

THE PIPA/KNOWLEDGE NETWORKS POLL

THE AMERICAN PUBLIC ON INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

--Media Release--

7 in 10 Americans Say Genocide Must Be Prevented in Sudan

Majority Says Genocide is Occurring There

Favors US Contributing Troops to UN Force

Awareness of Issue Low

For immediate release

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Washington DC: In a new PIPA-Knowledge Networks poll 69% said "If the UN were to determine that genocide is occurring" in the Darfur region of Sudan, then the UN, including the US, should "act to stop the genocide even if it requires military force."

Only 19% were opposed and 12% did not give an answer.

Americans are also inclined to believe that genocide is already occurring there. Presented two positions, only 24% endorsed the view that what is occurring in Darfur "is just a civil war between the government and people in a resistant region that happen to be of a different ethnic group." Instead, 56% took the position that what is occurring in Darfur, where "a million black African Darfuris have been driven into the desert by Arab militias who have destroyed their farms and prevented them from receiving relief," is genocide. Twenty percent did not answer.

These are some of the key findings of a PIPA-Knowledge Networks poll conducted July 9-14 with a nationwide sample of 892 American adults (margin of error plus or minus 3.3%).

Over two thirds (68%) favored the UN putting "pressure on the Sudanese government to stop the militias, by deciding that all UN members should freeze the assets of Sudanese officials and ban them from traveling to other countries." Only 18% were opposed.

Support was equally strong (65%) for a UN military force to enforce the recent ceasefire agreement that is also supposed to allow relief organizations full access to the people who have been driven from their homes.

A majority would also be willing to contribute US troops to such an operation, provided that other countries contribute the lion's share. Asked, "If other countries--African, European and others--were willing to contribute three quarters of the troops for a UN military force to enforce the ceasefire agreement in Darfur, do you think the United States should be willing to contribute one quarter?" 57% said that the US should be willing, while just under one third (32%) said the US should not be willing.

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Steven Kull, director of PIPA comments, “It appears that the regrets about failing to act in response to the Rwanda genocide may be influencing Americans. Even with the US stretched in Iraq, a majority of Americans say they are willing to contribute a share of the troops to try to stabilize the situation in Darfur—a number that would likely grow if the UN declared what is occurring there to be genocide.”

Steven Kull continues, “It is quite striking that Americans are as ready as they are to make such commitments when they have so little information about the situation there.” A mere 14% said they have heard “a lot” or “some” about the situation in Darfur. Just over half said they had heard nothing at all.

Those with greater awareness of the situation were much more likely to believe that genocide is occurring in Darfur and to support taking action. This suggests that, should the issue gain greater prominence in the news, support for action may grow.

Partisan differences were modest. Republicans were a bit more likely to say that if the UN determines that genocide is occurring then the UN, including the US, must take action (74% vs. 69%) and to say that the UN should send in a military force to enforce a ceasefire agreement (75% vs. 65%). Democrats, however, were slightly more prone to say that the US should be willing to contribute troops (64% vs. 54%).

The poll was fielded by Knowledge Networks using its nationwide panel, which is randomly selected from the entire adult population and subsequently provided internet access. For more information about this methodology, go to www.knowledgenetworks.com/ganp.

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