

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 11, 2006

Senator Richard Lugar, Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-6225

Dear Chairman Lugar,

In light of recent devastating developments in Sudan and the rapid deterioration of conditions on the ground in Darfur, we urge you to hold a hearing before the full Foreign Relations Committee to revitalize discussions on what must be done to avert further tragedy there.

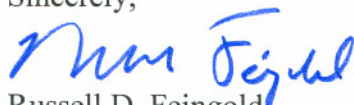
By now we are all aware of the scale of violence and devastation that has befallen the innocent people in Sudan's Darfur region. With more than 200,000 killed and an estimated 2.5 million innocent civilians forcibly displaced already, the recent upsurge in insecurity is resulting in hundreds of new deaths and thousands of additional refugees. Just days ago, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees warned that the worsening situation in Darfur threatens to spark another round of massive dislocation that could destabilize the entire region and result in a "major catastrophe." Amid continuing uncertainty about the status of the African Union Mission in Sudan and the future deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping force, thousands of Sudanese troops have been deployed to Darfur in recent weeks, prompting fears of a major military offensive that could lead to yet more deaths and displacement.

The U.S. government declared the violence in Darfur to be Genocide exactly two years ago. As you may know, thousands of Americans from across the country will gather this coming weekend in front of the White House to remind the government of the commitment it made. This anniversary will be marked by similar rallies throughout the country and around the world, as people look to the United States for leadership at this critical time.

While we understand this is short notice, we believe it is imperative that this body address this extremely timely issue. The two-year anniversary of the declaration of genocide is an ideal opportunity to engage with the Administration to find a permanent solution to this conflict.

It is with the utmost respect that we entreat you to convene a full committee hearing to reaffirm our commitment to a coordinated U.S. government response in the face of horrendous violence and human rights violations. We must not sit by while the first genocide of the 21st century escalates into a horrific humanitarian catastrophe. We sincerely appreciate your attention to this issue and consideration of this appeal.

Sincerely,



Russell D. Feingold
United States Senator



Mel Martinez
United States Senator