

PRESS RELEASE
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May 26, 2009
For Immediate Release

Congresswoman Maxine Waters Fasts in Solidarity with People of Darfur

Los Angeles – Congresswoman Maxine Waters (CA-35) participated in the Darfur Fast for Life today, consuming water only but no food, to show solidarity with the people of Darfur in Sudan and bring attention to the ongoing genocide there.

Actress Mia Farrow initiated the Fast for Life on April 27th with a hunger strike that lasted for 12 days. She had intended to fast for 21 days but was forced to end her hunger strike for health reasons earlier following the advice of doctors. Congresswoman Waters, others members of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) and celebrities agreed to take turns to extend the fast and raise awareness of the humanitarian crisis in Darfur.

Congresswoman Waters said, “I am participating in the Darfur Fast for Life to take a stand against genocide and demand action from the world community to protect innocent civilians, to guarantee respect for human rights, and to create a lasting peace in Sudan.”

Congresswoman Waters condemned Sudanese President Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir and the Janjaweed militia groups responsible for killing, raping and persecuting people in Darfur and called on the international community to hold them accountable.

The International Criminal Court (ICC) issued an arrest warrant for Bashir for war crimes and crimes against humanity on March 4th.

That very same day, the Government of Sudan expelled 13 non-governmental organizations from Darfur, accusing them of cooperating with the ICC investigation. These non-governmental organizations include many of the most respected humanitarian organizations in the world. Among them are Oxfam, Doctors without Borders, the International Rescue Committee, and Mercy Corps.

“The expulsion of these organizations leaves millions of civilians without access to food, clean water, and medical assistance. This outrageous action is just another example of the cruelty of the Government of Sudan towards its own people, and it proves that the ICC’s decision to issue an arrest warrant for Bashir was entirely justified,” said Congresswoman Waters.

Congresswoman Waters was deeply affected by the suffering she saw in Darfur when she visited the region along with Speaker Nancy Pelosi in 2006.

“As far as the eye could see, there were crowds of displaced people who had been driven from their homes, living literally on the ground with nothing but little tarps to cover them. That was three years ago, and yet this crisis has continued,” she noted. “However, I am encouraged by the efforts of faith-based groups, students, grassroots organizations and others, here in California and all over the world, taking steps to help the people of Darfur, raise awareness of their plight and apply pressure to stop the genocide.”

Tzivia Schwartz-Getzug, Executive Director, and Janice Kamenir-Reznik, President of Jewish World Watch (www.jewishworldwatch.org), joined Congresswoman Waters in fasting today.

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