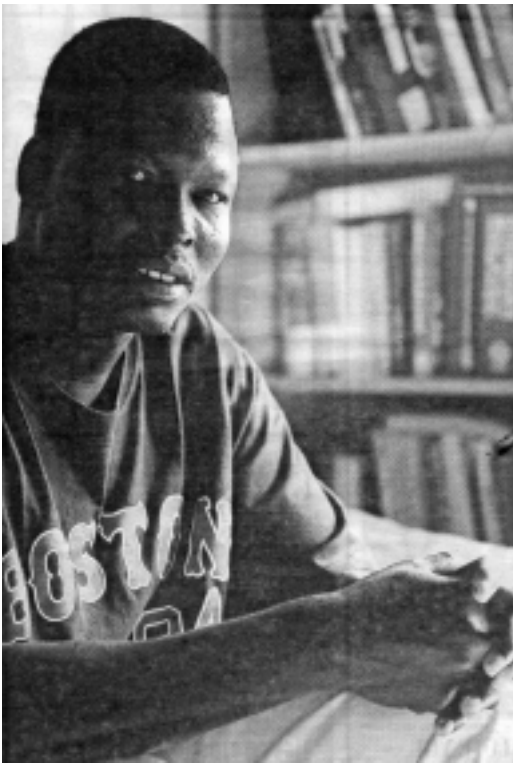


SURVIVORS CRY FOR END TO GENOCIDE

By Marie Szaniszlo



SPEAKING OUT: Panther Alier, 30, a native of the Sudan who now lives in Newton, plans to speak at a rally for Darfur to be held 3:30-5 at City Hall Plaza

Carine Gakuba lost both parents and four siblings in Rwanda's 1994 genocide. Merzudin Ibric survived a mass slaughter in the small Bosnian village of Srebrenica. Rosian Zerner was a witness to the horror of the Nazi Holocaust.

Today, the three will join other genocide survivors and thousands of other people from throughout the state at a torch-lighting ceremony from 3:30 to 5 p.m. at Boston City Hall Plaza to call on China to use its influence to help end the humanitarian crisis in Darfur.

"As China prepares to hold the 2008 summer Olympic Games, one of the world's most powerful symbols of peace and brotherhood, it is failing to help end genocide in Darfur," where some 400,000 people have been killed and 2.5 million have been driven from their homes," said Susan Morgan, spokeswoman for the Massachusetts Coalition to Save Darfur.

All countries, including the United States, must stand up for Darfur, Morgan said. But as Sudan's chief diplomatic sponsor, major weapons

provider and largest foreign partner, China has particular influence over its decisions.

Part of that country prospers even as the Sudanese government commits atrocities against its own people, Morgan said.

"It shouldn't take hundreds of thousands of people to die for the world to do something," said Panther Alier, 30, who has been separated from his family since he fled to Ethiopia when he was 10 years old after his Sudanese village was burned to the ground.

He spent years in refugee camps before the International Rescue Committee interceded in 2001 and helped bring him to the United States, where he now lives in Newton and is a graduate student at Brandeis University. "When someone dies a senseless death, as human beings we ought to act," he said.

Today's torch-lighting in Government Center will be the culmination of several "Dream for Darfur Olympic Torch Relays" throughout metro Boston.