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“The divestment movement [helps] draw international attention to the appalling situation in Darfur while pressuring the foreign companies working with the murderous Sudanese government to pull out. That could be a catalyst for change in Africa's worst killing zone.”

- The Los Angeles Times Editorial Board



Actor Don Cheadle joined hundreds of students at the University of California. In March, 2006 the University divested holdings from nine companies operating in Sudan.

Los Angeles and Targeted Divestment from Sudan

The new millennium's first genocide rages unabated into its third year in the Darfur region of Sudan. For the first time in history, the U.S. government, along with numerous other political and non-profit entities, has declared that an *ongoing* massacre amounts to genocide. While humanitarian groups have courageously assisted the millions of displaced in Darfur, international action has been shamefully underwhelming. The magnitude of the crimes in Darfur combined with the failure of the international community to stem these horrors has given states, cities, and institutions across the U.S. impetus to act. Divestment is one of the sharpest tools of influence US institutions have for influencing Sudan's behavior.

The Sudan Divestment Task Force has developed a uniquely targeted approach to divestment, focusing on the most egregiously offending companies in Sudan. Since the ultimate intent of Sudanese divestment is to protect the victims of genocide, it is important to tailor divestment to have maximal impact on the government of Sudan's behavior and minimal harm to innocent Sudanese. Divestment should therefore be targeted to those companies that provide revenue (or arms) to the government, impart minimal benefit to the country's underprivileged, and have expressed no significant policy regarding the Darfur situation (so-called targeted divestment). Such targeted divestment implicitly excludes companies engaged solely in the provision of goods and services intended to relieve human suffering or to promote welfare, health, religious and spiritual activities, and education. Recently, the Task Force joined forces with Jewish World Watch, a coalition of synagogues in Southern California working together to mobilize synagogues, their schools, their members and the community to combat genocide and other egregious violations of human rights around the world, in advocating for the city of Los Angeles and its pension systems to adopt a targeted divestment policy.

Jewish World Watch and the Sudan Divestment Task Force have recently met with both the Board of Administration and the investment staff of the Los Angeles City Employee Retirement System (LACERS) and worked with City Council President Eric Garcetti to introduce a city resolution in support of targeted divestment.

A growing nationwide movement

The states of New Jersey, Illinois, Oregon, and Maine have all approved divestment plans. There is pending divestment legislation in over twenty other states with five states utilizing the Task Force model of targeted divestment. Cities have begun consideration of divestment as well: Providence and New Haven have divested while numerous other cities, including San Francisco and Los Angeles, are engaged with Task Force members. At the university level, Harvard, Stanford, Yale, Brown, Amherst, Dartmouth, Brandeis, Samford, Simmons, University of Southern California, Columbia, University of Vermont and the University of California system have all enacted restrictions on Sudan investments. Additionally, there are emerging or active Sudan divestment campaigns at dozens of other institutions. At the private pension plan level, there is an active divestment campaign for TIAA-CREF, the nation's largest private pension fund. Finally, ex-Sudan investment tools have been developed or are being developed by asset managers such as Northern Trust, Barclays Global International, and State Street Global Advisors. Several Sudan-free mutual funds have also been recently introduced.

The media has also rapidly began to cover divestment, both on a national and local level. Featured stories, editorials, and op/eds have been placed in major newspapers across the country, including the *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *San Francisco Chronicle*. Sudan divestment has also been covered in other major media outlets including *Forbes Magazine*, *CNN International*, *MTV*, *Reuters*, the *Associated Press* and *National Public Radio*.

For more information visit SudanDivestment.org or JewishWorldWatch.org

SUDAN DIVESTMENT TASK FORCE

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