



State of New Mexico

Office of the Governor

Bill Richardson
Governor

News Release

For immediate release
January 8, 2007

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New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson Calls On President Omar Al-Bashir of Sudan to Support Cease-Fire and Help Restore Humanitarian Aid in Darfur Region

Richardson to visit Darfur tomorrow, will meet again with President Al-Bashir Wednesday

KHARTOUM, SUDAN- Governor Bill Richardson today met with Sudanese President Omar Al-Bashir for more than an hour to discuss the ongoing conflict in the Darfur region. The Governor urged President Al-Bashir to call for a cease-fire and to take other potential steps to reduce the violence and increase the safe delivery of humanitarian aid to the Sudanese people in Darfur.

“It was a frank, open discussion about the most urgent issues facing the Sudanese government and the people of Darfur, as well as people across Sudan,” said Governor Richardson. “It was a good meeting, and I feel we made some progress. I’m hopeful we can build on that progress when we meet again on Wednesday.”

Governor Richardson and President Al-Bashir also discussed the size and make-up of a potential United Nations Peacekeeping force, as well as ways to increase the amount of humanitarian aid delivered to Sudanese displaced by fighting in the Darfur region and the need to involve more rebel groups in the peacemaking process. Governor Richardson also pressed President Al-Bashir to work with the United Nations to jointly investigate gender-based violence and to allow women to be included as members of the United Nations forces.

Governor Richardson also met with Minni Minnawi, leader of the Sudanese Liberation Movement and Foreign Minister Lam Akol to solicit their ideas and support for finding a peaceful solution to the crises in Darfur.

Tomorrow, Governor Richardson will travel to El Fasher in the Darfur region where he will tour a camp for Sudanese displaced by the conflict and meet with the African Union Force Commander, rebel commanders, United Nations representatives and Darfur government officials. Governor Richardson will continue to push for a cease fire with all parties and encourage them to pursue a political solution to the Darfur crises. He will meet again with President Al-Bashir Wednesday morning to discuss the trip to Darfur and continue to work to create an atmosphere that will hopefully lead to a political solution that will bring peace and stability to Darfur and all Sudanese citizens.

Traveling with Governor Richardson is a delegation of representatives from Humanitarian organizations working to help solve the Darfur crisis and provide relief for the citizens of that region. They include: Kenneth Bacon, President of Refugees International; Amjad Atallah, President of Strategic Assessments Initiative and a consultant to the Save Darfur Coalition; Michael Bergman of the Center for the Middle East; Ambassador Lawrence Rossin of the Save Darfur Coalition; and Calvin Humphrey, Foreign Policy Advisor to Governor Richardson and Vice President of RJI Government Strategies.