

“Payne Commends International Criminal Court on Genocide Charges,” Press Release, Congressman Donald Payne, New Jersey’s 10th Congressional District, 15 July 2008, http://www.house.gov/apps/list/press/nj10_payne/pr_080715.shtml

Washington, D.C. – Congressman Donald M. Payne, Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health, commended the International Criminal Court (ICC) and its chief prosecutor, Luis Moreno-Ocampo for bringing charges against Sudanese president Omar al-Bashir. Payne stated, “Yesterday’s decision by the ICC to bring charges of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity against Bashir ought to be applauded. Bashir, for the past 5 years, and his regime have orchestrated a campaign of death, destruction, and rape against the people of Darfur and should no longer be overlooked.”

Since 2003, Bashir’s National Congress Party of Khartoum has devised and executed a genocidal campaign that has caused the deaths of over 450,000 people and has displaced an estimated 2.5 million. In recent months, the regime has intensified its brutality against innocent Darfuri civilians. According to a March 25, 2008 report by the United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon, Sudan has “increased hostilities in Western Darfur over the reporting period [which] have led to significant displacement and loss of civilian life, while also inhibiting humanitarian access to civilian populations affected by the fighting.” On June 26, 2008, Representative Payne introduced a bill – H.R. 6416, the Just and Lasting Peace in Sudan Act of 2008. The bill codifies all existing sanctions against the Sudanese regime and lays out clear conditions -- ending the Darfur genocide, and fully implementing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and the Abyei Boundary Commission’s recommendations – which must be met before the sanctions may be lifted.

“The international community must keep focus on the continuing humanitarian crisis on the ground,” Payne asserted. “The people of Darfur continue to suffer. Khartoum must allow unfettered access for humanitarian workers and the full deployment of UNAMID (United Nations/African Union Mission in Darfur) forces. I hope the ICC’s actions are a major step towards accountability for those responsible for the atrocities committed against the people of Darfur.”