

WHEREAS, last month marked the twentieth anniversary of the Rwandan genocide and the tenth anniversary of the occurrence of genocide in Darfur in Western Sudan; and,

WHEREAS, since the onset of genocide in Darfur, Pittsburgh City Council has supported the work of grassroots, diaspora, and student organizations in advocating for civilian protection and peace with justice in that part of the world; and,

WHEREAS, in March 2007, Pittsburgh became the sixth city in the country to divest its municipal employees' pension plans from companies doing business with the Sudanese government and military, and the State of Pennsylvania later followed suit; and,

WHEREAS, on May 25, 2011, six City Council members signed a letter, circulated by then Councilman and current mayor Bill Peduto, calling for the release of Hawa Abdalla Salih, a courageous advocate for women's rights and the rights of the displaced in Darfur; and,

WHEREAS, Ms. Salih was soon after released from torture and detention in Sudan and is now a political asylee in the U.S., and herself came to thank City Council for their support; and,

WHEREAS, unfortunately, both South Sudan and Sudan have been unable to settle important outstanding differences; and,

WHEREAS, The Sudan government has continued its bombardments and sponsorship of militia groups and its blockades of humanitarian assistance in Darfur and other areas of Sudan; and,

WHEREAS, South Sudan, afflicted by bad leadership and corruption, is witnessing fighting between its two largest tribes, Dinka and Nuer, in which both sides have been accused of war crimes and atrocities; and,

WHEREAS, On April 18-19 in Bentiu, South Sudan, Nuer soldiers slaughtered more than 200 men, women, and children who had taken refuge in a mosque in that city; and,

WHEREAS, reminiscent of Rwanda in 1994, this violence was accompanied—if not directly caused—by incitements to ethnic murder and rape, broadcast over the radio in Bentiu.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of the City of Pittsburgh urges President Obama and the U.S. State Department, especially the Office of the U.S. Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan, whose envoys and representatives have visited Pittsburgh over the past five years on four separate occasions, as well as the members of Congress from this and other states, to exert all possible diplomatic leverage to bring about peace with justice in both Sudan and South Sudan and to facilitate humanitarian assistance where this is currently being impeded. City Council acknowledges and deplores the massacre in Bentiu in an environment where additional such violations, and a possible full-scale civil war, may ensue.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Will of Council shall be circulated to Senators Casey and Toomey, Congressman Doyle, and President Obama.

Sponsored by Councilman Dan Gilman

Co-sponsored by Council President Bruce Kraus, Councilmembers Deb Gross, Theresa Kail-Smith, Darlene M. Harris, Natalia Rudiak, Corey O'Connor, R. Daniel Lavelle, and Rev. Ricky V. Burgess

Bruce Kraus
President of Council

Attest: Mary Beth Doheny
Clerk of Council

In Council, May 13, 2014