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SAVE
DARFUR

UPDATE ON DARFUR
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More than 10,000 United Nations peacekeepers and police are being deployed to southern Sudan to preserve the Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed in January to end the long civil war between the Khartoum government and the South. The forces include Indian, Bangladeshi and Nepalese soldiers.¹ Whether UN forces will also be allowed to assist or assume the African Union's role as peacekeepers in the Darfur region of Western Sudan is an open question. The Sudanese government is against the idea, preferring the African Union (AU) because, it argues, the AU soldiers are Africans and understand the culture of Darfur.² Still, Khartoum has said that it will consider the idea.³

Notwithstanding the protestations of Khartoum, the AU clearly needs help, both with additional people and with a substantially enhanced mandate. The AU currently has 6,000 people in its peace-keeping force, but its mandate is only to monitor cease-fire violations.⁴ When the AU patrols encounter skirmishes, they are under instructions to inform the organization's headquarters, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, but responsibility for the protection of citizens has been explicitly left to the government of Sudan.⁵ Thus, the AU has limited powers to intervene to protect civilians who are being raped, killed and burned.⁶

The AU teams are spread out across an area the size of France; they manage at most three patrols per day in various sectors of the region.⁷ Yet Darfur's displaced persons are gathered in some three hundred sites, and they need protection from the Janjaweed who prowl nearby.⁸ African countries are not eager to send more soldiers.⁹ In a literal rendition of "death by a thousand paper cuts,"

¹Reuters, December 5, 2005.

²*Ibid.*

³*Ibid.*

⁴*Ibid.*

⁵Samantha Power, *The New Yorker*, Comment: "Missions," Nov. 28, 2005 issue.

⁶Reuters, December 5, 2005.

⁷Samantha Power, *The New Yorker*, Comment: "Missions."

⁸*Ibid.*

⁹*Ibid.*

Khartoum has blocked the delivery of 105 Canadian armored vehicles to vulnerable AU troops, grounded the AU's helicopters by imposing arbitrary flight restrictions, and delayed visas for NATO officials intending to train AU troops.¹⁰

Increasing Violence Against the Rebels and the Refugees

For most of 2005, clashes have largely been between the Arab militia, known as the *Janjaweed*, and the rebel factions, including the main rebel group called the Sudan Liberation Army (sometimes called the Sudan Liberation Movement and herein referred to as the SLA, the SLM, or the SLM/A) and the smaller Justice and Equality Movement (JEM). However, direct confrontations between government forces and the rebels are on the rise.¹¹

The UN Mission in Sudan reported that on Saturday, December 3, 2005, Sudanese Armed Forces and militia jointly attacked the villages in the area of Nyala, the capital of South Darfur.¹² The fighting resulted in an unknown number of civilian casualties and displaced about 7,000 people.¹³ According to reports, the attack had been launched against the rebel SLM/A in the area. In apparent retaliation the following day, the SLM/A attacked Donkey Dereisa, 60 km south of Nyala, the capital of South Darfur.¹⁴

Then, on Tuesday, December 6, 2005, the Arab militia, the *Janjaweed*, raided the town of Congo Harasa. They destroyed all the wells that had been constructed by the humanitarian workers to provide water to the local population.¹⁵

The ongoing deliberate destruction of farmland and crops has negatively affected the optimistic agricultural output expected for this season, Radhia Achouri, the spokeswoman for the UN Mission in Sudan said.¹⁶

Attacks and instability continue inside the refugee camps. The refugees, referred to in many of the reports as Internal Displaced Persons (IDPs), are reporting continuous military presence inside the camps during the nights with threats, detentions, harassment to the civil population and shootings.¹⁷ Additionally, adding to the rising tensions in the IDP camps, there has been a proliferation of people posing as community leaders and presenting inflated numbers of newly arrived Internal Displaced

¹⁰*Ibid.*

¹¹BBC News, December 8, 2005 (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/4511046.stm>).

¹²The villages were Hemmeda, Um Boru and Koka in the Um Nkonya area, approximately 40 km northeast of Nyala, the capital of South Darfur.

¹³Reuters, www.AlertNet.org, Dec. 8, 2005.

¹⁴*Ibid.*

¹⁵*Ibid.*

¹⁶*Ibid.*

¹⁷*Ibid.*

Persons to demand food and other relief items.¹⁸ "They are not just businessmen - they are a real mafia. They sold around 12,000 rations of food in front of our noses," one aid worker said. "This business is a time bomb for the stability of the camp. The genuine community leaders that try to collaborate with us are exhausted and very scared. All of us have been threatened many times."¹⁹

Developments at Peace Talks in Nigeria Between Khartoum Government and Darfur Rebels

The seventh round of discussions between government and rebel representatives are continuing in Abuja, Nigeria.²⁰ The competing leaders within the largest and leading rebel group, the SLA/M, have agreed to set aside their in-fighting in hopes of more fruitful peace discussions with Khartoum.²¹

In addition, the smaller JEM (Justice and Equality Movement) has been included in the talks.²² A third rebel group, the National Movement for Reform and Development (National Movement or NMRD), has not been included in the Abuja, Nigeria peace talks.²³

Darfur Region Becoming Increasingly Unsafe for Aid Workers

Antonio Guterres, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, said that Sudan is becoming increasingly more dangerous for aid workers because of the mounting violence in the African country. "The situation is one of total insecurity where humanitarian workers are risking their lives. There are members of our team who can't leave the areas where they are, unless it is by helicopter, to work in the camps because the roads are considered to be totally unsafe."²⁴ Guterres said there had been cases where security forces in the country belonging to the African Union had been kidnaped by armed groups in Sudan.

The security situation in Darfur over the past weeks has been characterized by banditry, including looting and inter-tribal fighting, alleged clashes between the Sudan Liberation Movement and tribal groups, as well as harassment, threats and sometimes beating of the staffs of UN agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), according to the United Nations Mission in Sudan ("UNMIS" or "UN Mission" refers to United Mission in the country).²⁵

¹⁸*Ibid.*

¹⁹*Ibid.*

²⁰BBC News, Dec. 8, 2005.

²¹Reuters, Estelle Shirbon, "Darfur rebels pledge unity to break talks deadlock," Nov. 28, 2005.

²²*Ibid.*

²³www.KeralaNext.com , Dec. 7, 2005 (Kerala, India news source).

²⁴www.SudanTribute.com , Dec. 13, 2005.

²⁵www.KeralaNext.com , Dec. 7, 2005.

In West Darfur, according to the UN Mission, the leader of the third rebel group, the National Movement for Reform and Development, has claimed responsibility for an attack in late November on a police outpost which injured seven policemen. Around the same time, either Chadian deserters or the National Movement are suspected of having attacked an African Mission in Sudan (AMIS) patrol, wounding five African peacekeepers. Attacks by unidentified armed men on internally displaced people and refugees were reported near the border with Chad and at Tonkitier IDP camp.²⁶

In southern Sudan, the rebel Ugandan Lord's Resistance Army has murdered, raped, robbed and abducted civilians, including humanitarian workers, "adding to fears that the Ugandan rebel group has made the targeting of aid workers part of its strategy," the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has said.²⁷

The Geopolitical Interest in the Sudan

There are broad geopolitical interests at stake in Sudan, Africa's largest country. The new powers of Asia – China and India – are in Sudan for the oil. China, with a 40% stake, is the biggest single shareholder in the consortium developing the industry, but the Malaysians with 30% and the Indians with 25% also have significant interests. Almost all the oil produced goes to China, and it is estimated that approximately 4.5% of China's oil needs are being met by Sudan. In addition, Khartoum is being developed by Chinese companies, which bring their own laborers with them.²⁸

The Russians, who also have oil interests, probably have military deals with the Sudanese government as well.²⁹

The United States, through its various agencies and branches of government, has an inconsistent relationship with Sudan. The CIA is co-operating with the Sudanese government on anti-terrorism, though Sudan is still on the State Department's list of countries that sponsor terrorism. And while USAID spends billions of dollars developing the south, Congress has maintained trade, economic, and financial sanctions against Sudan for years.³⁰ The trade embargo was extended for another year in November 2005.³¹ Also in November, Salva Kiir, Sudan's first vice president and president of southern Sudan, met with Vice President Dick Cheney, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, and U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick. Mr. Kiir was told that Sudan's new unity government needed to do more to implement the Peace Agreement and to stop the violence in Darfur, particularly if it wanted U.S. sanctions lifted any time soon.³²

²⁶*Ibid.*

²⁷*Ibid.*

²⁸*The Economist*, Dec. 1, 2005, www.Economist.com .

²⁹*Ibid.*

³⁰*Ibid.*

³¹*South Africa Sunday Times*, www.SundayTimes.co.za , Nov. 2, 2005.

³²Reuters, Sue Fleming, "U.S. Pushes Sudan to Do More in Sudan," www.AlertNet.org , Nov. 2, 2005.

Congress recently cut \$50 million from its funding for African Union troops in Darfur, taking the funds from a foreign funding appropriations bill, but urged President George W. Bush to find funds elsewhere.³³

The United States and the European Union are committed to supporting the Comprehensive Peace Agreement between Khartoum and the South because it is the best hope for stability in the country. But the fear is that while the fragile Peace Agreement may have legitimized the Khartoum government, making it a negotiating partner or even an ally of the West, it has also given Khartoum licence to continue the killing of its own people in the Darfur region.³⁴

There are signs that the Comprehensive Peace Agreement is weakening. There continues to be a lack of cooperation on oil. Three large fields lie in the south's territory and, under the peace agreement, the revenues from those fields are to be split equally between the government in Khartoum and the south. Until now, however, the south, according to Coldau Ding, a veteran SPLM leader and now a member of the new parliament, has seen only a "small advance" from the north, even though the money is needed urgently. A joint north-south oil commission, which was called for by the Peace Agreement, has recently been established to resolve the oil disputes.³⁵

Another concern is the distribution of cabinet seats in the new National Unity government in Khartoum. The SPLM has a 28% share of the new government, and its new leader, Salva Kiir, is the first vice-president. But the party of Omar al-Bashir, the President of Sudan, which has a 52% of the cabinet seats, has awarded itself the ministries of energy and finance, two of the most powerful posts in the new cabinet. This creates the impression that Mr. Bashir does not truly want to share power with the South.³⁶

Yet another concern has been the lack of demilitarization in the south. Mr Ding, of the SPLM, argues that the local militias, which the government used during the war as its proxy killers, are "still at large," despite provisions in the Peace Agreement for them to be integrated either into the military wing of the SPLM or into the regular Sudanese army.³⁷

But the more immediate worry is the resumed killing in Darfur, and the risk of ever more deaths from famine and disease.³⁸

The Darfur Peace and Accountability Act

The Darfur Peace and Accountability Act (H.R. 3127 in the House, S. 1462 in the Senate) passed in the United States Senate on November 18, 2005. It is now pending in the House of Representatives.

³³Reuters, www.AlertNet.org , Nov. 2, 2005.

³⁴*Ibid.*

³⁵*Ibid.*

³⁶*Ibid.*

³⁷*Ibid.*

³⁸*Ibid.*

In summary, the Darfur Peace and Accountability Act provides, as follows³⁹:

- Urges the African Union to rapidly expand the size and mandate of the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) and offers the President authority to provide assistance to reinforce the deployment and operations of such an expanded mission, while also directing the US to urge for NATO reinforcement of the African Union mission (upon the request of the AU). It also calls on the international community to consider taking additional measures should the expanded AU mission fail to stop genocide in Darfur.
- Calls for the suspension of Sudan's membership from the United Nations General Assembly.
- Calls for the appointment of a Special Envoy for Sudan and northern Uganda, and fully supports the Comprehensive Peace Agreement for Sudan.
- Authorizes the blocking of assets and restriction of travel on any individual who the President has determined is responsible for acts of genocide, war crimes, or crimes against humanity in the Darfur region.
- Denies entry at US ports to cargo ships and oil tankers engaged in the oil industry in Sudan.
- Calls for a new UN Security Resolution which supports the expansion of the AU Mission; imposes sanctions against the Government of Sudan; extends the military arms embargo to cover the entire Government of Sudan, amongst other things.
- Prohibits U.S. assistance to countries which violate the military and arms embargo imposed pursuant to the UN Security Council Resolutions (with a waiver).
- Requires reports to Congress to include the various sanctions imposed, and requires information on the deployment of an expanded AU mission in Darfur, the status of NATO's plans and assistance to support African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS), and the performance of AMIS.

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³⁹See www.SaveDarfur.org .