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Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

January 31, 2007

Ms. Pat Long
135 West Philadelphia Street
York, Pennsylvania 17401

Dear Ms. Long:

Thank you for your letter. I appreciate your taking the time to make me aware of your concerns about the humanitarian situation in Sudan.

As you are aware, the government of Sudan, dominated by Muslim Arabs, has been in a conflict since 2003 with rebel groups in the country's Darfur region, an impoverished area in the western part of the country populated by non-Arab Africans. In addition to the attacks by the government, civilians in the area have come under attack by an Arab militia group called the Janjaweed. This militia group is aligned with, and supported by, the Sudanese government. Human rights groups report that members of this militia have burned villages, killed civilians, raped women, and looted food and property, sometimes while wearing government uniforms and accompanied by government troops. Humanitarian groups have been denied access to people in need. Out of a country with a pre-war population of 7 million people, up to 400,000 have been killed and over 2 million displaced.

As a member of the Congressional Human Rights Caucus, I share your serious concern for the humane treatment of the people of the Darfur region. Accordingly, in September 2004, I joined the overwhelming majority of my colleagues in voting to pass a resolution (H. Con. Res. 467) which declared that the atrocities unfolding in Darfur are genocide and reminded the international community of its legal obligations to stop genocide. Last session I cosponsored and voted in favor of the Darfur Peace and Accountability Act (H.R. 3127). This legislation, which was signed into law by President George W. Bush on October 13, 2006, strengthens sanctions on individuals and governments responsible for the atrocities in Sudan and authorizes additional funds for peacekeeping and humanitarian efforts in the region. So far, the United States government has provided over \$1 billion in such assistance. Rest assured that I will keep your thoughts very much in mind as additional legislation related to Sudan comes before the full United States House of Representatives for a vote.

Thank you once again for making me aware of your opinions. I hope that you will continue to keep me informed about issues that are of importance to you. Best wishes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Todd".

TODD RUSSELL PLATTS
Member of Congress
19th District, Pennsylvania

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