



## **About DAN**

The Darfur Australia Network (DAN) is a not-for-profit community organization run by members of Australia's emerging Darfuri Sudanese communities and concerned volunteers.

DAN was founded in May 2006 in Melbourne and in March 2007, a Sydney office was opened. Today, DAN has become Australia's most prominent advocacy organization speaking out about the conflict in Darfur.

Working in partnership with the Darfuri Sudanese communities of Melbourne and Sydney, DAN's main objectives are to raise awareness about the conflict in Darfur and to advocate for appropriate public policy responses to this urgent humanitarian and political crisis.

# **DARFUR AUSTRALIA NETWORK**

## **NEWSLETTER**

**March 2011**

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## DAN DIRECTOR'S REPORT

First of all I would like to introduce myself as the new Director of the Darfur Australia Network and thank my predecessor Nicky Solomon for the great work that she did while at DAN. We wish her all the best in her future endeavours! The situation in Darfur appears to have only intensified in the past few months and it is now as important as ever to show your support for the people of Darfur and the continuing peace process.

DAN has a lot of exciting projects to contend with this year which will be lead by our wonderful volunteers. We have been working on an education kit and DVD which has already been distributed to some schools, with a full launch taking place later on in the year. This education kit will enable students and teachers to gain a better insight into the conflict and will also provide an opportunity for Darfur community members to share their experiences with the broader community. We also have a research project underway which seeks to identify how the diaspora community here in Australia can affect the peace process in Darfur. As well as this, we will continue our lobbying activities and work to increase the protection of internally displaced people (IDPs) and Darfuri refugees from gross human rights abuses.

We have had a few changes in the DAN office with Lauryn Brokate, Joe Vecci and Ann Tran all stepping down from their positions. Ann and Joe however have decided to remain on in a smaller capacity- we thank you all for your hard work and dedication to DAN over the years! We also need to welcome our new volunteer coordinators Kaveh Kia, Katherine Goswell, Sarah Downes and Joanna Yau to the team!

I look forward to the year ahead and welcome any ideas that our readership may have on events or activities that DAN could be part of during 2011. This year is set to be challenging both for Darfur and DAN so your continued support is greatly appreciated.

Kind Regards,

Sherona Parkinson  
Director, Darfur Australia Network





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## SITUATION UPDATE

The current situation in Sudan is one of great contrast in which the achievement of peace for South Sudan is starkly contrasted with the continual struggle for peace in Darfur. In January of this year 98.83% of the people of South Sudan voted for independence in a referendum which had composed a key component of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between the government of Sudan led by the National Congress Party (NCP) and the former rebel Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM). This landmark victory, due to take effect on the 9<sup>th</sup> of July 2011, represents a unique opportunity for the peoples of South Sudan to pursue a peaceful and fruitful existence in their newly recognized state.

This is of particular importance given that the situation in Darfur has recently been overshadowed in the international media by the upcoming independence of South Sudan despite increasing violence in Darfur.

From the middle of February fierce fighting is reported to have taken place in the Northern village of Wadi Mura between government forces and armed movements including a joint rebel force of SLA-MM, SLA-AW and LJM.

Zam Zam IDP camp is reported to have received over 31,000 new arrivals in response to the increasing violence between the government and rebel groups. The conditions inside the Zam Zam IDP camp have been described by one witness as being "very bad", saying there is no process to record their arrival or provide them with food or tents for shelter. Cases of dysentery have also emerged among children of the new arrivals.

The African Union/UN Hybrid operation in Darfur (UNAMID) have responded by sending the mission's military and police components to increase patrols in the Shangil Tobaya area to improve civilian protection, and have appealed directly to both the government and rebel movements to cease further hostilities to enable access for humanitarian relief. The mission is also working to conduct an emergency needs assessment and work with local authorities to locate additional space in Zam Zam camp to shelter new IDP's.

Despite the UNAMID having taken action to address the rapidly deteriorating situation in Darfur, it has been reported that the rebel Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) led by Abdel Wahid Al-Nur wants to meet with the political and military leadership of the hybrid peacekeeping operation (UNAMID) to discuss the deteriorating situation of civilians and displaced persons in Darfur.



More recently, the Sudanese government in Khartoum appears to be sending mixed messages regarding its future plans for the three states of its Darfur territory. Currently Darfur is divided into three states; North, South and West.

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of March Reuters published a report detailing the Sudanese government's intentions to hold a referendum on whether to unify the three states of Darfur into one region. However, on the 8<sup>th</sup> of March, the Sudanese government had significantly changed their tact, approving the creation of two new states in Darfur. Although the Sudanese government has not yet released maps or described the borders of the new states, it has been released that the two proposed regions will be Central and Eastern Darfur with their proposed capitals in Zalingei and Ed Daein respectively. The Sudanese government states that their decision will improve the efficiency of the administration of Darfur's territories. However, ethnic groups such as the large Fur tribe say that it represents a bid by the Sudanese government to divide Darfur further along tribal line, breaking up ethnic powerbases such that they are turned into minority players in each state.

In February the governor of South Darfur expelled a French non governmental organization, Médecins du Monde (MDM), from Jebel Marra. The governor stated that his reasoning was based on the belief that the organization was cooperating with one of the region's main rebel groups. As MDM was the only international NGO authorized to work in

the stronghold of the SLM-AW rebels since 2008, this will have dire effects on the already dwindling humanitarian aid reaching the area of Jebel Marra. Similarly, on the 27<sup>th</sup> of March, Reuters reported that the Sudanese government had suspended the activities of the organization Catholic Relief in West Darfur. The Sudanese government stated that its response was in reaction to Catholic Relief's distribution of bibles in the Muslim region. The agency has denied distributing Bibles or Christian materials.

As the situation in Libya continues to worsen, it has come to our attention that Darfuris living in Libya continue to come under attack. Sudan Foreign Ministry spokesman Khalid Musa fuelled anti-Darfuri sentiment in Libya, telling Reuters this month, "There are elements from the Darfur rebels involved with the unfortunate events happening in Libya right now."

These statements have left Darfuri refugees who number in the thousands in Libya, fearful for their lives as anti-Government protesters manipulated by these comments attack out of desperation. There have been reports of over one hundred Darfuris being killed and currently fifty-seven Darfuris missing in the regions of Misrata and Tripoli.

The Darfuri community living in Australia, who have family members currently trapped in Libya have reported their distress due to the situation their family members are facing. DAN has written to MPs calling to protect Darfuris in Libya and to try to quell the anti-Darfuri sentiments held by anti-regime protesters.



## NEW SUDANESE AMBASSADOR TO AUSTRALIA

The replacement of the Sudanese Ambassador to Australia caught many by surprise. Mr Ibrahim Bushra Mohamed Ali, who is also the Sudanese Ambassador to Indonesia, was appointed as the new Sudanese Ambassador to Australia in September.

Acceptance from the Australian Government to Mr Ibrahim's submission as Sudan's official representative in Australia is a grave concern by the local Darfuri community. Not only did the Government ignore the fact that Darfur is one of the countries with the worst humanitarian development, but also recognized the legitimacy of the Sudanese Regime that it does not deserve.

Mr Ibrahim's appointment has confirmed an

official relationship between the Sudanese Government and the Australian Government. The Darfur community in Australia is concerned about the potential risks of the Sudanese international representatives being tasked to gather information about the transnational Sudanese community. It is not uncommon that overseas-based Sudanese have been denied entry to their home country or have been detained on entry.

The Federal Member of Parliament Mr Michael Danby MHR and DAN have voiced their concerns about the appointment. Mr Danby will ask the Federal Government to address the recurring crisis in Darfur, as well as, the security of local Sudanese community under the new diplomatic situation.

## DAN UPDATES

### Sudan365 'A Beat for Peace'

Drum circles were found every corner of the world in September! 19<sup>th</sup> September was Sudan365's 3<sup>rd</sup> Global Day of Action, working towards a peaceful future for Sudan. As a partner of Sudan365, DAN and Jewish Aid held a picnic with the Sudanese community and raised awareness by beating for peace in Sydney.



Want to know more about 'A Beat for Peace'? Click [here](#) or visit

[www.sudan365.org](http://www.sudan365.org).



## 'Harry Potter 7' Movie Fundraiser

Last November, fans of DAN and Harry Potter came together for a good cause. DAN has held a movie fundraiser at Cinema Nova on 18<sup>th</sup> November, an opening night screening of the 7<sup>th</sup> motion picture of the series – 'Harry Potter and the Deadly Hallows Part 1'.

We raised over \$400 at the fundraiser and would like to thank our event sponsors Chai Mamma, Eat Rite Australia and Universal Village for their support and donation.

DAN would love to have you at our events so keep up with us at

[darfuraustralia.org/events/upcomingevents](http://darfuraustralia.org/events/upcomingevents) or

contact [events@darfuraustralia.org](mailto:events@darfuraustralia.org).



## 'Peace is Possible in Darfur' DVD Release

We hope you have not lost hope for the situation in Darfur. DAN strongly believes that peace *is* still possible in Darfur. And we are not alone.

'Peace is Possible in Darfur' interviews members of the Australian Darfuri community, Professor John Langmore and DAN staff on the causes of the conflict and their views and experiences of instability and displacement. The film also features a children's photography workshop run by DAN and an insight of the resettlement of Darfuri youth in Australia.

To order or to know more about 'Peace is Possible in Darfur', please email [contact@darfuraustralia.org](mailto:contact@darfuraustralia.org).

**DAN would like to thank all the volunteers, community members, partners, supporters & those who make the work of this organisation possible...we couldn't do it without you!**



## Volunteer with DAN in 2011

2011 is here and it's time for a new-year resolution. Will volunteering be one of them?

If it's a yes, we have good news for you! DAN has a range of exciting volunteering opportunities available in 2011 from administration and events to community engagement activities and research. You can visit our [website](#) or email [volunteer@darfuraustralia.org](mailto:volunteer@darfuraustralia.org) for more information. We look forward to hearing from you!

Thank you for your continued interest and support!

## DAN 2011 Appeal

DAN thanks you for your support to our work in advocacy on the crisis in Darfur and community engagement with the Australian Darfuris. We know you care about the people and situation in Darfur and the Darfuri community Australia, and you are not satisfied with just reading updates about Darfur in the news.

If that's you and you want to make a difference this year, you can make a money donation [here](#) or contact us at [contact@darfuraustralia.org](mailto:contact@darfuraustralia.org). Visit [DAN shop](#) for our latest products.

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