

Hello, I'm Mira Sorvino, actress and ambassador for Amnesty International's Stop Violence Against Women campaign. I'm here to let you know about a very exciting rock concert I am hosting to benefit the victims of and raise awareness about the devastating conflict in Darfur, Sudan.

One of the target areas of the work we do that has affected me the most is the horrendous situation in Darfur. I have wanted to do something effective to raise funds for the victims and a greater public awareness about the worsening situation there for over a year now. I always had in mind a rock concert, something that would bring into the pop culture's consciousness something that most people would care about and try to stop, if they knew more about it. Almost everyone in our government has deplored the situation, including the president, but little action has been taken. I have a feeling that a groundswell of public attention would tip the balance towards meaningful action. Please let me tell you a little bit more about my involvement, the crisis, and the concert.

A year and a half ago, I traveled to Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. to speak out against the atrocities committed against black African villagers in Darfur, Sudan by local Arab militias, the Janjawid, armed by the Sudanese government in Khartoum.\* I met with several members of Congress, all committed to getting our government to pressure Khartoum to stop the terrible ethnic cleansing, which had already claimed 100,000 civilian lives. Their brutal techniques include slaughtering children in front of their mothers and systematically raping women for days in "rape huts" when the women leave their displaced persons camps looking for water and firewood. U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan had called the Janjawid's government-backed campaign a "scorched earth policy," verified by aerial photos of decimated villages. The very next day, Colin Powell, addressing Congress, officially called the situation a "genocide." I believed an undeniable public outcry would follow, and our government and the U.N. would put strong pressure on the Sudanese government to end their crimes against humanity.

How wrong I was. Somehow, despite the installation of a too-small and ineffective peacekeeping force made up of African Union troops with almost no assistance from the international community, very little has been done to protect the civilian victims and to demand accountability on the part of the Sudanese government for the war crimes and crimes against humanity they continue to commit. In addition, they have begun sending the armed militias across the border into Chad to wage a proxy war against the leadership there, a situation which threatens to become a humanitarian disaster of catastrophic proportions. Within Darfur, humanitarian aid and human rights groups' access to civilians who need help now more than ever is at an all time low.

In the year and a half that has come and gone, the toll of the dead has risen to over 200,000, 95% of whom are civilians. A staggering 2.5 million people have been left displaced from their homes. We all deplore the terrible loss of life incurred by the Rwandan genocide over a matter of months in the nineties, but is this one any less abhorrent because it is occurring within a time frame in which we can actually act to intervene?

I believe that the more the American public is aware of this under-the-radar tragedy, the more they will raise their voices in outrage, and our government will finally act in concert with the U.N. and the international community to put enough pressure on Khartoum to end this atrocity. I also believe in the power of young people getting involved in issues they care about, and letting our government and the rest of the world know that they will not silently stand by as others suffer. I know they can bring attention to the civilian victims of Darfur in the manner in which they so desperately need.

I am very thrilled to announce that Amnesty has agreed to fulfill my dream of a concert to benefit the Darfur victims and raise awareness about the issue. It will be held in conjunction with their annual general meeting in Portland, Oregon on the weekend of April 29th at the Roseland Theater. It is being called "Make Some Noise for Darfur," as part of Amnesty's much vaunted musical activism program, which has attracted the participation of such groups as The Black-Eyed Peas and Maroon 5.

We are thrilled to announce the enthusiastic participation of Brandon Boyd and "Incubus;" Tom Morello of "Audioslave" performing a solo acoustic set as "The Nightwatchman," "Collective Soul," and Suzanne Vega. This will be a great evening of rock and roll, and we are so grateful to these passionate artists who have selflessly offered their time and incredible talent to this event.

Cingular Wireless and Fender Guitars are two of the concert's corporate sponsors, and several major magazines have already vied for coverage of the event, and that is only the beginning of the media coverage we will receive. WireImage has promised to cover the event photographically, and get the images out across the country and world. Fender will provide guitars for the artists to sign and for us to auction to raise additional funds for Darfur.

**Please join us in an exuberant, high-profile event that could help put an end to a terrible conflict in which thousands of innocents are systematically murdered, raped, abducted and displaced each month. I cannot stress enough what a difference each individual could bring to the outcome of this effort. Please come to the concert; to buy tickets, go to [www.ticketwest.com](http://www.ticketwest.com). Find out how you can get involved in human rights activism for Darfur. Sign a petition at: [www.amnestyusa.org/countries/sudan/actions.do](http://www.amnestyusa.org/countries/sudan/actions.do). And to take part in our auction, please visit: [www.musicforhumanrights.com](http://www.musicforhumanrights.com).**

**Make a donation at to bring relief to the victims, no matter how small, tell your friends about it, and Make Some Noise for Darfur with us! This soaring, soul-rocking concert will be a wake-up call to the world that it is time to stop ignoring the plight of our brothers and sisters in Sudan. It is something none of us will ever regret, and all of us are bound to remember with pride.**

Yours,

Mira Sorvino

\*It is important to note that although the Sudanese government has conveniently framed the conflict as being ethnic in origin, many Arabs in the local farming communities have refused to take part in the violence, stood up with their neighbors and suffered the violent wrath of the Janjawid. The government armed the militias to systematically crush the west Darfurians' agrarian communities who tried to stand up to their economic and political marginalization.