

# Media Kit



## Darfur United

[DARFURUNITED.COM](http://DARFURUNITED.COM)



For Interviews, Images and B-Roll  
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## A MOVEMENT FOR HOPE

Darfur United is an all-refugee men's football team made up of Darfuri refugees living in camps in eastern Chad. Not only is Darfur United an opportunity for the refugees to represent their people and play, it is also a movement to bring hope, inspiration, and joy to the displaced people of Darfur. The team serves as a vehicle for awareness and support for a refugee community that has lived through unspeakable horrors and that has been forced to live a less-than-complete life in remote camps.



The refugee response has been incredible. Upon hearing news of the formation of Darfur United, refugee representatives in Camp Kounoungo, Chad, said, "Now we are a part of the world." Refugees now feel they have something to call their own, despite being homeless and waiting for peace for more than 10 years. The younger generation now feels motivated to play, train, and hope for something beyond the confinement of their camp.

## OBJECTIVES:

1. Raise global awareness and educate people about the situation in Darfur and about the refugee experience.
2. Facilitate ongoing support for education, sports, nutrition, and other services in the camps, through relationships between refugees and the global community.



## 2012 PEACE AND SPORT AWARD

For the creation of Darfur United, i-ACT was the recipient of the 2012 Peace and Sport NGO of the Year Award for having outstandingly contributed to peace and social stability in the world. Peace and Sport brings together more than 700 influential decision-makers and leaders from world sport governance, politics, International Organizations, and the private sector.





## WHAT'S NEXT

### DARFUR UNITED SOCCER ACADEMY

Building on the success of Darfur United, i-ACT is working with the refugee community to develop and implement the Darfur United Soccer Academy (DUSA) for children and youth. In October 2013, Darfur United launched its first Soccer Academy in refugee camp Djabal, and has plans to open three more in 2014. The Academy is led and managed by four trained refugee coaches – two men and two women. Experienced soccer coaches from the U.S visit the camps to recruit and train the coaches. The Academy serves as a source of awareness and health promotion for the children and youth. It partners with the primary schools in each camp in order to support school attendance, and it challenges gender norms by providing the equal inclusion and participation of women and girls. The Academy also serves as a way to connect the refugee participants with children and youth soccer players and clubs across the U.S. and globally. This is a vital connection for a group of people who feels isolated and forgotten.



### WOMEN'S TEAM

“When will we get to play?” was what one young refugee woman asked i-ACT while a group of women were on the sidelines watching the men play a game in refugee camp Djabal. The Darfur United Soccer Academy offers an opportunity for a few refugee women to be coaches, leaders, and role models empowered through sport. Building the first Darfur women’s soccer team will capitalize on this and create a ripple of hope beyond the confines of their camps. It will create a generation of female leaders who are united across tribes and equipped with tools for peace. In 2015, the first Darfur United women’s team will step onto a pitch and compete for the first time.

# 2014 DARFUR UNITED TEAM



**YOUSSEUF MAHAMAT ABDALLAH**



**ABDELRAZIK HAROUN IBRAHIM**



**MAHAMAT ADAM ABDALLAH**



**MOUBARAK KHAMIS AHMAT**



**ISMAIL GAMARADIN ABAKAR**



**ABDELHAMID MAHAMAT DJOUMA**



**BICHARA KHALIL ABDERAMAN**



**MAHAMAT OUMAR IGNEGUI**



**MOUBARAK ABDALLAH AHMAT**



**MAHAMAT MAHAMOUD ANNOUR**



**SADDAM HISSEIN DINE**



**ISMAIL ABDRAMAN IBRAHIM**



**YAYA RAMADANE ADAM**



**ABDELBASSID OUMAR SOULEYMAN**



**SALEH ABAKAR YAYA**



## CULTURAL AMBASSADORS

Alfateh Younous Haroun

### MEET MAHAMAT OUMAR IGNEGUI:

On the Field: Iggy can play anywhere across the midfield. He is hard-working and comfortable in possession of the ball. He has the ability to slow the game down at the most frantic of times! It's probably because of his cool and sleek personality.



Iggy, as he is fondly referred to by his teammates, is from refugee camp Oure Cassoni, the northernmost camp in eastern Chad, where the Sahara desert constantly sweeps away homes and alters the terrain. At the age of fourteen, Iggy was forced to seek refuge in camp Oure Cassoni where he has spent the last eleven years. There, he lives with his older brother. Iggy has been playing soccer since he was four years old. He is a well-spoken, hard-working, and passionate man. He has learned English and is currently taking courses in nursing. Darfur United teammates look to Iggy as a spokesperson for the team and also for words of encouragement.

### MEET ISMAIL GAMARADIN ABAKAR:

On the Field: Brave, bold, and always with a smile on his face, Ismail will once again provide Darfur United with tremendous cover in goal and will not disappoint when called upon. He is very popular member of the squad and a great team player.



Ismail is the oldest of seven and lives in refugee camp Farchana with his family. He is the Darfur United Goalkeeper, a veteran from the 2012 team who competed in the Viva World Cup. Many years ago, his mother Fatna was walking in the market when their village was attacked. Her husband was shot and told her to find all their children and escape. Fatna and her children walked 20 days across the desert, with no food or water, stopping only to make a small fire to warm up from the harsh chill. They hid from the militias during the day, and walked under the protection of the darkness at night until they reached Chad. Fatna, Ismail, and his six siblings have lived in a refugee camp for more than a decade. To Ismail, Darfur United is a way forward.



## DARFUR UNITED AT CONIFA WORLD FOOTBALL CUP

**Game 1: vs. Padania:** Sunday, June 1 @10am

**Game 2: vs South Ossetia:** Monday, June 2 @1pm

**Game 3 / Game 4:** TBD



## COACHES

### **Mark Hodson, Darfur United Head Coach**

Mark Hodson is returning as the Head Coach of the 2014 Darfur United team, a position he held in 2012 when the team originally formed and appeared at the Viva World Cup, an experience he describes as the “greatest sporting moment of his life.” Mark holds the USSF A License in soccer and has been involved in coaching the game at all levels from youth upwards. Mark is the president of Evolution Soccer Programs, holding responsibility for the long-term development and daily oversight of the program, including maintaining its emphasis on emotion, environment, and experience. Since 2004, Mark has been an integral part of the Sand & Surf Soccer Club, managing all 45 teams as Director of Coaching, and developing the club’s style on the field and its presence in the community. Mark also held several positions with Major League Soccer including District Leader, with which he was responsible for managing the West Coast Sales team from Chicago to California, liaising with MLS franchises, operating working agreement with teams, and overseeing the education and development of approximately 250 coaches on a seasonal basis. Prior to this position he was responsible for the growth and development of MLS Camps in New York and Los Angeles. Beyond managing Evolution Soccer Programs and the curriculum and coaches of Sand & Surf, Mark currently coaches Sand & Surf U12 girls and U14 boys.



### **Rachael Rapinoe, Darfur United Coach Ambassador**

Rachael Rapinoe of Rapinoe Soccer Camps - which are co-managed by her twin sister and US Women’s National Team Player, Megan Rapinoe - was the first Darfur United Coach Ambassador to launch the Darfur United Soccer Academy (DUSA) for girls and boys. In October 2013, she traveled to refugee camp Djabal in eastern Chad to train a pool of potential coaches, select the first two men and first two female DUSA coaches, and implement the first DUSA curriculum, created by Rachael herself. She has played Division I collegiate soccer with the University of Portland, semi-professional soccer with the Los Angeles Ajax’s, and professional soccer in Reykjavick, Iceland. Her experience does not stop there; she has been a soccer coach and counselor for different soccer teams and camps in Portland and Los Angeles, where she was responsible for the technical development of youth players, planning practices and team goals as well as developing awareness of women’s soccer. Rachael has also been sent as soccer representative for the U.S. to Japan and Indonesia to facilitate and teach soccer clinics, and to increase the participation of females in women’s sports. Rachael is currently pursuing a Masters of Science in Health and Exercise at Portland State University in Portland, Oregon USA.



### **Margo Baker, Darfur United Coach Ambassador**

Margo Baker serves as a Darfur United Coach Ambassador, after previously working as the Director of Operations and Academy Manager for the Chicago Red Stars of the National Women's Soccer League, followed by holding the position of Director of Programs for Gonzo Soccer and Leadership Academy. Margo, a Tennessee native, competed collegiately at Freed Hardeman University where she received her Bachelor of Arts in Communications, then went on to work as a graduate assistant for Louisiana State University Women's Basketball, while also working on and receiving her Masters in Education and Kinesiology at Louisiana State. She currently holds a USSF "E" coaching license and has coached multiple advanced-level and academy teams from 2005-2013. Margo currently resides in Portland, Oregon USA, where she uses soccer as a tool to help change the world.

## **I-ACT TEAM MEMBERS**

### **Gabriel Stauring, i-ACT Founder and Executive Director**



Gabriel became involved with the situation in Darfur out of a sense of personal responsibility. He believes that the power of community and compassion, combined with personal empowerment, can bring about meaningful change. Previously, Gabriel worked as a Family Consultant, providing in-home therapy for abused children and their families. He graduated from California State University at Dominguez Hills with a degree in behavioral science. In addition to visiting the refugee camps on the Chad-Darfur border 19 times, Gabriel has spearheaded campaigns such as Darfur United, Little Ripples (an early childhood education program), 100-Day Fast for Darfur, Darfur Freedom Summer Vigils, Camp Darfur, Darfur Fast for Life, and is featured in *The Enough Moment* by John Prendergast and Don Cheadle.

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### **Sara-Christine Dallain, MPH, i-ACT Director of Programs**

Sara-Christine joined i-ACT in 2013 to help coordinate Darfur United and the major projects implemented in the refugee camps in eastern Chad, including Darfur United Soccer Academy. She graduated from the University of Hawaii, Manoa, with a degree in Political Science, and holds a Master of Public Health degree from the University of California Los Angeles. Sara-Christine is also the ConIFA Director of Culture & Youth Exchanges. Beyond soccer, her interests lie in working alongside the most vulnerable populations, including refugees, to develop and implement community-led programs that build resiliency. She has previously worked at Direct Relief International and has traveled and worked on health and development projects in Ghana, Kenya, Chad, and Senegal. Sara-Christine is currently on the board of directors for The Chad Relief Foundation.

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### **Katie-Jay Scott Stauring**

i-ACT Director of Operations and Community Involvement. Katie-Jay joined the i-ACT team in July 2007. Much of her work related to Darfur United entails coordinating partnerships with communities, schools, grassroots organizations, businesses, and fundraising. She graduated from Portland State University with a BA in Sociology and a focus on Community Development. She has visited the Chad-Darfur border region five times and coordinated several campaigns and i-ACT partnerships. She works to bring the voices of refugees to the world conscience. Her motto is: Educate. Activate. Empower.

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## DARFUR

For decades, many Darfuris felt ignored by the central government in Khartoum and believed that the government favored Sudanese Arabs while oppressing non-Arab Sudanese. These frustrations boiled over in early 2003, when two primarily Muslim non-Arab Darfuri rebel groups launched a rebellion against the government of Sudan. The government responded to the rebellion by enlisting the help of some of the nomadic Arab tribes in Darfur, promising them land in exchange for their military allegiance. These groups formed militias known as the Janjaweed, and, with the support of the government, began wreaking havoc throughout Darfur. The Janjaweed has become notorious for abducting and kidnapping civilians, committing widespread rape, burning and looting villages and livestock, poisoning wells, and killing civilians. In 2004, the United States government called the conflict in Darfur a genocide, given the Arabs' systematic and widespread targeting of non-Arabs in an effort to eradicate the non-Arabs from their lands.

Since the conflict began over ten years ago, approximately 300,000 people have lost their lives and an additional 4 million have been displaced from their homes. While nearly half of those originally displaced have now returned to their homes, ongoing insecurity in Darfur continues to cause civilian casualties and displacement.

There have been multiple attempts to implement formal peace agreements, all of which have failed. The rebels in Darfur have splintered many times, further complicating the road to peace. The most recent agreement, the 2011 Doha Document for Peace in Darfur, offers little hope, as the most powerful and militarily active of the rebel groups did not sign it. As the peace process stalls, violence continues in Darfur. The proliferation of militias, inter-communal violence, and the army itself, remain serious threats to the civilian population.

Today, there are approximately 300,000 Darfuri refugees living in thirteen camps in Eastern Chad. These camps have been in existence for 11 years, hosting a population that has and continues to experience trauma and loss as well as a generation of children born into an environment that does not allow for much hope. The resources available to refugees are limited. Malnutrition is pervasive throughout the camps due to a decade of the same limited food rations. Programs deemed “nonessential” by the United Nations and other existing non-governmental organizations are not supported in the camps. Sports programs, physical activity, and psychosocial support for children are all considered “non essential.”