darfur australia network

Remember the Forgotten People...

To the Honourable Members of the House of Representatives and Senators of the Parliament of Australia

For the past four years, war has raged in Darfur, western Sudan. According to the United Nations, approximately 400,000 people have been killed and 3 million displaced. 4 million people remain dependent on humanitarian aid, representing approximately two thirds of the population of Darfur. This has lead to the situation being repeatedly referred to as the worst humanitarian crisis in the world. The people of Darfur have been forgotten by the international community – we have failed to stop the bloodshed.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is the primary international agency mandated with the protection of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). In 2003 the Government of Australia halved funding to this agency. Further funding of the UNHCR could, in part, enable the agency to more effectively protect those displaced by crises such as the conflict in Darfur.

The majority of Darfuri refugees are situated in Chad and Cairo, where the UNHCR provides humanitarian assistance. At present, however, there is no functioning system of Refugee Status Determination (RSD). Consequently Darfuri refugees are precluded from possible recommendation for resettlement to a third country such as Australia.

We the undersigned, call on the Members of the House and Senators to remember the forgotten people of Darfur by:

1.) Providing adequate support of the international agencies mandated with the protection of Refugees and IDPs by restoring funding to the UNHCR to pre – 2003 levels.
2.) Acknowledging the limited operational capacity of the UNHCR by;
    a.) Investigating why the majority of the Refugees displaced by the conflict in Darfur have no access to the UNHCR's RSD mechanism and the subsequent possibility of resettlement recommendation, and
    b.) Adequately reflecting the severity of the crisis in Darfur in Australia's Offshore Humanitarian Program's annual intake.
3.) Providing material and political support to the;
    a.) Proposed United Nations-African Union (UN-AU) hybrid peacekeeping mission to Darfur,
    b.) and diplomatic efforts towards sustainable peace in the region.

NAME (PLEASE PRINT)	ADDRESS	SIGNATURE

Please send signed and completed copies (before 1st February 2008) to
Darfur Australia Network, P.O Box 1249, Collingwood, VIC, 3066, AUSTRALIA