



**Africa Action  
In Conjunction with  
The African Studies Graduate Student  
Association of Howard University**

**Presents:**

**Witnessing Genocide – a Forum for Reflection,  
Collective Learning, Mobilization and Action**

**When: APRIL 11, 2008**

**Where: Howard University, Blackburn Center**

**Time: 7 – 9pm**

**Darfur Exhibit & Cultural Performances Open @ 5pm**

***\*After the event you are invited to hang out @ Safari bar  
4306 Georgia Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20011  
202.722.7701***

❖ **Five Years of Genocide: Reframing the Sudan Conflict**

*“Throughout history it has been the inaction of those who could have acted, the indifference of those who should have known better, the silence of the voice of justice when it mattered most, that has made it possible for evil to triumph.”*

*~ H.I.M. Emperor Haile Selassie*

As February 26<sup>th</sup> marks five years of continuing genocide in Darfur, Africa Action, in conjunction with the Howard University African Studies Department Graduate Students Association invites you to the *Witnessing Genocide Forum* to discuss the ongoing crisis

and explore the most effective ways for U.S. activists to act to end the genocide. This forum is historic in the way it seeks to reframe the Darfur crisis by taking a comprehensive approach that looks at Darfur within the broader context of Sudan and regional politics with reference to Chad and Libya. The forum will lift up the too often ignored voices of local Sudanese and highlight their heroic efforts to achieve enduring solutions to Sudan's problems. In order to strengthen solidarity with firm knowledge of those we seek to support, the forum will reintroduce the people of Darfur, whom we currently know mostly as victims, by way of an exhibit that highlights their complex but beautiful culture, geography, landscape and way of life.

Darfur is undoubtedly one of the saddest stories of human tragedy – to date the crisis has displaced over 2.5 million people and left between 250,000 and 450,000 dead. Rape is used as a weapon of war as militiamen routinely target women who leave refugee camps to collect water or firewood for their families. These women choose to venture out instead of their men because they are 'only' raped whereas the men would be killed.

In the last five years, thousands of U.S. activists have demonstrated the spirit of international solidarity through creative actions that have raised awareness of the genocide and demanded decisive action from the Bush administration and the United Nations. This inspiring example of people-to-people solidarity scored important victories including getting the Bush administration to acknowledge the genocide and achieving the passage of two U.N. Security Council Resolutions authorizing peacekeepers for Darfur.

*Yet the struggle continues.*

In recent weeks, the government of Sudan and the janjaweed militia intensified attacks on defenseless poor villagers, displacing thousands and leaving hundreds dead. The Sudanese government, emboldened by explicit support from countries like China and lack of serious pressure from the U.S. and other members of the international community, continues to frustrate efforts to deploy peacekeepers.

Through *Witnessing Genocide*, we will create a space to facilitate reflection, discussion, mobilization and collective learning and growth for all who care about world peace, human rights and justice. The forum will **reframe** the discussion on Darfur in light of the experience of the past five years and explore ways to most effectively support the people of Darfur and Sudan at large in their quest for peace and justice.

#### ❖ **Making The Connection: From an Isolated View to Comprehensive Understanding**

Many times Darfur is discussed in total isolation to the political and social situation in all of Sudan and the region. This limits our understanding of what needs to be done to build enduring peace and stability in Sudan. We want to connect the dots and explore comprehensive and sustainable solutions to the Darfur crisis and conflict in Sudan. To that end, we will showcase an exhibit highlighting Sudan's ancient and contemporary history, its rich and diverse cultures, the people, geography, economy and way of life that influences both the crisis and solutions.

### ❖ **Empowering Solidarity: From Mere Victims to Active Agents for Change**

Often times our conversations on efforts to resolve the Darfur crisis focus solely on the work of international activists, leaving out the heroic efforts by Darfuris and Sudanese themselves. This engenders the view of Darfuris as helpless victims in a web of overwhelming events. We want to lift up local voices and highlight heroic grassroots efforts underway not only to bring peace in Darfur but also to build comprehensive solutions to Sudan's problems. We want to strengthen our efforts by embracing local initiative and extending respectful solidarity.

### ❖ **The Beauty That is Being Lost: Seeing Through the Chaos**

Our conversation on Darfur has been dominated by stories of carnage and destruction. We want to talk about the culture of Darfur and the beautiful things in their culture that are going up in flames with those bombs. We want to get to know the people of Darfur more so we can best understand how to most effectively support them.

### ❖ **Make Your Mark: Act to End Genocide**

We are encouraging people to make handprint marks as witnesses to genocide. At the event, we will be collecting the last batch of handprints to add to the thousands from all over the country that we have collected to deliver to the U.S. mission at the United Nations in May to put pressure on the U.S. government to take stronger action.

### ❖ **Get Involved**

You can be involved as a **co-sponsor** of the event or as an **endorser**. As a co-sponsor you are welcome to join us in planning and organizing at all levels. As an endorser you are welcome to attend, contribute to discussions and display your organization's material and we will put your name on publicity materials. To co-sponsor or endorse please write to [briggs@africaaction.org](mailto:briggs@africaaction.org) or [marie@africaaction.org](mailto:marie@africaaction.org).

### ❖ **A Call to Artists**

We are inviting **poets, performers** and **visual artists** to showcase inspiring work related to Darfur, peace and social justice. If you would like to perform or contribute artistic input to the event please contact us at the details provided below. The forum will also feature the ***Children of Darfur: Picturing Genocide***, an exhibit of drawings by children in Internally Displaced Persons camps that graphically communicates the mental scars these kids have from being exposed to barbarous violence.

### ❖ **A Call to Activists**

We are sending out a call for **volunteers** to help with organizing this event, activities include distributing publicity material, mobilization, and event logistics.



**Africa Action** is a national organization that works for political, economic and social justice in Africa. Through the provision of accessible information and analysis combined with the mobilization of popular pressure we work to change the policies and policy-making processes of the U.S. government and multinational institutions towards Africa. The work of Africa Action is grounded in the history and purpose of its predecessor organizations, the American Committee on Africa (ACOA), the Africa Fund (AF), and the Africa Policy Information Center (APIC), which have fought for freedom and justice in Africa since 1953. Continuing this tradition, Africa Action works to re-shape U.S. policy towards Africa to support human rights.

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For more information about this event or about Africa Action, please contact Briggs Bomba or Marie Clarke Brill: [briggs@africaaction.org](mailto:briggs@africaaction.org); [marie@africaaction.org](mailto:marie@africaaction.org); 202.546.7961



**The African Studies Graduate Student Association (ASGSA)** is a membership based group that works to ensure the fair and responsible representation of the graduate students of Howard University's Department of African Studies and the greater Howard University community. We also promote African studies as an academic discipline at Howard and in the community at-large.

To learn more about the ASGSA, contact Anita at [anitawheeler@gmail.com](mailto:anitawheeler@gmail.com)