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## **SUPPORTING PEACEMAKERS IN DARFUR**

A Crisis Group Initiative to Bring Splintered Political and Militia Groups into the Peace Process and Improve Security on the Ground in Darfur

December 1, 2005

<b>Name of Organisation</b>	<b>INTERNATIONAL CRISIS GROUP</b>
<b>Name of Project</b>	<b>Sudanese Armed Groups Project</b>
<b>www.jewishworldwatch.org</b>	

### **I. BACKGROUND: THE ONGOING CRISIS IN DARFUR**

More than two and a half years after the initial upsurge in violence that triggered the current crisis, the western Sudanese region of Darfur is acknowledged to be a humanitarian and human rights tragedy: as many as 5,000 people - overwhelmingly civilians - are dying every month. The situation continues to deteriorate. After a slight improvement between March and August of this year, renewed violence is mounting. There are ceasefire violations by all parties; attacks by the government supported Janjaweed militias continue while peace talks have stalled. Escalating violence and persistent banditry prevent the effective distribution of humanitarian aid in the region. This resurgence of violence is the result of the government's failure to neutralise the Janjaweed militia which continues to roam the countryside armed and has now begun attacking the camps for the internally displaced (as reported by the African Union Mission in Sudan - AMIS - as recently as Nov. 11<sup>th</sup>). Darfurian civilians continue to suffer with no end in sight. The international community is failing to protect them and it has been unsuccessful in influencing the Sudanese government to do so.

The United Nations Commission of Inquiry on Darfur has recently released a report on the massive scope of atrocities carried out in the territory, primarily by the government and its allied Janjaweed militias. The situation on the ground shows a number of negative trends, including the targeting of humanitarian workers, mounting civilian casualties, the ceasefire in shambles, the negotiation process at a standstill, the rebel movements imploding, a rise in cross-border raids in Chad and new armed movements appearing in Darfur and neighbouring states. Chaos and a culture of impunity are taking root in the region.

The international community had identified the Africa Union (AU) as the peacekeepers in the region and the mediator in negotiations between Darfur armed groups and Khartoum's government in the Nigerian capital Abuja. However, divisions within the rebel movements have considerably slowed down the process. Further, the resistance until early December of the ruling National

Congress Party to including in its delegation at the talks representatives of the former rebel Sudan People Liberation Movement (SPLM), currently its partners in a Government of National Unity, thwarted any possibility of a political settlement.

Where AU peacekeepers have been deployed, security has improved. But the lack of troops combined with an inadequate mandate, have prevented the mission from providing sufficient protection for the number of civilians in Darfur.

## **II. CRISIS GROUP'S ROLE TO DATE**

The International Crisis Group was among the first organisations to alert the world to the deteriorating situation in Darfur back in 2003. Its frontline reporting from the field, combined with an energetic advocacy campaign, helped bring the crisis to the attention of policymakers, television viewers and newspaper readers around the world. Its proposals for dealing with the crisis - for ending the violence and forcing the parties to the conflict into meaningful negotiations - have been debated at the UN Security Council and in the chambers of the African Union.<sup>1</sup> While some action has been taken, Crisis Group believes the international community must do much more about the interconnected problems of humanitarian relief and security on the ground. The key international organisations and concerned governments should urgently agree and coordinate at a high level on what is necessary, without regard to institutional prerogatives or national prestige. Key priorities are: better protection for civilians; accountability for violations of humanitarian and human rights law; and injecting fresh momentum into the Darfur Peace Process.

## **III. CURRENT INITIATIVE**

### **Summary**

Against a backdrop of continuing violence, Crisis Group is prepared to stimulate a fresh initiative for peace in Darfur.

Over the course of the next few weeks, Crisis Group analysts will conduct field research in government held territories of Darfur to determine the ability of the AU forces on the ground to provide security and assess the conditions of the Internally Displaced. Government sponsored militias are often dismissed as pawns of their government patron yet they are also driven by their own grievances and objectives. Understanding these groups' structure, dynamics and relations with the society will fill a very important gap in the international community's knowledge of Sudan and provide a more precise and, thus, more effective policy recommendations. Our analysts will also investigate genuine reconciliation initiatives among Darfurian communities in the region to find long term solutions for the root causes of the conflict such as their competition over receding natural resources, and the efforts of the ruling Islamist NCP to subvert this process. Such communal reconciliation efforts are a necessary back up to

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<sup>1</sup> For a more detailed assessment of the impact of Crisis Group's efforts in Darfur, please refer to Appendix A: "Recent Examples of the Impact of Crisis Group's Efforts in Darfur."

the political agreement sought in the AU led mediation at Abuja, constituting a prerequisite for lasting peace in the region.

Crisis Group will also deploy a research team to an area held by rebels to assess the impact of recent divisions between the two larger Darfurian rebel groups on the ground. These groups, little studied to date, hold the key to lasting peace and security in Sudan. As well, the internal dynamics of rebel movements determine the likelihood of a negotiated peace settlement as much as other important factors, such as external pressure from the international community.

With the results of this research, a policy paper will be published aimed at assessing the deteriorating security situation. This report will set out in detail how the international community can best make headway in each of the three areas identified: civilian protection, accountability and peace talks. The paper will also highlight the dynamics of the long term social reconciliation process. It will bring together the encyclopedic knowledge of the political and security landscape that Crisis Group analysts have acquired in years of field research and will take stock of the international response to date. A compelling case for further action to save lives will be presented. The report will form the basis of a coordinated advocacy campaign - targeting both national governments and public opinion in the West, the Arab world and Africa.

Crisis Group is in a unique position to provide this valuable research. Having worked on Sudan since 2001, the Crisis Group has a veteran team of Sudan analysts led by Suliman Baldo, John Prendergast, and David Mozersky, who will oversee the research project and guide a team of field consultants. The proposed grant will allow Crisis Group to carry out extensive forays into rebel-held territory as well as conduct prolonged field visits to Darfur's government held camps.

### **Aim & Objectives**

The aim of the present initiative is to contribute to an end to violence in Darfur - through better civilian protection on the ground and a re-energized, more effective political process to resolve the conflict.

Specific objectives are:

- To provide national governments, the UN, AU and other international organizations with a source of fresh analysis of the situation in Darfur, the range of groups involved in the conflict, the shortcomings of existing civilian protection arrangements, and the status of the peace process;
- To generate detailed recommendations for ending the violence on the ground, including through a strengthening of the current AU protection force and a more robust approach to dealing with those responsible for violations of humanitarian and human rights law, and for creating a more effective peace process for resolving the underlying political issues at dispute;
- To sustain international interest in and concern regarding the situation in Darfur, and to raise international awareness of the shortcomings of action taken to date;

- To mobilize international support for immediate further action, along lines advocated by Crisis Group, to bring an end to the current crisis.

## Activities

- **Conducting Field Research:** A team of field-based analysts will research and prepare a report examining the position of each of the main parties to the Darfur conflict - including the Sudanese Government, the various government-aligned militias, and rebel groups - and assessing the motives and interests driving their war strategy. The report will examine the security situation in each part of the region, evaluating the impact of the AU force on the ground and identifying weaknesses in the force's mandate, capability, and operating approach. Finally, Crisis Group will review the status of peace talks between the government and rebel groups, identifying what each party hopes to gain from the talks and obstacles to progress.
- **Developing an Action Plan:** On the basis of such field research, Crisis Group will set out detailed recommendations designed to achieve progress on all three fronts - including proposals designed to persuade armed groups to come to the negotiating table for meaningful political talks and deter further violence, steps to strengthen the mandate and capability of international civilian protection forces on the ground, and an overhaul of the beleaguered peace process set up to produce a negotiated peace settlement.
- **Disseminating the Results:** Crisis Group's findings and recommendations will be set out in a Crisis Group report to be disseminated in English and Arabic worldwide, using Crisis Group's already well-developed global database of contacts. Some 4,180 selected senior officials in Africa and the West (including ministers, heads of international agencies, diplomats, and selected public servants in key roles) regularly receive Crisis Group publications in hard copy form. A further 16,800 targeted recipients -- mainly government and international officials, members of parliament, journalists and civil society activists -- receive the full text or the executive summary of publications electronically, in the form of an email attachment. In total, more than 56,250 people now regularly receive email notifications, or full copies or executive summaries of Crisis Group publications by post or email. Of these approximately 20,700 people have been selected for receipt, the rest - some 35,550 website "subscribers" - have chosen to receive (free of charge) notification of new publications by registering their interest at [www.crisisgroup.org](http://www.crisisgroup.org)
- **Advocacy Campaign:** Release of the report will be accompanied by an advocacy effort designed to draw attention to Crisis Group's recommendations and mobilise support for their implementation. Key messages will be conveyed at high-level meetings with government leaders in the region and in Europe and the U.S. Crisis Group will brief journalists and provide interviews and film footage to the media in a bid to renew public interest in the crisis. And Crisis Group analysts will travel to regional capitals, and the headquarters of the AU in Addis Ababa, to pitch the organisation's ideas to those directly involved in peace talks, helping to coalesce opinion around a practical strategy for peace.

#### **IV. FURTHER INFORMATION**

For further information on Crisis Group's work in Sudan, or to take up any of the points raised in this memorandum, please one of the following:

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Information on Crisis Group, including the full text of all previously published Crisis Group reports and briefing papers, can be downloaded from the organisation's website: [www.crisisgroup.org](http://www.crisisgroup.org)