Mr. Speaker, I rise today in

strong support of the Darfur Peace and Accountability

Act, H.R. 3127.

This important bill would block the assets

and deny visas and entry to any individual

(and family member) responsible for acts of

genocide, war crimes, or crimes against humanity

in Sudan. H.R. 3127 authorizes support

for the African Union peacekeeping mission

in Darfur. It prohibits U.S. assistance to a

country in violation of U.N. Security Council

embargo on military assistance to Sudan. It

also urges a Security Council resolution supporting

expanding the African Union peacekeeping

mission.

For too long the world community turned its

back to the ongoing genocide in the Sudan.

But the actions of students, religious leaders,

and concerned citizens in the United States

and around the globe raised awareness about

the horrors occurring in Darfur. I want to thank

all who shared with me their concern about

Darfur in town hall meetings, letters, phone

calls, and e-mails over the last three years.

Today the Congress is answering their calls

for action. Passing this bill is an all important

step to ending the genocide and beginning to

hold those who are guilty accountable.

Yet, today there is great suffering in Darfur.

The murders continue. The brutal violence still

occurs. The rapes persist. People still live in

fear. Since 2003, over 200,000 innocent civilians

have been slaughtered. More than two

million Sudanese civilians are displaced and

many live in temporary refugee camps. More

disturbing, over three million Sudanese are in

need of humanitarian assistance.

The images are stark. The stories are horrifying

and sickening. But each one is the picture

or story of a single person: a fellow

human. We need to remember that we are all

bound together in a common existence and a

member of the global community. Those who

have been slaughtered and those who are suffering

in Darfur are family. They are our brothers,

they are our sisters. They share the same

earth we do and we share a commitment to

their safety and wellbeing. My faith, and the

faith of many others, says that it is immoral to

sit idly by.

Our commitment to end this conflict and to

the people of the region must not begin and

end today. We must remain focused and dedicated

to ending the genocide and healing the

wounds of a prolonged civil war. Justice must

be served on those who perpetrated these

heinous immoral crimes and we must help rebuild

and restore the lives of the people who,

through the grace of God, survive this hellish

civil war.

We, here in Congress, have worked to end

this civil war before. We went on record in

September of 2004, declaring Darfur a genocide.

Just recently, the House approved over

$550 million to pay for additional peacekeepers,

increased humanitarian assistance

and resettlement of refugees. This money is

essential to maintaining the current peacekeeping

mission and ease the suffering of

those who are displaced.

It is long past time for the United Nations to

become involved in Sudan. The UN needs to

deploy a robust and sizable international mission

to end the genocide and then work to

bring peace to the Sudan.

After the systematic genocide of the Holocaust,

we said never again. After the horrors

of Rwanda and the Kosovo we committed ourselves

to preventing genocide before it surfaced

elsewhere. Sadly, we are close to adding

Darfur to this list.

I call on the President to continue to push

this issue with world leaders and push in the

United Nations to end the genocide in Darfur

and to internationalize the response. I pray

that the suffering will soon end, but that we

will not soon forget our brothers and sisters in

Africa.