

July 1, 2008

The Honorable George W. Bush
President of the United States

The Honorable Nicolas Sarkozy
President of France

His Excellency Ban Ki-moon
Secretary General of the United Nations

The Honorable Gordon Brown
Prime Minister of the United Kingdom

The Honorable Hu Jintao
President of the People's Republic of China

The Honorable Dmitry Medvedev
President of Russia

Dr. Jacques Rogge
International Olympic Committee President

Dear Sirs,

In our common aspiration to realize the ideals of the Olympic Games, we, the undersigned, urge the international community to convince the Government of Sudan to observe an Olympic Truce for Darfur before, during, and after the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. Through this letter, we issue an urgent call to the conscience of the international community. The violence in Sudan has gone on for too long. We hope you will use the opportunity of the Olympic Truce to work to end it.

The Olympic Truce originated in ancient Greece; in recent history, world leaders have invoked the Olympic Truce as an opportunity for the international community to expend exceptional effort, as athletes strive for medals, to create and promote peace.

In that vein, and in keeping with the Olympic spirit, we ask you to make your efforts for peace in Darfur "swifter, higher, stronger." Traditionally the Olympic Truce commences one week before the Olympic Games and ends one week after the Paralympic Games. This year, the truce period begins on August 1, 2008 and continues for 55 days.

In 2003, the United Nations reaffirmed the importance of the Olympic Truce in a statement signed by more than 400 heads of state and dignitaries who pledged "to support and disseminate, individually and collectively, the symbolic call for Olympic Truce throughout all future Olympic Games and beyond, and to exercise our best efforts within our communities, countries, and relevant international organizations to achieve its recognition and observance."

On October 31, 2007, China introduced a resolution supporting an Olympic Truce for the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games [G/A 62/L.2, "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal"]. The resolution calls "upon all Member States to cooperate with the International Olympic Committee in its efforts to use sport as an instrument to promote peace, dialogue and reconciliation in areas of conflict during and beyond the Olympic Games period." It was co-sponsored and adopted by 186 nations, including Sudan.

Just as the Olympic Games are a time for the world's athletes to unite in sport, the Olympic Truce is a time for the international community to unite for peace. We call upon our leaders to go beyond endorsing the rhetoric of the Olympic Truce by using this opportunity to take concrete steps toward protecting civilians in Darfur and establishing an enduring peace in Darfur and throughout Sudan.

A true Olympic Truce will only be possible for Darfur with an increased deployment of the UNAMID peacekeeping force and a rejuvenated peace process that has the full support of the permanent members of the UN Security Council. Therefore, we call on you to use the Truce period to exert diplomatic pressure to restart the peace process, and to initiate a rapid and effective deployment of the UNAMID peacekeeping force so that civilian protection would continue long after the Games.

With those measures in place, the international community could use the Olympic Truce period to provide humanitarian assistance in Darfur where hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians have no access to food, safe drinking water, and medical care.

For more than five years, before the eyes of the world, the Sudanese regime has committed atrocities of the worst kind. They have broken every promise and ignored every resolution, including UN Resolution 1769 of last July which authorized 26,000 peacekeepers for Darfur. To demonstrate its willingness to abide by the Olympic Truce, the Government of Sudan must immediately cease targeting innocent civilians, which is only ensured by ending all aerial military flights and support for ground attacks.

In the spirit of the Olympic Truce, we issue a moral call for these essentials: a rejuvenated peace process, deployment of peacekeepers, a cessation of attacks, and unfettered access for humanitarian workers. The Olympic Truce period should be marked by an increase of effort by the organizations and governments you lead to secure peace for the people of Darfur.

In the past the Olympic Truce has been invoked by the host nation. Now, just weeks before the Games, the People's Republic of China, given its considerable influence with the government of Sudan, is uniquely positioned to enact its resolution, "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal," for Darfur.

We are now calling upon China and the other members of the UN Security Council to implement the Olympic Truce for the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, as outlined in the resolution "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal," to help the anguished people of Darfur.

There could be no greater example of the Olympic ideal of promoting peace through sport than for the international community to use the 2008 Olympic Truce to end the first genocide of the 21st century.

Signed,

Felicity Abram, Australia, Pentathlon
Bethaney Adams, USA, Paralympic fencer
Ime Akpan-Mahoney, Nigeria, Olympian, Track and Field
Alana Alameda, Canada, Assistant Softball Coach Canadian National Team
Haifa Al Jader, Jordan, Professional Coach, Gymnastics
Charles Altekruise, USA, 1980, 1988 Olympian, Rower
Carlos Arena, Mexico, 1996 Olympian, Swimmer
Michiel Bartman, Netherlands, 1996 (Gold), 2000 (Silver), 2004 (Silver) Olympian, Rower
Elizabeth Beisel, USA, Swimmer
Alexandre Bilodeau, Canada, 2006 Olympian, Skier
Tyler Block, USA, Gymnast
Maria Isabel Molina Bonilla, Guatemala, Softball
Chris Boyles, USA, Decathlon
Terenzo Bozzone, New Zealand, Triathlete
Kyle Brady, USA, Gymnast
Dr Ian Brown, Canada, 2000, 2004 Olympian, Wind Surfer
Sean Bryan, USA, Gymnast
Jordan Bryden, Canada, Triathlon
Kyson Bunthuwong, USA, Gymnast
Grant Burwash, Canada, Duathlete
Tara Campbell, Canada, Water Polo
Mirinda Carfrae, Australia, Triathlete
Joey Cheek, USA, 2002 (Bronze), 2006 Olympian (Silver and Gold), Speed Skater
Colin Christ, USA, Gymnast
Marion Clignet, France, 1996, 2000 Olympian (Silver), Cyclist
Reid Coolsaet, Canada, Track and Field
David Cromwell, USA, 2008 Olympian, Swimmer
Candice Davis, USA, Track and Field
Chelsea Davis, USA, Diver
Ruben De Gendt, Belgium, Rower
Bryan Del Castillo, USA, Gymnast
Michael Del Junco, USA, Gymnast
Michael Ditchfield, UK, Retired Professional, Soccer
Selma Dilek, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Taekwondo
Richard Jr Dober, Canada, 2008 Olympian, Kayaking
Dominique D'Oliveira, South Africa, Gymnast
Cathryn Driver, South Africa, Volleyball
Nikki Dryden, Canada, 1992, 1996 Olympian, Swimmer
Shelley Dryden-McCann, USA, Track and Field
Philip Dunn, USA, 2000, 2004 Olympian, 2008 Olympian, Race Walking
Joy Fahrenkrog, USA, Archer
Cack Ferrell, USA, Track and Field
Edward Ferry, USA, 1964 Olympian (Gold), Rower
Jimena Florit, Argentina, 2000 and 2004 Olympian, Cyclist
Aaron Floyd, USA, Gymnastics
Justin Franklin, USA, Gymnast
Amanda Freed, USA, 2004 (Gold) Olympian, 2008 Olympian, Softball
Jeremy Frimer, Canada, Rock Climber
Amanda Furrer, USA, Shooter
Vicky Galindo, USA, 2008 Olympian, Softball
Heidi Gan, Malaysia, Swimmer

Daniel Geri, USA, Gymnast
Drew Goldsack, Canada, 2006 Olympian, Cross Country Skier
Maha Guirguis, Egypt, College, Tennis
Eric Haeussler, USA, Gymnast
Wade Hammond, Australia, Lacrosse
Jason Heit, Canada, Martial arts
Vanessa Herman, Canada, Swimmer
Chad Ho, South Africa, 2008 Olympian, Swimmer
Jeremy Holm, USA, 2002 (Gold) Olympian, Bobsledder
Sherri Howard, USA, 1984 (Gold), 1988 (Silver) Olympian, Track and Field
Gemma Howells, UK, Swimmer
Jen Howitt, USA, 2004 Paralympian, Basketball
Max Jaben, Israel, 2008 Olympian, Swimmer
Camilla Johansson-Sponseller, Sweden, 2000 Olympian, Swimmer
Marayke Jonkers, Australia, 2000 (Bronze), 2004 (Bronze) Olympian, Paralympic Swimmer
Geshan Kalupahana, Sri Lanka, College, Swimmer
James Kegley, USA, Retired Professional, Swimmer
Petra Klosova, Czech Republic, 2008 Olympian, Swimmer
Julie Koons, USA, 1998, 2002 Olympian, Speed Skater
Matthew Kooreman, USA, Speed Skater
Lauren Lappin, USA, 2008 Olympian, Softball
Douglas Lennox II, Puerto Rico, 2008 Olympian, Swimmer
Marie-Andree Lessard, Canada, Beach Volleyball
Kyle Litow, USA, Gymnast
Bryan Lundquist, USA, Swimmer
Annamari Maaranen, Finland, Gymnast
Michael Malahe, South Africa, Fencer
Margo Malowney, Canada, 1996 Olympian, Beach Volleyball
Heather Mandoli, Canada, Rowing
Diana Matheson, Canada, 2008 Olympian, Soccer
Tracy Mattes, USA, Professional, Hurdling/Pentathlon
Lauren McFall, USA, 2004 (Bronze) Olympian, Swimmer
Sara McMann, USA, 2004 (Silver) Olympian, Wrestler
Tim McNeill, USA, Gymnast
Jessica Mendoza, USA, 2004 (Gold) Olympian, 2008 Olympian, Softball
Romain Mesnil, France, 2008 Olympian, Track and Field
Aaron Moy, USA, Gymnast
Marissa Nichols, USA, Softball
Andrew Nisker, Canada, Tennis
Leszek Nowosielski, Canada, 1992 Olympian, Fencer
Andrea Nugent, Canada, 1988 (Bronze), 1992 Olympian, Swimmer
Stacey Nuveman, USA, 2000 Olympian, Softball
George Ogbeide, Nigeria, Track and Field
Lea Ann Parsley, USA, 2002 (Silver) Olympian, 2006 Olympic Coach, Skeleton Racer
Hayley Peirsol, USA, Swimmer
Leah Pells, Canada, 1992, 1996, 2000 Olympian, Track and Field
Whitney Ping, USA, 2004 Olympian, Table Tennis
Tina Poitras, Canada, 1992, 1996 Olympian, Race Walker
Vince Poscente, Canada, 1992 Olympian, Skier
Marina Radu, Canada, Water Polo
Jon Rankin, USA, Track and Field

Ben Remocker, Canada, Sailor
Sara Renner, Canada, 2006 (Silver) Olympian, Cross Country Skier
Lize-Mari Retief, South Africa, 2008 Olympian, Swimmer
Evan Roth, USA, Gymnast
Summer Sanders, USA, 1992 (Bronze, Silver, and Gold) Olympian, Swimmer
Stephanie Sandler, South Africa, 2004 Olympian, Gymnast
Rustam Sharipov, Ukraine, 1992 (Gold) and 1996 (Gold) Olympian, Gymnast
Michelle Sikes, USA, 2008 Olympian, Track and Field
Patrick Singleton, Bermuda, 1998, 2002, 2006 Olympian, Skeleton Racer
Sami Jo Small, Canada, 1998, 2002 (Gold), 2006 Olympian, Ice Hockey
Nikki Stone, USA, 1998 (Gold) Olympian, Skier
Julia Stowers, USA, 2000 Olympian, Swimmer
Mike Strange, Canada, 1992, 1996, 2000 Olympian, Boxer
Masahito Takemura, Philippines, Swimmer
Grace Taylor, USA, National Champion, Gymnast
Andres Ovalle Terano, Guatemala, Former Member of National Team, Volleyball
Jenny Topping, USA, Softball
Adrian Turner, UK, 2004 Olympian, Swimmer
Kelly Vanderbeek, Canada, 2006 Olympian, Skier
Richard Vaughan, UK, 2004 Olympian, Badminton
Amy Walsh, Canada, 2008 Olympian, Soccer
Josefin Wede, Sweden, Swimmer
Barry Weiner, USA, 2000 Olympian Coach, Gymnastics
Rhian Wilkinson, Canada, 2008 Olympian, Soccer
Corey Williams, New Zealand, 2008 Olympian, Water Polo
Hiroki Yokoyama, USA, Gymnast
Kendra Zanotto, USA, 2004 Olympian, Swimmer

Mahmoud A. M. Braima, Ph.D., Professor and Chair, Darfur Association in the United States of America
Suliman Giddo, Darfur Peace and Development Organization
Jimmy Mulla, president of the Southern Sudanese Voice for Freedom
Bakheit Shata, Darfur Community Organization