

HUMAN
RIGHTS
WATCH

International
Film Festival

www.hrw.org/iff

DARFUR NOW

Ted Braun -US/Sudan - 2007 - 97m - In English

Free Screening – HRWIFF Education Programme 2008

Greenwich Picturehouse, Friday 14 March, 10.15am

For students of Citizenship, Politics, Geography, Film & Media (KS4+)

Why see this film?

- Passionate and determined individuals from all over the world show how personal action can make significant differences to international challenges.
- See how life for the people of Darfur has been affected by the political unrest and conflict that dominates their country
- A film about an ongoing, very real and very dangerous situation made by an accomplished and critically acclaimed documentary filmmaker
- Witness footage shot inside Sudan where permission for filming has not been granted previously.

A real story happening right now

“There comes a point when we need to ask ourselves what is the threshold, how much will we tolerate” says 24 year old Adam Sterling, a UCLA graduate who is taking a stand about the crisis in Darfur. He explains that this is the first time in history that the US government has ever declared a state of genocide while it is still taking place. For Adam the time for action is now.



Sudan, Africa's largest country, has been in a state of almost constant conflict since it gained political independence in 1956. Darfur, a region roughly the size of France, has become home to the country's latest chapter of atrocities. In 2003 rebels from the Sudan Liberation army movement took arms against the government after years of political, social and economic marginalisation. The Sudanese government responded by deploying Janjaweed militia to clear civilian settlements suspected of supporting rebel armies. Government forces and the Janjaweed, meaning "devils on horseback," are thought to be responsible for untold numbers of civilian deaths and the displacement of a further 2.5 million.

DARFUR NOW follows the ups and downs of six individuals from across the globe who have been moved by the tragedies in Darfur and mobilised into taking action that they hope will put the world on the path to ending these atrocities. These subjects include the aforementioned UCLA student who, with no political experience whatsoever, passes a state bill to stop any money from going to Sudan; the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court; Pablo Recalde, a central figure in the World Food Program; and actor



Don Cheadle, star of the movie Hotel Rwanda. The film documents the actions of these subjects, traveling from the refugee camps and rebel army bases of Darfur to the Californian State Government and the International Criminal Court at The Hague.

Despite the continuing overwhelming atrocities suffered by the people of Darfur Ted Braun paints a cautiously optimistic portrait of hope in DARFUR NOW. The passion and determination

of just a handful of individuals has already gone some way towards restoring peace in Darfur, and whilst the changes have limited significance we are reminded that atrocities of this kind have been turned around in the past. The international community certainly has the resources to make a difference and with the growing determination of united individuals it may muster the necessary will. For now though, the struggle goes on for the people of Darfur; for the latest news visit the film's website at <http://takepart.com/darfurnow>

Who made this film and why?

DARFUR NOW was produced and directed by award winning filmmaker Ted Braun. He studied English at Amherst College and film production at the University of Southern California's School of Cinematic Arts and later taught screenwriting at both institutions; he's currently an Assistant Professor in screenwriting at USC. He has written and directed several award-winning documentaries and fictional films, on topics ranging from test pilots of aviation's golden age, to the historical Jesus, to the struggle for the civil rights of developmentally disabled citizens. He spent the first four months of 2007 in Sudan filming Darfur Now with unprecedented access to the internally displaced people of Darfur, international aid workers, the government and the rebels. Darfur Now is his first theatrical documentary.

Questions to consider before the screening

- The current conflict in Darfur began in 2003, shortly before this the country was involved in a 20 year civil war between the Sudanese government and southern-based rebels. Find out more about the country's recent political history including religious and ethnic divides, political leaders and intervention from the UN and the African Union.
- Activist Adam Sterling, at age 24, was moved into taking action which had significant results with no prior experience or knowledge of politics. Do you think young people in the US are typically more or less engaged in politics than those in the UK? What role do you feel young people have to play in international politics? How engaged in political issues are you, what activity are you aware of and what issues does this cover?
- This film was made with the agreement of its main subjects and of the state but at times at great personal risk to the filmmakers. If you were making this film what lengths would you be prepared to go to? Is it ever acceptable to risk the life or safety of yourself or others? Is undercover filming or breaching the law sometimes legitimate?
- Don Cheadle and George Clooney have used their celebrity status to shed light on the events in Darfur and persuade US government officials to take action. Film Director Steven Spielberg recently withdrew his support for the Beijing Olympics over China's policy on Darfur, what can you find out about this? How important a role do you think celebrities have to play in international future politics? What are the pros and cons of celebrities becoming politically active?

Further Research and Reading:

Further information on DAFUR NOW the film

<http://takepart.com/darfurnow>

<http://www.myspace.com/darfurnow>

Interview with filmmaker Ted Braun and actor/activist Don Cheadle:

http://www.indiewire.com/people/2007/10/indiewire_inter_120.html

On Sudan

BBC Country Profile Sudan:

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/country_profiles/820864.stm

Human Rights Watch work in Darfur:

<http://www.hrw.org/doc?t=africa&c=darfur>

Legislation on Darfur – Genocide Intervention Network

<http://www.genocideintervention.net/advocate/action/legislation>