

Dear Mr. President,

I am an American citizen since 1992, a member of the Zaghawa tribe and a native of Darfur. Over the past several years, I have been in daily contact with my countrymen in Darfur and in other parts of Sudan. I have heard witnesses' accounts of many acts of genocide and other atrocities committed by agents and proxies of the government of Sudan against members of my family, my friends, residents of my village and countless others.

When you were a senator and a candidate for president, you spoke often and strongly about America's responsibility to end genocide in Darfur. Upon your first election in 2008, as the president of the United States of America, many Darfuris named their newly born boys after you – Obama. Darfur people, in their tradition, name their children after the dearest people in their lives or a person that made a significant change in their lives for the better. They were very optimistic that you were the one who would stop the first genocide in the new millennium, the genocide in Darfur.

Today, in the summer of 2013, millions of Darfuris live, or are more accurately simply existing, in wartime conditions you really cannot imagine. They feel abandoned by you and America. One expressed the desperation of the men, women and children there saying, "We have no choice other than to fight to the death."

Now, in the second term and fifth year of your presidency, the elders, grandparents, and mothers, in the nights of Darfur, pass on the horrible stories of the genocide to the younger generations. They pass on the fact that the world chose to accept and tolerate those who have committed the crime of genocide. They tell how an American president who pledged to end the Darfur genocide instead stood by when President al-Bashir effectively ended humanitarian aid in Darfur, when civilians were killed by government forces and militias, and when the government re-initiated ethnic cleansing in the Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile. They cannot understand that you, a two-term president, may leave office with a legacy of failing to stop the Darfur genocide and failing to bring any of the responsible criminals to justice.

Genocide is a unique crime in that its effects live through the survivors for generations and centuries to come. Darfur's genocide is one of the most documented crimes. Just as the offspring of Holocaust survivors have learned the horrible details from their ancestors, Darfuri people also are passing details of the Darfur genocide to their offspring – who acted to stop the genocide, who did little, or who did nothing. As time passes, every excuse that may sound good and reasonable now for not doing enough to end the genocide will pale in the eyes of history and in the eyes of generations to come.

Mr. President, no matter what you accomplish in any other arena, domestically or internationally, if you do not adopt and promptly implement, together with U.S. allies, a revised comprehensive and coordinated policy toward Sudan, your legacy will forever be tied to failing to stop the genocide in Darfur. Twenty years from the day you leave office, any time new mass graves are uncovered in a remote village in Darfur, your legacy will turn, in the books of history, into a legacy of death.

Fifty years from now, it will be incomprehensible to those who will learn the history of genocides that you sat as an American president for two terms, and allowed al-Bashir, the mastermind and executioner of the Darfur genocide, the first sitting head of state indicted by the International Criminal Court for genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity, to continue to commit these terrible crimes. History will remember that you failed to stop the killing, displacement, rapes and other destructive consequences called genocide by the U.S. Congress and by you.

Mr. President, I implore you to take the necessary actions to save the lives of Sudanese civilians not yet killed by their government. As you said in 2007, genocide is “a stain on our souls.” Please don’t let the Sudan genocide become a lasting stain on your legacy.

Sincerely,

Mohamed Suleiman

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