Bellona leader Frederic Hauge thinks the Ministry of Finance must pull Norway’s Sovereign Wealth Fund out of Lundin Petroleum. The Norwegian government owns close to NOK 1 billion in the company accused of contributing to war crimes.

Lundin Petroleum's General Assembly voted down a proposal last year from several shareholders, including Norway’s Sovereign Wealth Fund, to implement an external review of the company's alleged involvement in war crimes in Sudan.

“Them [Lundin] wanting to cover up former wrongdoings makes them a rogue company in my opinion. It’s extremely good that Lundin’s being investigated in Sweden, yet we continue to award them licenses to some of the largest fields on the Norwegian Continental Shelf. And there’s no debate in Norway about how they earned the money they invest,” says Bellona Foundation leader Frederic Hauge.

**Ethical Council rejects the case**

Swedish insurance giant Folksam immediately divested itself of its holdings in Lundin when the proposal regarding a self-audit was voted down by others including the Norwegian National Insurance Fund, in addition to the Lundin family itself. Norway’s Sovereign Wealth Fund (SWF) did not.

Recently, the Bellona Foundation asked the SWF’s Ethical Council to investigate whether the fund's investment in Lundin Petroleum violates its own ethical rules. The Ministry of Finance may exclude companies where there is an "unacceptable risk that the company contributes to, or is responsible for serious or systematic human rights violations, and serious violations of individual rights in war or conflict" at the request of the Council.

“What can very likely be described as "blood money" acquired during the civil war in Sudan was used to invest in, and start Lundin's oil industry in Norway,” claims Mr Hauge.

But the Council has dismissed the case for the reason that the Swedish oil company sold out from the business in Sudan ten years ago. The war crimes that Lundin is accused of having contributed to are, in other words, history.

"It’s on-going violations and the risk of future serious violations that can form the basis for a recommendation of exclusion from the Fund. Lundin Petroleum hasn’t had operations in Sudan or South Sudan since 2003. It is therefore unlikely that this case will lead to exclusion from the Fund, given the circumstances that are applicable today,” Council advisor Pablo Valverde writes in an email to Bellona.

**Close ties**

Bellona thinks the guidelines should be changed, in that case. Back home in Sweden, key people associated with Lundin are being investigated for possible involvement in human rights violations and war crimes in Sudan between 1997 and 2003.

In addition to former Lundin board members current Foreign Minister Carl Bildt, Lundin brothers Ian and Lukas, and Lundin CEO Ashley Heppenstall are in all probability in the prosecution's spotlight too.

The reason is the report "Unpaid Debt", behind which stand 50 human rights and aid organisations (ECOS – European Coalition on Oil in Sudan). Part of ECOS’ requirements is that Lundin and two other oil companies pay compensation to victims, estimated to be in the region of NOK 16.6 billion (about USD2.91 billion).

“This case was highlighted again last year when Lundin’s AGM delegates voted against an external investigation. The matter is still on-going,” Mr Hauge says.

He fears that the Ministry of Finance has too much power over Ethical Council, set to guard the Sovereign Wealth Fund’s investments. Bellona wants a more independent, government-appointed Ethical Council.

“This is shameful, and the case can become extremely embarrassing,” declares Mr Hauge.

Oil company Lundin is advised of Aftenbladet’s series of articles which highlight their activities in Sudan between 1997 and 2003. Communications director Maria Hamilton has stated in writing that the company thinks they did a good job and helped to improve the lives of people in the country.

In an official statement dated 23 June 2010, Lundin Petroleum denies on behalf of itself, its management and board are in any way directly or indirectly involved or an accessory to any alleged errors committed in Sudan.

[Norway National Insurance Fund voted against Lundin inquiry](http://www.aftenbladet.no/energi/aenergy/Norway-National-Insurance-Fund-voted-against-Lundin-inquiry-3130366.html)

Lundin shareholders demanded an independent investigation of the oil company when Swedish police began an investigation of individuals associated with the firm. But the Lundin family stopped the proposal, along with the Norwegian National Insurance Fund, among others.