

Suspend Sudan Now

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Sudan should be suspended from the U.N. Human Rights Council. Such a move would signal the world's disapproval for the current government and be a clear sign that the United Nations could take stronger steps if the government does not change its behavior.

I am optimistic and encouraged by Secretary of State Colin L. Powell's statements discussed in the Sept. 9 editorial "Mr. Powell and Darfur" and his testimony, which clearly labeled the dismal human rights situation in Darfur as genocide. Because of the thorough documentation supplied by an atrocities documentation team assembled at the initiative of the State Department, we know that more than 405 villages in Darfur have been destroyed in a consistent, widespread pattern of atrocities that include killings, rapes and burning of villages.

The situation is a critical test of the Security Council's resolve to persuade the Sudanese government to end the crisis. Although prominent members of the council have oil and military contracts in Sudan and may argue against it, Sudan should be suspended from the Human Rights Council until it starts meeting basic open standards of decency and honesty.

The 1948 U.N. Genocide Convention requires signatories, including the United States, to prevent and punish genocide. The stark facts of what we know has happened and is still happening demand immediate action.

The people of Sudan have a right to expect safety and courage to come from the United Nations. That has not yet occurred.

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