



An Invitation to Muslims to Just L.E.A.D

“He who has killed an innocent soul, it is as if he had killed all humanity. And he who has saved an innocent soul, it is as if he has saved all humanity.” ~Qur’an 5:32

“The Holy Prophet Mohammed came into this world and taught us: ‘That man is a Muslim who never hurts anyone by word or deed, but who works for the benefit and happiness of God’s creatures. Belief in God is to love one’s fellow men.’”

~Abdul Ghaffar Khan

In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful. Abdul Ghaffar Khan’s words are striking in the context of the last five years, when the world has seen growing Muslim on Muslim violence. Lack of awareness in the West means that Islam is often linked to conflict in the news. Radical versions of Islam make headlines, encouraging a negative stereotype of Islam as violent and anti-democratic. The National Islamic Front that has held power in Sudan for decades has perpetuated this image of Islam with the violence in Darfur. Muslims in America have the opportunity to set the record straight by defending the human rights of Darfurian Muslims under attack and seeking peace in all of Sudan. Global action for peace in Sudan today could save hundreds of thousands from starvation, disease and violence, giving witness to the Almighty One’s decree quoted above. (5:32)

Have You Heard? Background on Conflict in Sudan

The genocide in Darfur became front page news in 2003. Evidence of the systematic destruction of lives elicited the declaration of genocide by the U.S. in 2004. By the end of 2005 Sudanese government forces and their proxy militia, the Janjaweed, had destroyed 80-90% of the villages of Darfur. In recent years the genocide in Darfur has become more complicated, and the violence more chaotic. The ruling National Islamic Front in Khartoum continues to engage in large-scale military assaults on civilians, on camps of internally displaced people, and on the under-resourced UN-African Union peacekeeping force.

Over 450,000 Darfurians have lost their lives and more than 2.7 million have been displaced. Survivors testify that their attackers made clear their genocidal intent saying, “We must crush you. You are Black, you are slaves.” The mandate by a Janjaweed commander was, “Change the demography of Darfur and empty it of African tribes.” The government of Sudan claims that the reports coming out of Darfur are a Western conspiracy to undermine an Islamic nation - but the source of these reports are the refugees themselves, Muslims with pleas for protection.

The UN estimates more than 200,000 were newly displaced in 2008, a rate of more than 1,000 human beings a day. Stretched humanitarian aid agencies have been hamstrung by increasing

insecurity, able to regularly serve fewer than 50% of the 4.5 million people in need. Hit-and-run helicopter support missions are the lifeline for those out of reach.

The genocide in Darfur is not the first time that the government of Sudan has used genocidal tactics against its own people. In the North-South Conflict, the government pitted ethnicities against one another based on race and religion and carried out a campaign of mass starvation, forcible displacement, enslavement, murder, rape, and direct military attacks. Two million people lost their lives. Four million people were displaced. This brutal war came to an end with the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in January 2005, but this agreement has not been fully implemented. The fragile peace has been strained in recent years.

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Living the Qur'an

The government of Sudan's tactics of targeting civilians is haram - prohibited in Islamic law. The Holy Prophet Muhammad - peace be upon him - knew first hand the experience of persecution, and was forced to flee Mecca and resettle in Madinah. The Qur'an invites Muslims to come to mutual understanding through dialogue to end conflicts (3:64) and instructs that peace is the best course of action in conflict. (8:61-62) The Prophet Muhammad lives out the Qur'an and returns to Mecca near the end of his life, conquering the city without shedding blood.

Throughout his life, the Holy Prophet Muhammad exhibited the values of honesty, fairness and wisdom and used these traits to settle conflict peacefully. The spirit of these values lives in the five pillars of Islam. Engaging to protect people in Darfur puts the teachings of Islam into action. What greater **sadaqa** is there than the pursuit of justice to save lives? How better could one practice Islam than by seeking peace, for as it is written, "**All creation is the family of God, and the person most beloved by God (is the one) who is kind and caring toward His family.**"

"The believers are brothers, so make peace between your brothers."

~ Qur'an 49:10

Muslims Have the Power to Protect—An Invitation to Engage

We are called as Muslims to try to follow the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad and be open to the revelations of the Almighty One. Obedience to this call

"Let there arise from among you a band of people who invite righteousness, and enjoin good and forbid evil."

~ Qur'an 3:104

comes with the promise of support. When you reflect on the crisis in Darfur, what do you imagine the Prophet Muhammad's response would be? Are you invited to rise up with others to enjoin

good and forbid evil in this situation?

The next presidential administration has the opportunity to repair our nation's global image and take leadership in the international community to achieve:

- protection of civilians from violence, starvation and disease,
- sustainable peace for all Sudan, including upholding the CPA, and
- justice for victims and accountability for perpetrators.

We invite you to take the following simple actions as a part of Africa Action's Just L.E.A.D Campaign to build lasting peace in Sudan:

- Include Sudan in a message during Jum'ah.
- Dedicate a service to Sudan by the

Spring of 2009 and host a discussion afterwards.

- Let Africa Action know what your mosque has committed to do for peace in Sudan.

The engagement of your community could be the difference between action and inaction by the U.S. in this crisis.

Africa Action can support you by providing additional resources for your service, talking points and analysis for the discussion, and even some buttons and pens to help inspire people through paraphernalia! Contact us at www.africaaction.org, outreach@africaaction.org, or 202.546.7961.