



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Sara-Christine Dallain, scd@iactivism.org, +1 805.637.6876

REFUGEE SOCCER TEAM REPRESENTING DARFUR RECEIVES AN OFFER OF FRIENDSHIP AND SUPPORT FROM A TEAM REPRESENTING THE ISLE OF MAN

Darfur United and Ellan Vannin Become “Twinned” Teams

HERMOSA BEACH, CA USA and ISLE OF MAN, UK - December 19, 2013 - In what could be seen as an unlikely pairing, Manx Independent Football Association (MIFA) and Darfur United (DU) soccer team have joined in a “twinned” partnership. MIFA contacted Darfur United, a team formed from refugees living in camps in Eastern Chad, to offer support in getting DU to the 2014 ConIFA World Football Cup in Sweden. Beyond financial support, MIFA is interested in friendship, cultural exchange, and a long-term relationship with DU.

The “twinned” partnership was initiated by MIFA after hearing of the DU team’s inspiring story. Darfur United is made up of young men that escaped extreme violence in their homeland. They have been living in remote, isolated refugee camps at the edge of the Sahara for 10 years. These camps—located in Eastern Chad, close to the Sudan border—are the home to over 300,000 refugees, and have very limited resources. Darfur United is not only an opportunity for the refugees to represent their people and play, but it’s also a movement to bring hope and awareness to the displaced people of Darfur. “Players from our team, Ellan Vannin, are moved by their efforts and by the use of football as a vehicle for building community,” said Malcolm Blackburn, MIFA’s Chief Executive. “My dream is to see players from both of our teams meeting for the first time, sealing the friendship.”

Gabriel Stauring, Founder and Director of i-ACT, the organization behind the formation of Darfur United, said: “When I first told the refugee community about creating the Darfur United team, a refugee leader said to me, ‘Now we are part of the world.’ Receiving the amazing offer of brother and sisterhood from MIFA and the people of the Isle of Man confirms what the leader said. It shows how the power of football can create positive connections that are hard to imagine by any other means.”

Ellan Vannin is made up of young men from the Isle of Man, a self-governing British Crown Dependency located in the Irish Sea between the islands of Great Britain and Ireland. The population of the island is 85,300 people.

Malcolm Blackburn stated, “This is the beginning of a wonderful and mutually beneficial relationship. We will help the team get to Sweden and support their programs in the camps, but we will receive so much in return. Our players and our people get to learn about another culture and the experience of a people that is very different from our own. It is a great connection for both sides.”

###

Darfur United is an all-refugee soccer team and youth academy 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 – a movement to bring hope, inspiration, and joy to the displaced people of Darfur. www.DarfurUnited.com

The team Ellan Vannin, which is the name of the Isle of Man in Manx, is a representative team of the Manx people. Formed in 2013 the Manx Independent Football Association (MIFA) is giving people of Manx heritage the chance to play fully internationally football. In 2014 the Ellan Vannin will have its first competitive international matches at the ConIFA World Football Cup. <http://www.conifa.org/EllanVannin>

CONIFA is a global umbrella organization for all the football teams outside FIFA. There are more than 5 500 ethnicities around the world and hundreds of sportingly isolated regions that do not have an international arena to play international football. The 2014 World Football Cup will take place June 1-9 in Ostersund, Sweden. www.ConIFA.org