

far to here.

*Still images of moving stories
on the road from
Darfur to Australia*



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Far to Here, proudly presented by

darfur australia network



With the assistance of the Australian Government through
the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body.



Australian Government



The support of the Victorian Government through the provision
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Media Release

From Fear to Hope: The long journey from far to here.

Melbourne – A moving exhibition featuring photographs taken by more than 16 young Sudanese who fled to Australia will begin a national tour in Melbourne today.

The 'Far to Here' exhibition, which commemorates the sixth anniversary of the Darfur conflict, illustrates the moving stories of those who fled the conflict in Darfur in search of safety.

Matthew Phillips, Director of the Darfur Australia Network (DAN), said the Far to Here exhibition was a snapshot into the lives of people brought to the brink of despair by conflict.

"But it is a snapshot that shows them now standing strong, resilient and looking forward with hope despite their shocking experiences in a long and violent conflict," he said.

"This project has given the Darfuri community in Australia the opportunity to creatively tell their stories."

The exhibition will feature black and white portraits of community members, taken by photojournalist Kabir Dhanji, coupled with photos taken by Darfuri youth in photography workshops, capturing their day-to-day experiences in Australia.

The result will be a suite of images that spans continents and generations – a visual journey from war to peace and turmoil to stability.

Dr Zahra Haroun, a Darfur community member who arrived in Australia through the Refugee and Humanitarian Program in 2000, said conflict and insecurity continued in the country.

"We are very happy in Australia, but we are worried for our families who are still in Darfur," she said.

Far to Here will be exhibited in Melbourne from February 11th-21st, 2009 at fortyfivedownstairs. The exhibition will then be showcased for Refugee Week at Parliament House, Canberra, from June 17th to July 5th, and travel to Sydney in August 2009. A launch will take place on February 10th at 10:30 am sharp.

For a Far to Here media kit or to arrange an interview with a member from the Darfur community please contact Jen Ward at media@darfuraustralia.org, on 03 8060 5659 or 0421 048 035.

The exhibition is proudly presented by the Darfur Australia Network with the support of The Australia Council for the Arts, the Victorian Department of Planning and Community Development, the Victorian Multicultural Commission, Amnesty International, the City of Melbourne and Aesop.

For more information visit: www.FarToHere.com



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Darfur Australia Network (DAN)

The Darfur Australia Network (DAN) is a not-for-profit community organisation aiming to raise awareness about the continuing tragedy in the Darfur region of Sudan, assist in the resettlement of Darfuri refugees and build solidarity between the Australian people and the people of Darfur.

For more information visit www.darfuraustralia.org

Far To Here Information

Far to Here and DAN

How do refugees from Darfur bridge the divide between memories of conflict and loss, knowledge of ongoing violence in their homeland, and beginning a new life in Australia? How has the journey from Africa to Australia affected them? And what do they think of their new home?

Far to Here is a photographic exhibition that attempts to answer some of these questions. In part one, Kabir Dhanji documents the lives of Darfuri people who fled the conflict in Sudan and are now residing in Australia. In part two, Darfuri youth capture their own experiences, photographing their day-to-day surroundings. The result is a suite of images that spans the chasms between continents, cultures and generations.

Far to Here seeks to convey the complexity of the Darfuri experience in Australia as told by Darfuris themselves.

Throughout January, 16 Darfuris aged between 8 and 17 participated in photography workshops. They learnt the principles of photography and were encouraged to experiment with capturing aspects of their everyday life on film. The workshops provided a forum in which Darfuri youth could discuss their experience, critique their own work and select their favorite images to be exhibited. Similar workshops will be run in Sydney later in the year.

Through this project, the Darfur Australia Network (DAN) hopes to support the voices of the Darfur community in Sydney and Melbourne to advocate on their own behalf and to raise awareness of the ongoing conflict in Darfur.

‘Far To Here’

Melbourne: 11 - 21st Feb @ fortyfivedownstairs, 45 Flinders Lane, Melbourne 3000.

Canberra: 17 June- 5 July @ Parliament House, Canberra 2009.

Sydney: TBC 3 weeks in August 2009.

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Fast Facts about Darfur:

The Conflict

Darfur is a region in Western Sudan, Africa and is about the size of France. Before the conflict began around 6 million people lived in Darfur.

The current conflict in Darfur began in February 2003, when a Darfuri rebel group rose up against the government, demanding greater political representation. As a response the government sent the Janjaweed militia, already active in the area, which indiscriminately attacked rebels and civilians.

4.2 million people have been affected by the conflict, with 1.8 million of them children under the age of 18.

According to the United Nations, an estimated 400,000 have died, from the conflict and conflict-induced diseases.

An estimated three million people have been displaced, the majority languishing in camps for internal displaced persons (IDPs) in Sudan, or in refugee camps in Egypt, Chad, Central African Republic and Ghana.

Around 3.8 million people are dependent on humanitarian aid for day-to-day survival, delivered by international non-government agencies. However, due to attacks on aid convoys, much of this desperately needed food and medicine does not get through. Attacks on convoys have forced NGOs to scale down their operations, or pullout of entire areas.

Darfuri Refugees in Australia

It is estimated that 600-700 Darfuri refugees live in Australia, although this number is based on anecdotal evidence from the Darfuri community. It is difficult to ascertain the exact number of Sudanese refugees in Australia that come from Darfur because official channels only recognize them as Sudanese citizens.

Most came through Special Humanitarian Program (SHP), under which refugees are nominated by family and friends already living in Australia.

The majority of Darfuris live in Brisbane and Sydney, with smaller populations in Victoria, located mainly in Dandenong, Sunshine and Shepparton.

The United Nations and UNAMID

The two most relevant Security Council Resolutions regarding the current situation in Darfur are Resolutions 1674 and Resolution 1769:

Resolution 1674, passed on April 28 2006, known as the 'Responsibility to Protect'. It acknowledges that the sovereign state has the primary responsibility to protect its own populations against genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. However, if the state is unable or unwilling to do so, responsibility shifts to the international community.

Resolution 1769, passed on July 31 2007, sanctioned the largest ever peace-keeping force to assist the beleaguered African Union force in Darfur. The United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID), when fully deployed, would have 26,000 uniformed troops in Darfur. It is authorized to consist of up to 19,555 military personnel, including 360 military observers and liaison offers and 6,432 personnel.

As of December 31st 2008, UNAMID is under-resourced. Only 15,136 uniformed personnel have been deployed, including 12,194 troops, 175 military observers, and 2,767 police officers, supported by 796 international civilian personnel, 1,405 local civilian staff and 796 UN volunteers.

The UNDPKO have an open request to all donor countries, including Australia, for resources and personnel.

Australia has committed \$71 million and nine specialised personnel to UNAMID, claiming that the military is overstretched with commitments in the Middle East and the Pacific to contribute any further personnel or transport.

Far to Here Spokespeople.

Mohamed Abdullah.

Mohamed Abdullah was born in Kutum, North Darfur. Mohamed joined the Sudanese army, but soon became disillusioned. Objecting to the brutal practices and policies of the Government towards Southern Sudanese, he refused to fight in the civil war. As a result of his opposition, he was jailed then expelled from the Sudanese Army. Mohamed arrived in Egypt in February 1998, and was accepted into Australia's Refugee and Humanitarian Program in August 2000.

After living in Perth for three years, Mohamed moved to the Melbourne suburb of Braybrook. He has a degree in Electrical and Electronic Engineering from Victoria University.

Dr. Zahra Haroun.

Dr Zahra Haroun is from Nyala, the capital city of South Darfur. She completed her medical degree at Ahfrad University in Khartoum. After working in a hospital in Nyala for two years, Zahra followed her soon-to-be husband who had already fled to Cairo, Egypt. Following their wedding, Zahra and her husband remained in Cairo for five months before coming to Australia through the Refugee and Humanitarian Program in November 2000.

Since moving to Australia, Zahra has had her qualifications assessed by the Australian Medical Association and in May 2008 passed her clinical exams. Currently Zahra is working for Monash University as a tutor, assisting other overseas trained medical professionals as they prepare to sit their clinical exams. She has also raised three young boys.

Rob Gunstone – Children's workshop coordinator, Melbourne.

Rob Gunstone is a professional photographer based in Melbourne. He has been running River Rock Photography for four years, and has also worked for local newspapers. From working with development organisations in India, to taking photos for early childhood development centers in China, and teaching youth at risk in Melbourne, Rob has a broad range of experience. Rob is married, with two young sons.

Kabir Dhanji – photographer.

Kabir Dhanji, a photojournalist, has worked for BBC East Africa, covering Sudan, Kenya and Somalia. He has also worked for the San Francisco Chronicle and the Los Angeles Times.

DAN Spokespeople.

Matthew Phillips.

Matthew Phillips is a Director of the Darfur Australia Network. He has been involved with DAN since its inception in 2006. He is currently completing his studies at the University of Melbourne.

Alpha Lisimba.

Alpha Lisimba was born in Karokaro, South Darfur, and fled in 1999 to Egypt following attacks by the Janjaweed. He worked for the Forced Migration and Refugee Studies Program at the American University in Cairo and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Alpha moved to Melbourne in 2002, and has recently completed his Masters of International Relations at Deakin University.

To arrange an interview with any of our spokespeople, please contact Jen Ward on 0421 048 035, 8060 5659 or media@darfuraustralia.org.

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These photos are of the Darfur community in Melbourne and Sydney and are for publicity and promotional material only. They may not necessarily appear in the exhibition *Far to Here*.

To obtain a CD of print-ready samples of Kabir Dhanji's work for *Far to Here*, please contact Jen Ward at media@darfuraustralia.org or on 03 8060 5659.



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