in Darfur and bring relief and humanitarian aid to refugees and survivors. Participating organizations include Human Rights Watch, the Save Darfur coalition, the International Medical Corps, and the International Crisis Group.

According to the UNICEF website, an estimated 3.4 million persons, equivalent to almost 51% of the total pre-conflict population in the region, have been affected by the crisis in Darfur. As the tragedy unfolds in the Sudan, the response from the international community has been called a moral catastrophe. But now, in response to international pressure, NATO is considering whether to devote more resources and aid to the crisis. As of now, NATO is expressing reluctance to devoting additional troops to the situation despite President George W. Bush's statement last week that the peacekeeping mission should be doubled in size.

"Visitors to our Core Exhibition are greeted by the biblical phrases 'Remember, Never Forget' and 'There is Hope for your Future,'" said Dr. David G. Marwell, Museum Director. "They reflect wisdom learned from the destruction of the Temple, and they guide us as a Holocaust Memorial. They explain why we must get involved in Darfur. It is everyone's responsibility to bear witness and assure that the atrocities of genocide are acknowledged, stopped, and never forgotten."

John Prendergast, special advisor at the International Crisis Group, will offer the keynote address. Prendergast is a former Director of African Affairs for the National Security Council and special advisor to the State Department during the Clinton Administration. He has focused most of his twenty-year career on conflict resolution in Africa and shaping U.S. foreign policy toward the region.

"The crisis in Sudan would abate rapidly if the international community, led by the United States, pursued three simultaneous policy tracks: civilian protection, peace promotion, and war crimes accountability," Prendergast wrote in an August 2005 opinion piece for the *Boston Globe*. "Civilian protection is the international community's signature failure in Darfur. Two and a half years after the government and Janjaweed began their assault, the world has managed to deploy just 5,000 troops in Darfur to observe an unimplemented ceasefire. That's it."

A panel of leading experts on the situation in Darfur will discuss the current state of affairs, and using the Jewish concept of *tikkun olam* – repairing the world – as a guide, will seek to answer these questions:

- Is there a humanitarian imperative to reach out to those in need?
- Is it possible to be compassionate and strategic?
- Why is Humanitarian aid in America's best interest?

Panelists will include Jerry Fowler, Committee on Conscience (USHMM); Kenneth Roth, Human Rights Watch; Rabbi Lee Bycel, International Medical Corps; Mark Hanis, Genocide Intervention Network; Suliman A. Giddo, Darfur Peace & Development; Dr. Annie Sparrow, Human Rights Watch; former Marine Captain Brian Steidle, Save Darfur Coalition; and photographer Richard Levine. Rabbi Ammiel Hirsch of Stephen Wise Free Synagogue will offer introductory remarks.

Organizations participating in the Action Fair include American Jewish World Service, Amnesty International, Anti-Defamation League, Celebrate Africa Foundation, Darfur Crisis Committee of Brooklyn Parents for Peace, Darfur Rehabilitation Project, Genocide Intervention Network, and the Union for Reform Judaism.

(More)

“The number one goal in Darfur must be reversal of ‘ethnic cleansing,’” said Kenneth Roth, Executive Director of Human Rights Watch. “More than two million civilians have been attacked, looted, driven from their homes and brutally deprived of their economic base. The winners have been the Janjaweed militias and a clique of Khartoum leaders fanning ethnic hatred with oil money to keep their grip on power. The ‘ethnic cleansing’ they have perpetrated cannot stand.”

Attendees will have the opportunity to get involved through the many humanitarian organizations that will be on hand throughout the day as part of the Action Fair. Participating organizations include: American Jewish World Service, Amnesty International, Anti-Defamation League, Darfur Rehabilitation Project, Genocide Intervention Network, Human Rights Watch, International Crisis Group, International Medical Corps, Save Darfur Coalition, and the Union for Reform Judaism.

“In my trips to Darfur and Chad I have met extraordinary people with gut-wrenching stories of survival and courage,” said Rabbi Lee Bycel, Senior Advisor for Global Strategy with International Medical Corps. “I have been privileged to see the outstanding humanitarian work being done by the staff of International Medical Corps and other NGOs who do their lifesaving work with great devotion. There is an urgency to help the people of Chad and Darfur and I feel that the mandate ‘not to stand idly by’ reflects the humanitarian ethic of helping those who have lost so much.”

Tickets for the Symposium and Action Fair are free with suggested donation. Advance reservations are recommended and can be made online at www.mjhnyc.org or by calling (646) 437-4202. The Action Fair will begin at 12 pm followed by the Symposium at 1 pm.

This program is made possible, in part, by the generous support of Priscilla and Harold Grabino in memory of Rabbi Balfour Brickner and his commitment to social justice.

The Museum’s three-floor Core Exhibition educates people of all ages and backgrounds about the rich tapestry of Jewish life over the past century – before, during, and after the Holocaust. Current special exhibitions include: *Ours To Fight For: American Jews in the Second World War*, which explores the lives of Jewish men and women who served during WWII; *Bukharan Odyssey*, photographs by Zion Ozeri of one of the world’s most exotic and colorful communities; and *Life in Shadows: Hidden Children and the Holocaust*, which tells the remarkable stories of the Nazis’ most vulnerable victims—Jewish children. The Museum offers visitors a vibrant public program schedule in its Edmond J. Safra Hall. It is also home to Andy Goldsworthy’s *Garden of Stones*. The Museum receives general operating support from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, and is a founding member of the *Museums of Lower Manhattan*.

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