Subject: World History, Health, International Affairs, Social Studies

Background:
In the Darfur region of Sudan, an area roughly the size of France named for the Fur people who live there and across the border in Chad, hundreds of thousands of peoples are displaced and living in makeshift camps.

Through a joint effort of U.N. agencies, non-governmental organizations and government authorities, progress has been made in providing people with more food, clean water, medicines and improved sanitation. However much more needs to be done. Without urgent intensified assistance, the people are at a major risk of contracting deadly diseases including cholera, dysentery and malaria.

For a first hand look at conditions in Darfur, please see the photo essay at the following:

Introduction:
Have the students read the following NewsHour background article about the current crisis in Darfur:
http://www.pbs.org/newshour/update/Sudan_08-06-04.html. (Students may also listen to or watch a NewsHour segment on the same topic:

The following questions can be used to guide the reading:

(a) How many people are living in the camps? How has this situation been changing?
(b) What are conditions like in the larger camps closer to cities? In camps in more rural locations?
(c) What sorts of conditions contribute to the spread of disease?
(d) According to this article, what diseases have been identified? Which ones lead to death?
Activity #1 -- Developing Familiarity with Some of the Diseases

The following is a group activity to find out more information about cholera, malaria, hepatitis E, Ebola virus and malnutrition or kwashiorkor. You may break students into groups and assign each group a disease. After students are finished their research, create a chart on the board and ask each group to discuss what they found. Write it in the chart for the class to see.

Procedure

1. Give students a copy of the handout, Guiding Questions for Research and ask them to explore the following Web sites to answer the questions.

Cholera
Source: http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo/cholera_g.htm#Can%20cholera%20be%20treated
Source: http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/diseases/cholera/basics.html

Malaria
Source: http://www.cdc.gov/travel/malinfo.htm
Source: http://www.bestdoctors.com/en/askadoctor/m/maguire/jhmaguire_062600_q1.htm

Hepatitis E

Ebola Virus
Source: http://www.who.int/CSR/disease/ebola/en/
Source: http://www.who.int/mediacentre/releases/2004/pr54/en/

Malnutrition

Extension Activities

Three options are provided below for individual or small group additional activities. These may be given as homework or additional research activities. A culminating activity taking some kind of action in support of relief efforts is also recommended.

1. Explore which American-based private voluntary organizations are involved in relief efforts? Which ones are working specifically with medical problems? What kind of work are they doing? For information please see http://interaction.org/sudan/Oxfam. As a class discuss and plan activities to support those agencies working to alleviate the suffering in Sudan.

2. Why is water such a problem? Visit http://www.unhcr.org/ and look for the latest news releases on the Chad/Darfur location. Create a public service campaign focused on publicizing the lack of clean water in Darfur. The campaign may be directed toward the school community or your larger local community.