

Thursday, July 3, 2008
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Save Darfur Canada
A national advocacy coalition
www.SDCanada.org

Ottawa woman cycling to Toronto to raise awareness about crisis in Darfur, Sudan

On Friday, July 4th, Lee Carty is setting off for an 8-day and 500km bicycle trip, to raise awareness about the crisis in Darfur, Sudan. She calls her initiative 'Cycling for Life and Hope.'

Armed with postcards from Save Darfur Canada's national postcard campaign and a lot of enthusiasm, she hopes her efforts will motivate others to take action to help save lives a world away. She will blog about her experiences throughout her trip on her website at: <http://www.freewebs.com/keep-the-flame-burning-for-darfur/bloggingmyride.htm>.

Lee Carty's ride schedule:

Friday, July 4: Ottawa Parliament Buildings to Merrickville - *day 1: 79km*

Saturday, July 5: Merrickville to Athens - *day 2: 44km*

Sunday, July 6: Athens to Kingston - *day 3: 81km*

Monday, July 7: Kingston to Picton - *day 4: 65km*

Tuesday, July 8: Picton to Brighton (Presqu'ile Provincial Park) - *day 5: 58km*

Wednesday, July 9: Brighton to Port Hope (Presqu'ile Provincial Park) - *day 6: 53km*

Thursday, July 10: Port Hope to Oshawa - *day 7: 58km*

Friday, July 11: Oshawa to Toronto (ending at the Harbourfront) - *day 8: 71km*

Lee first heard about the situation in Darfur 2 years ago, and was shocked to discover the scale and magnitude of the region's conflict and humanitarian crisis. A photo of a Darfuri woman with tears running down her cheek haunted her – thoughts of the terrifying realities of people on the ground motivated her to do more.

"I'm pretty shy," she explains, "so taking this kind of public action is really daunting for me. But when I thought of people suffering in Darfur, I felt this was something I had to do."

We should all be doing more. People are dying and living in terrible circumstances, and I believe that every Canadian can make a difference.”

Lee is an artist, and has in the past auctioned her work to benefit the activities of Doctors Without Borders and World Vision, who work with Darfuri populations on the ground. The Save Darfur Canada postcards she gets signed throughout her trip will be sent to the Prime Minister, asking for more Canadian engagements to help bring peace to Darfur. She will also ask people to make donations to support Save Darfur Canada, a national advocacy coalition.

“Canadians can make a difference for people in Darfur – and Lee’s efforts prove it true,” explains Save Darfur Canada’s executive director, Tara Tavender. “More people will know about the Darfur crisis because of her, and more people will take action by participating in advocacy efforts to influence decision-makers. Canada should and could be doing more to bring peace to Darfur, but our leaders will only take action if we tell them to.”

The United Nations calls the humanitarian crisis in Darfur “the worst in the world today,” and estimates that up to 400,000 people have died during 5 years of conflict. 3.5 million have been displaced, and 500,000 people have been cut off from access to essential relief due to insecurity.

Canada has provided considerable support to humanitarian relief in the region, but could be doing more to accelerate the full deployment of UN peacekeepers to Darfur, and to advance the fragile peace process.

Save Darfur Canada is a national advocacy coalition based in Montreal, Quebec. Its members include Amnesty International Canada, the Darfur Association of Canada, the Canadian Jewish Congress, Kairos Ecumenical Justice initiatives, the Muslim Canadian Congress and STAND Canada. For more information, please visit: www.SDCanada.org.

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