

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Olympic Truce:

55 DAYS OF PEACE – AND MORE – FOR DARFUR

DREAM FOR DARFUR, JULY 2008

OLYMPIC TRUCE REPORT

In its new report, *The Olympic Truce: 55 Days of Peace — and More — For Darfur*, Dream for Darfur urges the UN Security Council, with Olympic host China in the lead, to invoke the historic “Olympic Truce” as a diplomatic tool to address the mass atrocities in Darfur.

The Olympic Truce period for the Beijing Games would start on August 1 and continue until September 24, 2008. This time period is defined both by tradition and a UN resolution from 2005. During the Olympic Truce period:

- The Sudanese government would stop aerial and ground attacks on its own unarmed civilian population.
- Aid workers would be able to gain access to the hundreds of thousands of civilians who have been forced out of reach of food, clean water, and medical care for years because of the conflict.
- UNAMID peacekeeping forces ready to deploy would enter Darfur, including forces from Thailand, Nepal, Sweden and Norway. These troops have been delayed by the Sudanese regime’s obstruction.
- A high-profile mediator, joined by the UN and the African Union, would ideally make progress on a just peace process.

The Olympic host has already shown its support for the Olympic Truce by introducing the Olympic Truce Resolution last October at the United Nations. The resolution was co-sponsored by 187 countries, including Sudan, and adopted by consensus.¹

The full report and a history of the Olympic Truce are available at www.dreamfordarfur.org/olympictruce.

A Note from Dream for Darfur:

In an ideal world, the Olympic Truce would be implemented globally during the Games. In anticipation of the Beijing Games, we are calling for the Olympic Truce to be invoked specifically for Darfur; the focus of our year-long campaign has been to urge China, as Olympic host, to use its unique influence with the Government of Sudan to bring protection and peace to the anguished population of the Darfur region.

WHAT IS THE OLYMPIC TRUCE?

Created in ancient Greece to provide athletes and spectators with “safe passage” to the Games, the Olympic Truce came to be associated with the call for a period of peace on the occasion of the Olympics. The Olympic Truce is considered the longest peace treaty in history; it lasted a millennium.²

The Olympic Truce was formally revived by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in 1992,³ and has been utilized numerous times in the diplomatic arena for intervention in conflicts during the period of the Games. The new report outlines this precedent on page 7.

OLYMPIC TRUCE WIDELY ENDORSED

- Since 1993, the UN has reaffirmed the Olympic Truce with a General Assembly resolution every two years, including in 2007, when Beijing introduced the UN Olympic Truce Resolution.
- In 2000, the Olympic Truce was included in the United Nations’ Millennium Declaration.⁴
- Since 2000, more than 400 heads of state and dignitaries – including the late Pope John Paul II, Presidents Nelson Mandela and Bill Clinton, Prime Minister Tony Blair, and others – have signed a statement of support for the Olympic Truce.⁵

OLYMPIC ATHLETES CALL FOR OLYMPIC TRUCE IN DARFUR

While there are no official guidelines governing the Olympic Truce, precedent suggests that various parties can invoke it, including the Olympic host, the United Nations, and the IOC.

In 2008, a new precedent was set: more than 100 athletes — an essential constituency in the Olympic movement — invoked the 2008 Olympic Truce for Darfur by co-signing a letter to the UN, the Olympic host, and the IOC. The letter is available at www.teamdarfur.org.

CHINA'S CHOICE: OLYMPIC TRUCE OR "GENOCIDE OLYMPICS"?

China's glorification of itself as Olympic host is hypocritical given its complicity in the Darfur crisis. The government of China has for the past five years been the most important supporter, economically and diplomatically, of the regime in Sudan, which is engaged in a genocidal campaign against its own citizens in the Darfur region.

Khartoum sells 70 percent of its oil to China, whose state-owned oil companies own production facilities throughout Sudan. China sells Khartoum weapons that are used against civilians in Darfur. At the UN Security Council, China has exercised its power as a permanent, veto-wielding member to advocate on behalf of Khartoum.⁶

The government of China faces a stark choice. Beijing can deliver on its "One world, one dream" promise as Olympic host, and on its professed concern for the people of Darfur — or, Beijing can choose to be recorded in history as the host of the 2008 "Genocide Olympics."

WHAT MUST HAPPEN

To realize an Olympic Truce for Darfur, the Olympic host, joined by the other UN Security Council leaders, must demand that the Sudanese regime stop all ground and aerial assaults on civilians as of July 8, 2008, one month before the traditional Truce period. This will allow Khartoum — with its history of broken promises — to

demonstrate its commitment to comply with the truce. It will also allow humanitarian workers to begin to access isolated areas in Darfur in a secure environment.

Invoking, and more importantly, *implementing* the Olympic Truce could be the show of international political will needed to bring peace and security in Darfur.

FULL REPORTS

Available at www.dreamfordarfur.org/olympictruce

- *The Olympic Truce: 55 Days of Peace — and More — For Darfur*, Dream for Darfur's full report.
- *A History of the Olympic Truce*, a report on the evolution of this diplomatic tool.

To support the Olympic Truce: Individuals can add their names to the letter signed by athletes calling for the 2008 Olympic Truce for Darfur. Take action at: www.teamdarfur.org/truce.

ENDNOTES

1 Official Website of the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games. UN adopts Olympic Truce Resolution (2007, November 1). Retrieved June 20, 2008, from: http://multimedia.olympic.org/pdf/en_report_1250.pdf and <http://en.beijing2008.cn/news/official/ioc/n214187495.shtml>.

2 Comment by Greek UN ambassador Adamantios Vassilakis during discussion of UN Olympic Truce resolution in at the 43rd Plenary session of the UN General Assembly, 2005. United Nations. (2005, March 11). General Assembly Urges States to Observe Olympic Truce During Upcoming Winter Games in Italy (GA/10415). Retrieved June 20, 2008: <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2005/ga10415.doc.htm>.

3 International Olympic Committee. FACTSHEET: Olympic Truce, UPDATE – FEBRUARY 2007, 1-2. Retrieved June 16, 2008, from: http://multimedia.olympic.org/pdf/en_report_839.pdf.

4 United Nations. (2000, September 19). United Nations Millennium Declaration - 2000 (A/RES/55/2). Retrieved June 20, 2008, from: http://www.olympictruce.org/html/para_10_resolution.html.

5 Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (2008). Statement of World Personalities in their Individual Capacities in Support for the Olympic Truce. Retrieved June 20, 2008, from: http://old.mfa.gr/english/satelites/olympic_truce/statement.html.

6 See Human Rights Watch. The United Nations and Darfur. Retrieved June 20, 2008, from: <http://www.hrw.org/wr2k5/darfur/3.htm>.