



*"and they shall beat their  
swords into ploughshares,  
and spears into pruning  
hooks; nation shall not lift  
up sword against nation;  
neither shall they learn war  
any more." (Isaiah 2:4)*

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## **Statement on Darfur adopted by the board of Project Ploughshares on April 29, 2006**

### **1. The Question of Responsibility**

The violations against the people in Darfur over the last three years have been truly extreme. Over two million people have been displaced and at least 200,000 have been killed. Countless homes and villages have been plundered and burned and thousands of women have been sexually assaulted. The government of the Sudan, like all governments, has a primary responsibility to protect its people but for Darfurians it has failed utterly. Accordingly, the international community, including Canada, must accept its responsibility to protect these people.

### **2. Canada's Responsibility to Protect the People of Darfur**

Our political leaders have clearly acknowledged the extraordinary peril of the people of Darfur and Canada's resulting responsibility. Canada has provided diplomatic support for peace talks in Abuja and logistical and other support for the African Union's military involvement. On the question of military intervention, we refer to the February 2006 statement adopted by the World Council of Churches. After insisting on the priority that should be given to preventive measures and emphasizing the importance of various pre-conditions for any intervention, the Council states, "the fellowship of churches is not prepared to say that it is never appropriate or never necessary to resort to the use of force for the protection of the vulnerable." The statement went on to say that "just as individuals and communities in stable and affluent societies are able in emergencies to call on armed police to come to their aid when they experience unusual or extraordinary threats of violence, churches recognise that people in much more perilous circumstances should have the right to call for and have access to protection."

### **3. Canadian Religious Leaders' Appeal**

On January 16, 2006 leaders from Jewish, Hindu, Sikh, and twelve Christian groups called on Canada's political leaders "to continue taking steps, unilaterally, bilaterally and multilaterally, to protect communities under threat, [and] boldly work with others to resolve the conflict, and restore peace and safety to the people of Darfur." Further, they said, "we urge the government to include Darfur at the top of its international policy agenda, and take actions that would be effective in bringing peace and security to the people there."

### **4. Being Sensitive to Local Factors**

The broader international community must be sensitive to local conditions and to the potential of regional players, lest well-intended actions become counter-productive. But caution must not lead to paralysis. On March 23, 2006 Rev. Dr. Mvume Dandala, General Secretary of the All Africa Conference of Churches, criticized the African Union for being too deferential to the government of Sudan and stated: "Sudan's deeply troubled Darfur region needs a truly international peacekeeping force soon, and cannot wait another six months."

Moira Hutchinson, Chair