



About DAN

The Darfur Australia Network (DAN) is a not-for-profit community organisation run by members of Australia's emerging Darfuri Sudanese communities and concerned volunteers.

DAN was founded in May 2006 in Melbourne, and in March 2007 a Sydney office was opened. Today, DAN has become Australia's most prominent advocacy organisation speaking out about the conflict in Darfur.

Working in partnership with the Darfuri Sudanese communities of Melbourne and Sydney, DAN's main objectives are to raise awareness about the conflict in Darfur and to advocate for appropriate public policy responses to this urgent humanitarian and political crisis.

DARFUR AUSTRALIA NETWORK

NEWSLETTER

June 2011

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DAN DIRECTOR'S REPORT

As the world has focused on Northern Africa and the Middle East the past few months, we have to ask ourselves: why was Darfur overlooked?

Darfur has continued to suffer aerial bombardments with over 70,000 people displaced in recent months and deaths occurring daily. Outbreaks of measles, meningitis and diarrhoea have occurred in IDP camps and humanitarian organisations have had restricted access to camps, despite the grave conditions people are experiencing.

It is the aim of DAN to ensure that people do not forget what is happening in Darfur and to push the Australian Government to do all it can within its power, to assist Darfuris in their efforts to attain peace. The conflicts in Darfur have been raging for eight years, and DAN is into our fifth year as an organisation. This year we hope we will see the international community unite to bring peace to Darfur and end the suffering of people that have had to endure too much, for too long.

DAN's awareness-raising efforts have continued in earnest. Yahya Abdelkarim, a DAN Board member, will be interviewed on several national and local radio programmes in June, as well as recently publishing a poem on the [Right Now](#) website, an opinion editorial by DAN was published in [The Australian](#), and our recent Speaking in Schools workshop in Melbourne had 21 participants, all of whom are ready to share their stories of survival in classrooms to complement our [Education Kit](#). Sydney is to have a similar workshop in the next couple of weeks, which the community is looking forward to, especially after the good feedback from the Melbourne session. We would like to thank Julie Green who ran our workshop in Melbourne and for all the participants for giving up their time to come along.

We have a few more additions to the DAN team: Susan Hornbeck, Claire Watt, Katherine Rule, Matt Longworth, Rosie Akauola, Gavan Blau and Hannah Hansson. Thank you all for donating your time and energy into the organisation.

We also had to say a sad goodbye to Veronica Yow who has been part of the organisation since June 2008, most recently serving as Secretary of the Board. Veronica has been offered a project management role in Egypt, which we are sure she will tackle with the same enthusiasm that she approached her work with at DAN!

To coincide with Refugee Week, DAN is excited to bring you the Australian debut of an inspiring film, *The Last Survivor*. The film follows four people's stories of survival from four different genocides in the world's recent history. Tickets are selling out fast, so be quick to book! Please read on for more information about this and the other DAN activities DAN in the last few months.

Kind Regards,
Sherona Parkinson
Director, Darfur Australia Network



SITUATION UPDATE

Since December 2010, renewed fighting between the Government of Sudan (GoS) and armed rebel groups throughout the south of North Darfur and South Darfur have resulted in the widescale displacement of civilians.

As of March 2011, the number of newly displaced people reached approximately 75,830.

The majority of these Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) flooded into Zamzam IDP camps and other IDP camps in South Darfur. The humanitarian situation in many of these camps remains dire as international NGOs' access to camps is intermittently halted by government authorities. According to official IDP camp statistics for the month of May, four children in refugee camps around Merching in South Darfur passed away due to a shortage of food and malnutrition. In addition, officials responsible for child care in Zamzam IDP camps informed the United Nation's Children's Fund (UNICEF) that the infant mortality rate in the camps (Zamzam A and Zamzam B) reached 13 deaths per week over a two week period due to the spread of cases of measles and diarrhoea.

The humanitarian situation is not only dire for IDPs, but also for those living in remote and isolated areas of Darfur. In an attempt to address this problem, The African Union/UN Hybrid operation in Darfur (UNAMID) launched Operation Spring Basket on May 1.

As part of the initiative UNAMID will oversee water projects, including one focused on returnee villages.

On May 14, Abdel Wahid Al-Nur and Minni Minnawi, the leaders of the two main Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) factions, signed an alliance pact to overthrow the regime of President Omer Hassan Al-Bashir and to build a democratic regime in Sudan. This re-unification comes as a surprise given the creation of two new splinter groups over the last few months that, following this agreement, have reintegrated into the SLM. Their unification was based on their belief that all Sudanese forces have to join hands to remove the current regime—the cause of injustice and suffering, not only in Darfur but in the whole country.

The Sudanese government has arrested and detained many Darfuri protesters, including two civilian UNAMID workers. The UNAMID workers were arrested in early May, despite provisions for diplomatic immunity for UNAMID staff. Ibrahim Gambari, leader of UNAMID, has repeatedly demanded their release, claiming that no information regarding their detention has been provided to UNAMID which contravenes their agreement with the Sudanese government, and that their detention is unlawful.

There continues to be conflict between the Sudanese military and the rebel groups, most notably in airstrikes by the Sudanese military on Darfur. These airstrikes have claimed upwards of 20 lives in the last month. The high incidence of aerial bombardment by the GoS has led to many in Darfur to demand that a no-fly zone be imposed by international forces.



There has been much discussion about the apparent double standard evidenced by the swift international response to the conflict in Libya versus the apparent disregard for the conflict in Darfur.

Over the last several months, significant effort has been made towards the progression of the Darfur Peace Agreement. On April 27, the joint UN-AU mediation team submitted a draft peace agreement to the Government of Sudan, the rebel Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), and the rebel Liberation and Justice Movement (LJM). The draft covered a number of pertinent issues including human rights and fundamental freedoms, power sharing and administrative status of Darfur, wealth sharing, compensation, return of IDPs and Refugees, justice and reconciliation, permanent ceasefire and final security arrangements, implementation of the modalities and mechanisms, and Darfur–Darfur dialogue and consultation.

All were asked to respond to the draft agreement by May 7. On May 1, JEM rejected the draft, stating that it remained far from the legitimate aspirations of Darfuris. Following this disagreement, delegates from the GoS and JEM have entered into discussions on a number of topics according to an agenda scheduled by the UN-AU mediation team and in the presence of the US Senior Advisor for Darfur, Dane Smith. In contrast to JEM, LJM signalled it agreed with 95 per cent of the draft agreement, leading to the GoS to suggest that they, together with the LJM, become the sole signatories of the final peace agreement.

However, this has been refuted by later reports which have stated LJM and JEM have re-affirmed their intentions to take a united position in the ensuing peace talks. The final draft is due to be presented to a stakeholders' conference on May 27. The conference was originally intended to run in Doha 18–23 May but was postponed as negotiations between the GoS and JEM are deadlocked over a range of issues.

One of the most contentious issues of the Darfur peace agreement has been the upcoming referendum on the administrative status of Darfur. Scheduled for 1 July 2011, the referendum will decide whether two new states will be created in Darfur, bringing the total number of states in the region to five. The GoS states that their decision will improve the efficiency of the administration of Darfur's territories. However, ethnic groups such as the large Fur tribe, say that it represents a bid by the Sudanese government to further divide Darfur along tribal lines, breaking up ethnic powerbases to reduce them to minority players in each state. JEM's opposition to the upcoming referendum has been supported by the National Consensus Forces (NCF), a coalition of 14 opposition forces, who on May 11 released a statement that rejected the organisation of a referendum.

Finally, the North Sudan Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) Committee has launched a program to disarm ex-combatants in Darfur, offering them health care and job prospects in return. This is being carried out with the cooperation of UNICEF, UNDP and UNAMID.



ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN FOR DARFURIS TRAPPED IN LIBYA

In March this year, members of the Australian Darfur community expressed grave concerns for their family and friends in Libya.

Darfuris were unduly caught up in the Libyan conflict, when the Government of Sudan implicated that Darfuris were employed by Gaddafi as mercenaries. The manipulation of anti-Gaddafi protesters resulted in hundreds of Darfuris being targeted.

Advised by the Darfur community in Melbourne and Sydney, DAN wrote letters to prominent Members of Parliament and sent out a press release at the height of the conflict.

DAN urged the Australian government to appeal to the international community to fulfil its responsibility to protect all people caught up in the

escalating crisis and urge anti-Gaddafi protesters to refrain from targeting refugees caught up in the chaos.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) responded to DAN and underlined the efforts of the Australian government in the Libyan conflict. The Australian government funded the evacuation of 1,735 third country nationals from Libya and continues to assist the International Organisation on Migration (IOM) to repatriate more civilians in Libya.

The official reply also stated the Australian government's priority on various humanitarian issues in Libya. The government has called for all parties involved in the conflict in Libya to uphold international human rights standards.

DAN UPDATES

Opinion Editorial Printed in The Australian

Why Libya and not Darfur? It's time the UN stepped in.

As the world continues to assist Libyans in their struggle against a vicious dictator, displaced millions in Darfur look on in confusion. Tensions in Libya reached horrific proportions and the world stepped in to provide relief.

People in Darfur have been experiencing a similar fate to those in Libya for the past eight years, with no respite in sight.....

Read the full article [here](#).



The Last Survivor Premiere

[*The Last Survivor*](#) is a feature-length documentary that explores the idea of genocide in the 21st century. Following the lives of survivors of four different genocides and mass atrocities — The Holocaust, Rwanda, Darfur, and Congo — *The Last Survivor* presents the stories of survivors and their struggle to make sense of tragedy by working to educate, motivate and promote a civic engagement with mass atrocity crimes.

Genocide is not something that just happens in the past, or over there. It did not end with the Holocaust. It has occurred on nearly every continent and continues to happen in Darfur. Since 2003, the people of Darfur have been attacked by their government through proxy forces, militia groups and the military resulting in up to 400,000 deaths. *The Last Survivor* highlights the danger of ignoring genocide and reminds how the common bonds of humanity link us all.

Details:

**Venue: Cinema Nova,
380 Lygon Street, Carlton**

**Time: 6.30 for 7.00 pm.
Meet in Nova Bar up the escalators.**

Date: Tuesday 21 June

**Tickets: \$20
(all proceeds go to DAN)**

**Bookings essential
To purchase tickets email:
sherona@darfuraustralia.org**

Speaking in Schools Workshops

Twenty-one Darfur Community members attended the “Speaking In Schools” workshop held on Easter Saturday in Melbourne. During the workshop, participants developed their skills to raise the awareness of secondary school students about the situation in Darfur and to further students’ understanding of what it means to be a ‘global citizen’.

The community members were encouraged to use their own experiences in order to engage students in discussion, and to share with them ways they themselves could become involved in advocacy.

As a result of the workshop, DAN now has twenty-one Darfur community members who are ready and able to be booked for speaking engagements in schools. If you would like to make a booking, please email: contact@darfuraustralia.org.

**DAN would like to thank
all the volunteers,
community members,
partners, supporters &
those who make the
work of this organisation
possible...we couldn't
do it without you!**



DAN Acknowledgements

DAN thanks you for your support of our work in advocacy on the crisis in Darfur and community engagement with the Australian Darfuri community. We would especially like to thank Christine Grant, as well as the kind people at Lily Loves Pearl, Victorian Drama League, Red Stitch Theatre, Fully Stoked Clothing, Essential Personal Training, Organic Trading and Alter Eco Pacific for their generous donations for our *Last Survivor* raffle.

We know you care about the people and situation in Darfur and the Darfuri community in Australia, and you are not satisfied with just reading updates about Darfur in the news. If you want to make a difference this year, you can make a money donation [here](#) or contact us at contact@darfuraustralia.org. Visit [DAN shop](#) for our latest products.

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