

PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

**Congresswoman Maxine Waters Expresses Concern about People of Darfur,
Announces She Will Fast to Show Solidarity**

Washington, DC – To show solidarity with the people of Darfur in Sudan and bring attention to the ongoing genocide there, Congresswoman Maxine Waters (D-CA) announced her intention to participate in the Darfur Fast for Life. Speaking today at a press conference organized by the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC), Congresswoman Waters and other CBC members were joined by actress Mia Farrow who initiated the Fast for Life on April 27 with a hunger strike that lasted for 12 days.

Ms. Farrow had intended to fast for 21 days but was forced to end her hunger strike for health reasons earlier than intended following the advice of doctors. Congresswoman Waters spoke to Ms. Farrow by phone and encouraged her to end the hunger strike for the sake of her health. CBC members and other celebrities have agreed to take turns to extend the fast and raise awareness of the humanitarian crisis in Darfur.

Congresswoman Waters said, **“The Darfur Fast for Life is an opportunity 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. Mia Farrow has demonstrated true dedication to this cause by making a personal sacrifice, and I will be honored to join her and do my part.”**

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 will leave 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.

In 2006, Congresswoman Waters visited the Darfur region with Speaker Nancy Pelosi. **“I was deeply disturbed by the suffering I saw,”** she recalled. **“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. I am encouraged however by the efforts of faith-based groups, students, grassroots activists and others all over the world taking steps to help the people of Darfur, raise awareness of their plight and apply pressure to stop the genocide.”**

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