

**Remarks as Prepared for United States Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist
Sudan Resolution
Floor Statement
United States Senate
Thursday, May 6, 2004**

- Mr. President, I rise today to draw attention to terrible tragedy that is unfolding in the Darfur region of Sudan. I have traveled many times to Sudan. I care greatly for the people there, as do a number of my colleagues who are here in the chamber today.
- I would like to commend Senator Brownback for his leadership on this issue. He has shown steadfast commitment to the people of southern Sudan.
- I would also like to commend Senator Feingold. He and I worked for years on the Africa Subcommittee to draw attention to the terrible civil war in Sudan.
- I thank my colleague from Tennessee, Senator Alexander, who now chairs the Africa Subcommittee. And I would also like to thank Chairman Lugar, Senator Biden, and all our colleagues who over the years have worked to help the people of this war torn country.
- Mr. President, the international community estimates that one million Sudanese from the Darfur region have been displaced by the ongoing attacks by government backed militias.
- At least 110,000 Darfur Sudanese have sought refuge in Chad. But even there the militias, known as the Janjaweed, have been able to cross the border and attack the refugee camps.
- The outgoing UN humanitarian coordinator in Khartoum says the continuing atrocities are nothing short of genocide.
- Since the violence began in February of last year, up to 30,000 Darfur natives have been killed. The UN coordinator warns that the raping, looting and mass destruction being perpetrated by the Janjaweed is "more than just a conflict." He warns that, "It is an organized attempt to do away with a group of people."
- On Monday, a UN mission returned from a six day inspection of Darfur. The team concludes that many of the violations they investigated may constitute war crimes and/or crimes against humanity. Their report, due to be completed by the end of this week, is expected to confirm many of the accounts of mass murder, multiple rapes, aerial bombings and ground attacks.
- And the crises only threatens to worsen. Later this month, the rainy season will begin. Aid experts tell us that the massive, yearly flooding may seriously hinder their efforts to distribute desperately needed aid and medical supplies. Amnesty International warns that the impending rains are a ticking time bomb in the countdown to disaster.
- Mr. President, the situation in Darfur is dire. I take a special interest in plight of the Darfur people because of my own contact with the Sudanese.
- I have traveled throughout southern Sudan. I often spend my time performing surgery at a hospital in a little village called Lui. I have visited the Nuba Mountains, the Blue Nile region, and Pabong. Most recently, I was again in Sudan in August to perform surgery at the Samaritan's Purse hospital in Lui, the only medical facility in a 150 mile radius of the town.

- Through these travels, I have witnessed first hand the life shattering results of twenty years of brutal war. I have treated bombing victims, innocent people with limbs shattered by shrapnel. I can attest to the suffering the Sudanese people have endured.

- Mr. President, I worked with my colleagues Senators Brownback, Feingold, Biden, Chairman Lugar, former Senator Helms and many others to enact the Sudan Peace Act in the last Congress. That bill provided a framework for the peace negotiations in Sudan.

- Last September, I was heartened by the announcement of a ceasefire between the Khartoum government and the Sudanese rebels. Peace, it seemed, might finally come to that troubled part of the world.

- But my hopes are wearing thin. The government of Khartoum must take responsibility for its complicity in the systematic murders and atrocities being committed in Darfur by the Janjaweed.

- On Tuesday, the US Agency for International Development delivered the first of four aid airlifts planned for the week. The agency is providing thousands of blankets and temporary shelter, along with food and medical supplies.

- But even the most hopeful projections estimate that the Darfur crisis will continue another 18 months even if Khartoum starts cracking down on the Janjaweed militias now.

- Hence, there is no time to waste. Literally millions of lives are in the balance.

- Mr. President, we must draw world's attention to the crisis in Sudan.

- This week's election of Sudan to a third term on the United Nations Human Rights Commission is a travesty. It undermines the credibility of the commission, but more importantly it signals to the Sudanese people that the highest human rights body in the world has abandoned them and ignored their pleas.

- I stand alongside of the Administration in its unqualified disapproval of Sudan's inclusion in the UN Human Rights Commission.

- By approving S. Con. Res. 99, however, this body rightly condemns the actions of Khartoum in Darfur. We put Khartoum on notice that the United States Senate will continue to scrutinize and hold accountable acts of commission or omission by the Khartoum government that violate their citizens' human rights.

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