

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 15, 2006

The Honorable Denis Sassou-Nguesso  
President  
Republic of Congo  
Chairman  
African Union

Dear President Sassou-Nguesso:

We are writing to you about an issue of critical concern: the ongoing crisis in Darfur. As you know all too well, this situation is on the verge of becoming one of the worst moral and humanitarian catastrophes of our time.

First and foremost, we would like to express our respect and gratitude to the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) for its efforts, under the most difficult of circumstances, over the course of the last few years. The African Union (AU) leadership, along with individual troop contributing countries – such as Rwanda, Senegal, and Nigeria – made a decision to put the lives of its own personnel on the line in the midst of a violent campaign of terror waged by a peer state against its own civilians. In a geographically diverse and inhospitable terrain, the AU built this operation, the most complex in the organization's history, at a time when the civilian population was being ethnically cleansed every month.

Despite these efforts, the situation in Darfur is rapidly deteriorating. Many of us have had extensive conversations with African political leaders, U.S. personnel, AU military commanders, United Nations (U.N.) representatives, and, most importantly, civilians who fled their homes in Darfur. This disparate group of individuals all came to the same conclusion: unless immediate action is taken by the international community, the situation will unravel and hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians will be placed in immediate and mortal danger.

We believe that the African Union is essential to averting this catastrophe. Accordingly, we respectfully ask that the African Union, and its Member-States, consider taking the following steps at the meeting of the African Union Peace and Security Council slated for next week: (1) extend the mandate of AMIS until at least the end of the year; (2) publicly endorse and express support for the U.N. Security Council Resolution 1706; and (3) urge the Sudanese government to consent to the deployment of a U.N. force of approximately 20,000 troops in Darfur.

The U.S. Senate recently appropriated \$20 million as an emergency, stopgap measure to help AMIS meet immediate needs should the force be extended. In addition, we are proposing that the U.S. government push for a subvention grant from the U.N, and then work immediately with key bodies at the U.N. or through other international forums to provide a steady stream of resources to AMIS for the duration of its mission.

We recognize that the actions taken to date by AMIS represent key African efforts to mitigate what remains a grave crisis. At the same time, we believe there is widespread recognition – belatedly in our view – that the genocide in Darfur is an international, and not just an African, issue and it is time for others in the international community to do their fair share to end the crisis. We would like to work with the AU to ensure that AMIS can easily and immediately transition into a force that has access to the resources and mandate of the best U.N. Security Council authorized missions. As a starting point, we are proposing a joint meeting of the U.N. Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council.

We know the African Union cares deeply about the situation in Darfur. The lives of soldiers under the charge of the African Union have been lost in efforts to bring an end to the violence in the region. We pledge to do all within our power to help accomplish the aforementioned steps in an effort to find a solution to this humanitarian emergency and to prevent the loss of more African lives in the Darfur region.

Sincerely,



Barack Obama



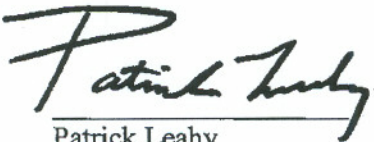
Carl Levin



Mike DeWine



Harry Reid



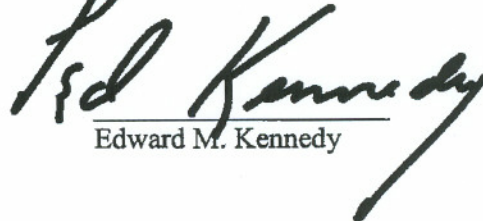
Patrick Leahy



Richard J. Durbin



Russell D. Feingold



Edward M. Kennedy

CC:

The Honorable Alpha Oumar Konare  
Chairman, The Commission of the African Union

The Honorable Youssouf Ouedraogo  
Minister of State for Foreign Affairs & Regional Co-operation  
Burkina Faso  
Chairman, Peace and Security Council

The Honorable Said Djinnit  
Commissioner for Peace and Security  
Peace and Security Council  
The Commission of the African Union