

What?? There's a Genocide? Where?

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NYMC Genocide Awareness and Prevention

As you sit here reading this article I am sad to inform you that you are currently a witness to the first genocide of the 21st century. Most Americans are surprised by this statement and often ask, "Where is this genocide?" However, across the Atlantic and over 6,000 miles away lies a genocide that has been brewing in Darfur, Sudan. Since 2003, the genocide in Darfur has claimed over 400,000 lives and displaced more than 2.5 million people. Decades of neglect, poverty, and civil war led to an insurrection against the Sudanese government, and has now erupted into a full blown genocide orchestrated by the Sudanese government. What is sad about the situation in Darfur, has been the world's lack of action to find ways to encourage the international community to put Darfur first on its political agenda. However, amidst all this despair lies a glimpse of hope. This hope has come through the tireless efforts of student organizations, communities, and humanitarian organizations that have joined a nationwide movement that is devoted to learning more about the genocide and finding ways to get involved in stopping it.

Leading the way in the anti-genocide movement is the Genocide Intervention Network (GIN). The GIN works with individuals, student organizations, humanitarian organizations, and the United Nations to help the international community find political and practical solutions in Darfur and other countries at risk of genocide. One of the most notable humanitarian organizations in Darfur is the International Medical Corps. The IMC is a global, humanitarian, nonprofit organization that is committed to saving lives and relieving suffering through health care training, relief efforts, and development programs. The IMC has been providing critical emergency medical services for conflict-affected residents of South and West Darfur since July 2004. IMC is currently present in South America, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. The IMC was created in 1984 by a group of volunteer doctors and nurses who recognized a need for healthcare professionals in conflict-ridden countries. The mission of the IMC is to "improve the quality of life through health interventions and related activities that build local capacity in areas worldwide" (IMC, 2008). The IMC sends volunteer doctors and nurses to places like Darfur to provide training to native healthcare professionals and health care to local populations.

Darfur is currently in dire need for organizations like the IMC because the genocide situation has put this country in a public health nightmare. Thousands in refugee camps are at risk of disease due to poor sanitation and unclean water, which are breeding grounds for pests that spread disease. Children are also unable to get important immunizations because of the poor healthcare infrastructure in these camps. Malnutrition threatens the lives of thousands of displaced persons daily. While refugees may have escaped the genocide for a while, they still have to suffer through the public health atrocity that the genocide has created. Organizations such as the IMC are looking for healthcare professionals and practitioners to lend a hand in these conflict torn countries. There exists a need for compassionate healthcare professionals to help meet the medical needs of the people in these countries. If you are a rising healthcare professional, the Genocide Awareness And Prevention (GAAP) club encourages you to get involved in stopping the genocide and finding ways to use your clinical training to benefit those who otherwise would be without.