

4/06/2007 Moran Visits Africa to Study Hunger and Human Rights Issues

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Focuses on Humanitarian Aid and Ending Conflict in Darfur

KHARTOUM, SUDAN - In his role as co-chair of the House Hunger Caucus, Congressman Jerry Moran earlier this week accompanied House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer of Maryland to the African country of Sudan to discuss the ongoing crisis in the Darfur region with government officials and humanitarian leaders. Nearly half a million people have been killed throughout the course of this conflict. Another two million people have been displaced from their homes within Darfur and hundreds of thousands have been forced to flee into the neighboring country of Chad. Refugees are suffering from severe malnourishment and disease.

"Villages are being attacked and crops destroyed," Moran said. "Thousands of people are without food and water and are dependent on relief organizations until the violence comes to an end. No political struggle should cause the people of a nation to struggle for survival. In a world where we have an abundance of food, we cannot let anything - including a country's government - get between a hungry child and food."

The crisis began in February 2003 when two groups emerged to challenge the Sudanese governments' treatment of certain tribes in Darfur. The conflict escalated when the government of Sudan and its allied militia - the Janjaweed - began a campaign of terror against civilians to stop the movement.

In Sudan, Moran met with government officials, including Mohamed Yousuf Kebir, the Governor of North Darfur, and Major General Luke Aprezi, African Union Mission in Sudan Force Commander, to discuss ways to end the conflict in Darfur and the urgency of allowing United Nations peacekeepers into Sudan. He also toured the Alsalam Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) Camp where 47,000 refugees live in crowded, deplorable conditions. Moran and the delegation were briefed on the efforts of organizations taking part in the humanitarian mission in Darfur, including the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Feed the Children and Catholic Charities. These groups have come under attack and been forced to limit their operations.

Moran was recently named a co-chairman of the House Hunger Caucus. Members of the caucus work to raise awareness about issues surrounding hunger and the important role of American grown agricultural products.

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