

**OFFICIAL REPORT (HANSARD)**

*Monday, May 1, 2006*

**Darfur**

**Ms. Ruby Dhalla (Brampton—Springdale, Lib.):**

Mr. Chair, I begin by commending and thanking the thousands of volunteers, organizations and individuals, in particular Students Taking Action Now: Darfur, or STAND, and the Save Darfur Parliamentary Coalition for the role they have played in ensuring that the voices of the children and the plight of women in Darfur is not forgotten.

As a nation, we cannot afford to forget that in another place in the world atrocities are occurring, which are truly unimaginable and for which there really are no words. Minute by minute children are dying of malnutrition, women are being raped, beaten and abused and young men are being lured into the culture of gangs, violence and the militia.

The United Nations has referred to the situation in Darfur as the world's worst humanitarian crisis. With almost two million deaths and four million people being displaced in Sudan, we have a responsibility to stop the genocide, to stop the atrocities and to stop this humanitarian crisis, which is occurring before our very eyes. We must take action now.

Canada has an international reputation of being a world leader for the promotion of peace, for humanitarian relief efforts and as a champion of human rights. The previous Liberal government had a commitment to put an end to the violence in Darfur. Canada was one of the top three donors upon the founding of Africa's made in Africa solution, committing over \$170 million. We subsequently made the largest single contribution upon the expansion of the African mission in Sudan, committing 7,700 personnel and 80 Canadian military and police personnel to help in the process of peace building, stability and poverty reduction. Despite all of this aid, World Vision Canada has reported that approximately 10,000 more people are dying per month. The world cannot afford to watch these human beings die.

Under our previous prime minister, the member for LaSalle--Émard, we championed the doctrine of responsibility to protect. We championed this cause in the global arena. It is incomprehensible that Canada would watch an entire generation being cleansed and wiped away.

We must protect the women and children in Darfur. We must protect the thousands of people who are dying, not with talk but with concrete action. We must be the champions of a United Nations peacekeeping mission that focuses on Darfur just like we were for the comprehensive peace agreement which was reached in 2005. Even if other countries on the UN Security Council are hesitant to move forward with a UN mission focused on Darfur and focused on achieving positive results for the people of Darfur, we must convince the countries on the Security Council that this is simply the right thing to do.

We must send in our peacekeeping troops, if necessary, to protect civilians, to provide stability and to promote peace and order.

I call on our government to implement the 10-point agenda for action in Darfur, as proposed by the Save the Darfur Parliamentary Coalition. I call on the government to implement strict policy that will ensure and support the rapid transition from the current African Union force to a robust chapter 7-mandated UN protection force.

We call on the government to enhance troop support to allow for the civilian protection mandate to be achieved. We call on the government to enforce the United Nations Security Council ban on military flights over Darfur, to support the UN Security Council to disarm militia groups, to enable internally displaced people to return to their homes.

We call on the government to implement the 10-point agenda for action because it is the right thing to do. The people of Darfur need us. This is not the time for us to play politics. We cannot stand by for the sake of diplomatic relations or even financial burden. We have a moral responsibility to save the lives of thousands of innocent people who are perishing.

As the Sudanese government and the rebel groups work with the African Union and burn the midnight oil to reach an agreement, we must ensure that all stakeholders hold the Sudanese government to account, that a peace agreement finalized will be honoured and will be the start of a process to provide the people of Darfur with hope for their families will be reunited, that women will be respected and that children can learn and become productive citizens and contribute to their communities so the people of Darfur have the peace and stability that they need.

(2200)

**Mr. Jason Kenney (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, CPC):**

Mr. Chair, we do want to focus on the future obviously, but my colleague opposite mentioned the previous government's approach to this issue. Could she tell us whether her colleague, the member for LaSalle--Émard, when he was prime minister, raised in either of his official visits to China or in the visit of President Hu Jintao to Canada the fact that the People's Republic of China was the largest supplier of armaments to the Sudanese regime, that it was the largest trade partner of the Sudanese regime and supplier of revenues through its energy activities in Sudan?

Did the former prime minister raise with his Chinese interlocutors the repeated Security Council vetoes and opposition from the PRC to any form of constructive resolutions to the Sudanese matter?

**Ms. Ruby Dhalla:**

Mr. Chair, I know we must ensure that we, as parliamentarians, move forward and help the people of Darfur. What I can say is that during a previous Liberal government regime, the prime minister was committed, along with other parliamentarians in the House, to ensure that the people of Darfur had positive results, that we had a process for peace, that we achieved stability and that we provided an environment for children of Darfur to succeed.

We were one of the first countries at the table when the made in Africa solution of an African mission in Sudan was inaugurated in 2004, committing over \$170 million. Subsequently, when it came time for the expansion of this mission, we were one of the largest contributors of any other country. In addition, when the United Nations peacekeeping mission took place in Sudan, we provided personnel and assistance. We also had observer status at the sixth round of negotiations.

There has been an ongoing effort, in addition to the other moneys that were given for food and humanitarian aid. However, despite all this investment, there is still a substantial amount of atrocities occurring in Sudan and we must do more as a country and as a global society.

**Mr. Laurie Hawn (Edmonton Centre, CPC):**

Mr. Chair, we will take that as a no.

The hon. member mentioned, quite rightly, the responsibility to protect, and that is something we hear about often. Along with the responsibility to protect, we need to have something with which to protect.

I ask my hon. colleague whether the responsibility to protect should also include the responsibility to arm oneself, to be prepared and capable of protecting if it comes down to that. I am guessing she will say yes to that. Then I will ask her whether her party is prepared to support us when we expand the Canadian Forces and give it the capability to protect, which we have been lacking for the last many years.

(2205)

**Ms. Ruby Dhalla:**

Mr. Chair, I mentioned in my notes the 10-point action plan, which has been referred to and I think is being supported by all parliamentarians on this side of the House.

One of the first points was in regard to ensuring a robust chapter 7, which is mandated by the United Nations Protection Force. We will have to wait and see over the next 48 hours what the result of the negotiations are.

As I said in my speech, and I think I can speak on behalf of other colleagues on this side, we would be very strongly in favour, if required, of the deployment of troops to ensure the process of peace building, to ensure that we provide an environment for children to get educated and to succeed and to ensure that we protect women.

As a country, we have a tremendous reputation throughout the international arena for being peacekeepers and ensuring that we provide humanitarian relief and build nations. If it does come down to it, we will support troops in Darfur.