

12-HOUR LETTER WRITING MARATHON CALLS FOR ACTION TO PREVENT GENOCIDE IN SUDAN

Oxford restaurant staff and students write letters to MPs and journalists for 12 hours to raise awareness about the situation in the Nuba Mountains of Sudan.

Turl Street Kitchen, Oxford host marathon to get citizens hand writing letters to MPs to pressure government.

UK based Nuba diaspora come to Oxford to show their support for the day of action

On Saturday 9 June, the Turl Street Kitchen, Oxford, is hosting a 12-hour letter writing marathon to highlight the deteriorating situation in the Nuba Mountains of Sudan. Staff from the Turl Street Kitchen and Oxford students will spend 12 hours getting people off the street to learn about the issue and write a letter to local MPs and journalists to promote further action. One volunteer, Ruth Whateley will be writing letters for 12 hours straight.

Since last June the government of Sudan has carried out daily aerial attacks in the Nuba Mountains terrorising civilians. Over 1000 bombs targeting civilian areas have been recorded, over 300,000 people have been internally displaced, and at least 23,000 have fled across the border into Unity state, South Sudan.

Baroness Cox praised the events aims: “The past year has seen atrocities perpetrated by the Government of Sudan in the Nuba Mountains: aerial bombardment by Antonovs and helicopter gunships, denial of access for humanitarian aid, extrajudicial killings, detentions and torture of civilians and looting of civilian properties. After Rwanda, world leaders said ‘Never Again’. But ‘Again’ is happening today. We cannot use the excuse that we do not know. We need to see many more events like this, raising the issue with MPs, journalists and the wider public so that more decisive action can be taken”.

Dr Mukesh Kapila, former Head of the UN in Sudan, visited the Nuba Mountains with the Aegis Trust in March. “I have seen clear evidence of crimes against humanity in the Nuba Mountains with my own eyes, as you can see for yourself in the film released online by the Aegis Trust this week,” says Dr Kapila (see <https://vimeo.com/43381822>). “I also witnessed evidence that the Sudanese Government is using illegal weapons – including anti-personnel landmines and cluster bombs – both of which constitute a war crime under international law.

“In the ongoing absence of cooperation from Khartoum, and with the rainy season now making transport increasingly difficult on the ground, it’s time for the British Government and wider international community to help local community groups facilitate assistance,” says Dr Kapila. “This is not without risks, but bold measures are justified. Time is at a premium and tens of thousands of lives are now under threat.”

James Smith, Chief Executive of the Aegis Trust, accompanied Kapila to the Nuba Mountains in March. He says, “Sudan is the only nation in the World led by a man wanted for genocide at the International Criminal Court. Especially in light of clear evidence that he is presiding over ongoing systematic and widespread atrocities against civilians, it’s time for Britain to set an example by downgrading diplomatic relations with his regime.”

Turl Street Kitchen Staff member Ruth Whateley remarked: “Having recently learnt about the critical situation in the Nuba Mountains I was determined to do something to raise the profile of this issue. I’m going to be sitting on Turl Street for the whole 12 hours to encourage others to give just ten minutes of their time to write a letter to their local MPs and journalists”.

This week is the one year anniversary since the government of Sudan in Khartoum started carrying out almost daily aerial attacks on this civilian area the size of Scotland.

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Notes to Editors

- The Aegis Trust is a genocide prevention charity registered in England and Wales number 1082856 (www.aegistrust.org).
- Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART), was established by Baroness Cox in 2003 and is a registered charity in England and Wales number 1107341 (www.hart-uk.org).
- Aegis Trust and HART are officially supporting the letter writing marathon.
- Turl Street Kitchen is open daily from 8am – midnight for coffee, meals and drinks (www.turlstreetkitchen.co.uk).
- Turl Street Kitchen is based at 16-17 Turl Street, Oxford.